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With Friends Like These...

One of the best things you can say to a suffering friend:

Some of the worst things you can say to a suffering friend:

You shouldn't _____ that _____

Job 2:11-13

¹¹When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. ¹²When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. ¹³Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

Job 4

*¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:
²"If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking?
³Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands.
⁴Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees.
⁵But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed.
⁶Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?*

I know _____ this is happening to _____

If I were you, I would _____

You should be _____ for all that God will _____ you through this.

Just _____ this _____ and things will be fine

⁷"Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?

⁸As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.

⁹At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

Job 5

⁸"But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him.

⁹He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

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¹⁷"Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

¹⁸For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

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²⁷"We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

What next?

Take some each day this week to read these passages on suffering and hope: James 1:1-12, John 11:1-44, Psalm 46, Psalm 73, Psalm 77

To learn more about the issue of suffering, read *If God is Good*, by Randy Alcorn or *Disappointment with God*, by Phillip Yancey

Go to <http://parkerhill.wordpress.com> – where you will find weekly follow-up questions for you and your small group