



SESSION

4

THE STORY OF
JOB & GOD



1. I am very patient and attentive when my friends blab on and on about their problems.
2. God will remove your pain, if you ask Him to.
3. One of the most reliable resources of theology are the theologians of our rich past.
4. There are some people whom we should admonish that their problems are caused by their sins.
5. Our hope that God can change our crises is always fragile.



READ: Job 8:1-7 (NIV)

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: 2 "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. 3 Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? 4 When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. 5 But if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, 6 if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state. 7 Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.

BLAH! BLAH! BLAH

- 8:2 - "Your words are a blustering wind.": The Hebrew word translated "blustering" is unusual; it means strong and abundant; thus Job's words, to Bildad, were like a forceful, continuous windstorm. Perhaps Bildad also was hinting that Job's rash, wild words were destructive, like the windstorm that killed his 10 children (1:19).

GOOD MEDICINE...WRONG PATIENT!

- 8:3-7 - "But if you will seek God earnestly...": Anyone who has sinned against God suffers the consequences, Bildad said. Job's children illustrated that fact. They died because they sinned, and now Job was dying because he sinned. Why else would Job be suffering? Surely this cruel, heartless remark hurt Job deeply. After all, he had offered sacrifices to cover his children's sins (1:5). If Job were as pure and upright as he claimed to be, all he needed to do was look to God and plead with (literally, "implore the grace of") Him (cf.

DIG DEEP

5:8). Bildad was saying Job should seek God, not expect God to search for him. Such a simple step, Bildad claimed, would result in God's restoring Job to a place of blessing that would make his former condition seem like nothing! However, since Job had already pleaded with God (7:20–21) and nothing happened, Bildad's counsel was confusing.

∞ Why do you think that Bildad's advice is appropriate for some people, but very inappropriate for Job?

∞ Bildad suggests that God is in control of everything, and that he has the power to end Job's suffering. How is his understanding of God's use of omnipotent power dangerous?

READ: Job 8:8-10 (NIV)

8 "Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned, 9 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow. 10 Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?"

THE PROBLEM WITH TRADITIONS

• 8:8-10 - "Ask the former generation...": Bildad was a traditionalist. He leaned heavily on the theology that he had heard from the traditions of the past. They all agreed: If you sin, God will punish you.

∞ How do you see Satan using our long-held traditions of the past to distort the character of God today?

READ: Job 8:11-19 (NIV)

11 Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water? 12 While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. 13 Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. 14 What they trust in is fragile; what they rely on is a spider's web. 15 They lean on the web, but it gives way; they cling to it, but it does not hold. 16 They are like a well-watered plant in the sunshine, spreading its shoots over the garden; 17 it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks and looks for a place among the stones. 18 But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.' 19 Surely its life withers away, and from the soil other plants grow.

THE PROOF: CAUSE & EFFECT

• 8:14 - "What they trust in is fragile...": To depict this cause-and-effect principle, Bildad gave three illustrations—two from plant life and one from the insect world. Just as papyrus wilts without the water of a marsh even more quickly than grass, so a person who opposes God ... the godless (*hānēp*, used eight times in Job, meaning "profane" or "irreligious") will perish. Anything such a person may depend on for hope—such as Job's alleged innocence—is as useless and inadequate as leaning on a spider's web.

∞ Job had called out to God in Chapter 7. Why then would it go against God's character to treat Job's faith as fragile as a spider's web?

1. Am I continuing to seek God despite the blessings and cursings of my lifetime?
2. How am I allowing traditions to form my understanding of God?
3. How does this help to clarify my understanding of God's character?

