

Cycle Two: Misconceptions of Suffering, Continued
Job's Friends Offer More Inept Consolation

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

1. Job's friends challenged his integrity...essentially saying that he was a windbag, a man of empty religious talk, and a liar who was far from God and in sin. This was evident to them because of his sufferings, which they insisted were the evidence of his iniquities and sinful state. His friends had a skewed worldview; the lenses through which they viewed the world. Why is it so critical that Believers develop a Biblical worldview if we're to properly know and understand both God and His ways? What are the dangers of worldviews that misrepresent who God is and how He works in the world, both for us and for others?
2. Job's friends challenged his salvation, stating that any person who was in such a low position and intense state of suffering must be an unbeliever, since God would not treat a true believer this way. In their view, Job's suffering was the evidence that he did not know God. On the other hand, the Bible teaches that a season of trial actually makes a believer's faith stronger. Let's read James 1:2-5 and unpack some of the spiritual benefits of human suffering. Does this help us to understand why God allows a believer to suffer?
3. The theological error of Job's friends is similar to the prosperity gospel of our own day. This false gospel supposes that God wants everyone to be prosperous with health, wealth, and general prosperity. One author defined the prosperity gospel as the idea that financial blessing and physical well being are always God's will for the Believer, who brings these things to pass by positive confession and faith. Also known as positive confession, this error encourages Christians to speak into existence their wealth, health, and prosperity...to decree and declare it in Jesus name. Let's do some Bible study and explore some alternative ideas from the scripture...
 - 1 Peter 3:14-17
 - Acts 9:16
 - Philippians 1:29
 - Acts 5:41

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-6
- John 3:17-18
- Matthew 7:24-27

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

1. The Bible teaches us to be steadfast in our faith and immovable. What do you need to do now to ensure that when the winds of trouble come, your faith stands firm?
2. Some lessons of faith can only be learned through seasons of suffering. What have you learned...or how has your own walk with Jesus grown stronger as a result of hardships in life?