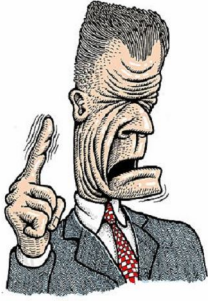


Job's Friends



"With friends like you who needs enemies?"

*"I have heard many things like these;
miserable comforters are you all!"*

Job 16:2



There are three friends that carry on a sparing match of wits with Job through chapters 4 to 31. It's very much like a three round tag team boxing match with each on throwing a punch followed by Job's answer. By the end of three rounds the arguments get weaker and weaker with Bildad's last assault being only six verses and Zophar doesn't even come out of his corner for the final round.

The fourth voice of Elihu appears in chapter 32-37 from a young whippersnapper who condemns all of them, and though he has many good things to say about God he too lacks compassion. They are all full of sound and fury.

Eliphaz – The eldest, logical, common sense from experience $2+2=4$. He is like the kindly mother scolding a child, *"Now you don't mean that. Apologize and say your are sorry."*

Bildad – The lofty theologian, legalist, traditionalist and echoes the position of the Pharisees in the New Testament. *"Who sinned this man or his parents that he was born blind?"*

Zophar – The finger-pointing, stone-throwing, angry, judgmental, blaming and shaming friend. He is the hothead among them.

Elihu – the youthful zealot, a know-it-all, disagrees with everyone but himself. Even through he has much good to say about God, he is lacking compassion. He is the only voice not condemned by God.

The sum of it all was not in their arguments but in the attitudes. None of them were kind, merciful, understanding or compassionate. They all failed to be true friends, born for adversity, and demonstrate impatience, anger, and self-righteousness. The point of it all is to help us see ourselves in one or all of Job's friends.

They were not very friendly. They were not loving. They were not kind. They were not helpful. So too, we can be terribly judgmental and impatient with friends who suffer.

True Friends

The Bible has much to say about friendship. Jesus is the example of true friendship in that while we were yet sinners he still loved us. He laid down his life for his friends and he is the friend that loves at all times and sticks closer than a brother.

Job 6:14-15

A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams, as the streams that overflow.

Job 16:1-2

"I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all!"

Proverbs 10:12

Love covers a multitude of sins.

Proverbs 11:13

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man (friend) keeps a secret.

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 18:24

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 27:6

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Proverbs 27:9

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens the countenance of a friend.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: 10. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Jesus is Our Example of a True Friend

- ✚ Never speaks evil of us to others.
 - ✚ Never betrays a confidence.
 - ✚ Never throws stones.
 - ✚ Never is judgmental.
-
- Always is merciful.
 - Always is kind, loving and forgiving.
 - Always is there beside us.
 - Always picks us up when we fall.

Can you think of other Biblical examples of true friendship?

- Jesus lays down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Our Words

Words are important. They either **heal** or they **hurt**. They **build up** or they **tear down**. They **comfort** or they **criticize**. They **encourage** or they **discourage**. They **praise** or they **raze**. They **bless** or they **bruise**. They **help** or they **hinder**. They **commend** or they **condemn**.

James 3:1-12

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. 3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Psalms 141:3 *O LORD, set a guard over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

Proverbs 25:11 *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*

Proverbs 25:11-13 *A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear. Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters.*

Isaiah 50:4 *The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.*

Matthew 7:1-2 *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

Luke 6:36-37 *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

John 8:8 *When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

Comfort One Another

Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

2 Corinthians 1:3-6

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

Isaiah 40:1-2

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

**Let us never be guilty of being “miserable comforters,”
but let us encourage, comfort and lift up our weaker brothers.**

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Galatians 6:2

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Consider the “One Another”
commands of the Lord**

There are over 100 comforting promises of God in Isaiah 40 to the end of Isaiah.

WHAT WE ARE TO DO WITH ONE ANOTHER

THESE ARE COMMANDS... NOT SUGGESTIONS!

1. ACCEPT ... (ROMANS 15:5-7)
2. BE KIND ... (EPH. 4:32)
3. LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE ... (1 JOHN 3:16)
4. PUT UP WITH ... (EPH. 4:2)
5. HONOR ... (ROMANS 12:10)
6. LOVE ... (JOHN 13:34; 15:12; 17) FERVENTLY (1 PET 1:22)
7. SERVE ... (GAL. 5:13)
8. SUBMIT TO ... (EPH. 5:21)
9. WASH FEET ... (JOHN 13:14)
10. BEAR BURDENS ... (GAL. 6:2)

1. GREET ... (ROMANS 16:16)
2. ADMONISH ... (ROMANS 15:14)
3. CONFESS FAULTS ... (JAMES 5:16)
4. COMFORT ... (1 THESS 4:18)
5. EDIFY ... ONE ANOTHER (1 THESS. 4:18)
6. EXHORT ... (HEB. 3:13)
7. FORGIVE ... (EPH. 4:32)
8. SING TO ... (EPH. 5:19)
9. PRAY FOR ... (JAMES 5:16)
10. SPUR ON ... (HEB. 10:24)

1. JUDGE NOT ... (ROMANS 14:13)
2. ENVY NOT ... (GAL. 5:15)
3. PROVOKE NOT ... (GAL. 5:15)
4. BITE NOT ... (GAL. 5:15)
5. DEVOUR NOT ... (GAL. 5:15)
6. LIE NOT ... (COLOSSIANS 3:9)
7. DEFRAUD NOT... (1 THESSALONIANS 4:6)
8. SHOW NO PARTIALITY ... (1 TIM. 5:21)
9. FORSAKE NOT GATHERING ... (HEB. 10:25)
10. PUT NO STUMBLINGBLOCK ... (ROM. 14:13)

These one another ministries were never intended to be done Sunday morning in church, but together in each other's homes. (Acts 2:46 /Acts 20:20)

It is the rejection of loving, edifying, encouraging togetherness in the body of Christ that destroys the true church's testimony. (Hebrews 10:25)

John 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.