

## Helping the Hurting

When another believer is in the midst of deep sorrow or pain, what is it that another believer can them that will be most effective to help them in their suffering? Jobs' friends came to comfort him in his suffering. Something happened during the execution of their ministry that not only failed to comfort him, but also increased his suffering. Let us examine where they went wrong so that we might serve others better.

### The original purpose of the ministry

Ch. 2:11 – 3 friends – heard of Job's distress; met together to come to him. **Purpose:** to sympathize – nud – to grieve with him; comfort – nacham – console.

When the friends heard of his suffering they decided to help him

Sympathize – **nud** - grieve with him – share his grief

Comfort – **nacham** – to have pity, feel sorry, show compassion

- Their original purpose was to share his grief and comfort him in his suffering.
- Their intent was very good but they failed to stick to their purpose

2:12 – when they saw him from a distance, they spontaneously wept at his state

- Their personal love for him is obvious – they broke into wailing
- They were lacking in capacity to maintain unconditional love
- They forgot their purpose and their mission took a bad turn

2:13 – sat on the ground in silence – 7 days and nights

What a profound act of sharing grief – sat with him in silence

- They saw his great pain – they sat and shared his grief

### Job's need and desire

16:2 – you are all miserable comforters – Job bemoans the “comfort” he is receiving

21:34 – you comfort me in vain – you are comforting me not at all

- In the midst of his suffering, Job wanted and needed comfort and support
- In the midst of great suffering, the need is for compassion and support

### Losing their focus

3:1-26 – Job opens his mouth in complaint – curses the day/birth – never been born

- Job's great suffering has caused him to lose his perspective
- He doesn't understand what God is doing – questioning what God is doing
- Intense prolonged suffering can cause us to lose our grip on God's plan
- Loss of loved one – Why God?

### Changing their focus

4-37 – great debates

- Ch 4 Eliphaz reacts to Job's distorted view – begins to instruct him
- He switches from grieving and comforting to correcting Job
- The 3 friends embark on a ministry of correcting Job in the midst of grief.
- Rather than provide comfort, they ended up adding to his grief.

### Job receives comfort

42:10-11 – God restored Job's health and wealth; family / friends came to him – consoled and comforted him

- Undeserved suffering ran its course and God removed it at the right time.
- In the end, Job learned the lesson and received comfort from his suffering
- All that the friends said and did during the debates did not edify Job
- The Lord condemned what they called a righteous ministry.

- 1. The primary spiritual resource to help the hurting is unconditional love. 1Cor 12-14; Rom 12:5-10; Eph 4:11-16 sp gifts + Love**
  - Love is committed to edify and is discerning about timing
  - Love does not promote itself – 3 friends were determined to be heard
  - Helping the hurting requires putting ourselves aside to help others
  
- 2. Recovery from loss and grief occurs gradually and in stages. Kubler-Ross 5 stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance**
  - The early stages of grief and loss are about coming to grips with reality
  - Early stages of grief are not a time for intense cognitive function
  - Job is in the midst of his grief – not time for correction
  
- 3. Each phase of grief have their appropriate forms of ministry - gifts.**
  - Early stages are a time for compassion and grieving with the person
  - Latter stages are a time for explanation and re-thinking
  
- 4. Timing is a critical component in any ministry**
  - Counter / non productive to attempt to correct thinking while in grief
  - To be heard, you must hear first; hear to be heard
  
- 5. The 3 friends reacted to Job's suffering by trying to fix him.**
  - They decided that the time was right to correct his thinking and behavior
  - Even if their assertions had been correct, the time for correction was later
  
- 6. God has provided spiritual gifts to deal with different phases of correction**
  - Mercy – supernatural comfort from God's love
  - Exhortation – supernatural counsel to help correct thinking
  - PT – pulpit ministry to nurse the bel's soul back to health