

Job 16

Read Job 16:1-5: The conversation is starting to repeat itself. Job chastises his friends for being terrible at comforting him in his time of need. He is asking them *what is motivating them* to hurt him further. Job says that **he would restore them if they were in his situation**. God does not impute iniquity in his children; so why would we do it to our brothers? It is easy to second-guess others. There are many talkers in this world; but not too many doers. God really is more interested in our acts of obedience and intentions, than lapses and sins. Wisdom is measured in our circumstances and opportunities; not in our ability to deal with theories and hypotheticals. Our lesson here is that the life test is not in getting the right answer. It is what we do with our opportunities.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Psalm 32:1-2)

When people focus more on people's sins than their contributions; they are not looking at things the way that God does. Endless nitpicking is a sin.

Try helping your neighbors and enemies. It's a life-changing challenge.

- You will be happier
- You could change that person's life
- You could make a friend
- You have set an example for others
- It is better for society
- It is a good self-test

A hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor. (Proverbs 11:9)

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem, And may

Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant.” (Genesis 9:22-27)

It is like seeing plane wreckage; and concluding that it was pilot error... and driving to the hospital and telling the pilot. Regardless of its inappropriateness; Fools and *peanut gallery* critics ultimately bless us. We have to look past the put downs and frustration. Try to say something uplifting about your enemies and critics today; and see what happens.

It is humbling to criticize; and then be embarrassed in your own failed attempt to do the same thing. This happens to manual laborers and workplace subordinates. Office bosses will demand better work or more productivity. When the boss tries some hands-on work he may only be able to work for 20 minutes; or do a worse job.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

We are called to consider what is before us. **We should be assistance-based; not blame based.** What if Fox News spent as much time on being a forum for non-partisan solutions rather than blame chasers? Finding the cause is good to make improvements; not to bury people. We are not called to condemn others. There is a difference. It will be obvious enough who has made mistakes. It is wise not to hire a drug abuser; but it is wrong to wish that criminals die of aids. It is right to prevent abortions; but it is wrong to demonize or wish harm upon our opponent on any matter. We tend to emphasize our opponent's weaknesses, and dismiss their strengths. Jesus was completely impartial.

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; (Proverbs 24:17)

The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covers the mouth of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:11)

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit. (Proverbs 15:4)

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. (Proverbs 18:21)

Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. (Proverbs 24:11)

It is very freeing to not throw fuel on the fire when someone is being criticized. *Let God sort that out.* I really need to watch my own tongue. I get stuck cleaning up others' messes. I am quick to point out the lack of forethought or planning on their part. *God help me to shut up; and keep working.*

Read Job 16:6-17: Job tells his friends that talking about his problems is not helping. Sometimes we need to vent; but more often it results in prolonging or re-living the experience. Some people are like parrots; that never stop yacking about their problems. Some psychologists warn their patients to stop complaining as it brings on depression. Complaining is like a pain multiplier.

The number one thing that we crave when we are in a trial is relief. We need to perceive progress or relief to be comforted. Instead; Job's friends are obscuring any direction that he might take. Job is sorry for his transgressions. What more do they expect?

Job is now classifying his friends as *enemies*. He is worn out; and his friends only seem to make it worse. His body is showing signs of losing vitality and a continuation of open sores covers him. He sees no hope on the horizon.

The need for hope is a lot bigger than we think. The devil attacks us in the areas of motivation and hope. Job believes that God has turned him over to his enemies for destruction. Maintaining hope in God is another definition of faith. It is character that produces hope. It is patience that produces character. You can't get more hope without being placed in a situation where hope is not visible or outwardly-apparent.

Job has similarities to Christ on the cross. Jesus was ridiculed and criticized and tortured, and he did nothing wrong. Perhaps one new revelation to us in Job's life is that there are shadows of Christ seen in the life of Job.

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; And in the night season, and am not silent. But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; They trusted in You, and were not ashamed. But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, For trouble is near; For there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion's mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen! (Psalm 22:1-21)

There is a reason why bad things happen to good people. **Perhaps there is much more value to suffering and rejection than we know.** Losing valuables can reveal our hidden priorities. What does it say about us if we have Christ, but still feel that we have nothing to live for? Sometimes everything else has to taste bitter to spend more time in prayer.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power

of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:8-11)

Is God our *all in all* if we are hopeless after losing all earthly things? We cannot know that we are in good fellowship with God until we lose it all. Is God enough? Can we have joy in that? Jesus provided that example.

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. (John 1:11)

Read Job 16:18-22: Job is praying. He wants someone to present his case to God. He knows his days and powers have limitations. He wants to have a more tangible discourse with God to call attention to what he is going through. He wants someone to pick up his case; and call attention to what is happening to him. **He is confused about how near God is to him.** He does not realize that God is intimately-involved with the smallest affairs of our lives.

We cannot listen to God if we are only talking. Meditation on the word is conversational. You ask a question and then start reading. Then you thank God for what comes to mind and bring up your requests. Then you ask another question, and continue reading. There are millions of frustrated Christians who don't really read the Bible. How can you have a healthy conversation with God if you don't review what he has said?

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me." "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me. (Isaiah 49:14-16)

It is a blessing (not a curse) to be corrected by God. It is ironic that we should shout for joy when we are going through the wringer. It is proof that we are on the team.

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that

you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:12-18)

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:2-5)

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. (Hebrews 12:3-13)

Wining at life is not about a bank account or lifestyle. It's about being in fellowship with God amidst all things.