

## WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR ONE

### We Reap What Adam Sowed – The Curse/Chapter Six: Job’s Example (application; continued)

No practical application derived from Job’s example would be complete without considering the interaction which takes place between Job and his ruthless friends. They came for the purpose of comforting him, and initially they did (2:11-13). But it isn’t long before their expression of compassion changes into an all-out effort to “help” him. This desire to provide such help arises in response to Job’s lamentation in chapter three, prompting similar advice from Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar (5:8; 8:5-6; 11:13-19). The essence of their counsel can be paraphrased as follows: “Job, there is no need for you to die or even desire death. Simply repent of the sin which has brought on this suffering and your hope will be restored and you will live.” Make no mistake, these men were not messengers from God, but emissaries of Satan, as revealed in Eliphaz’s encounter with an unmistakable demonic influence, prior to his time with Job, in Job 4:12-21 –

**“Now a word was brought to me stealthily, and my ear received a whisper of it. Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, dread came upon me, and trembling, and made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed by my face; the hair of my flesh bristled up. It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; a form was before my eyes; there was silence, then I heard a voice: ‘Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? He puts no trust even in His servants; and against His angels He charges error. How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth! Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; unobserved, they perish forever. Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.’”**

By means of this demonic input, Eliphaz becomes convinced that Job’s suffering was due to some specific sin. It motivated him, and the others, to stubbornly insist on a confession of that sin (5:6-7; 8:3-4; 11:20), even though no such cause-and-effect dynamic was in play (2:3); as God Himself reaffirms in 42:7-8. However, their insinuations provide Job with only a partial excuse for his failure. A key turning point in the real-life drama of Job’s suffering occurs in chapter 16, where he labels these three stooges for what they really were: “sorry comforters” (16:1). At the same time, he allows them to remain and continue their discussion. If only Job had politely asked them to leave. He desperately needed some time alone, if for no other reason than to experience some relief from the stress of being “helped” by these men.

Instead, they stay and Job strays from appeal to accusation in regard to the fairness of God’s ways. At that critical point, he begins viewing God as angry with him (16:9), running at him like a warrior (16:14); wronging, as well as persecuting him (19:6, 22). The conversation becomes intense and vitriolic, as Job’s anger and indignation is verbalized, not only horizontally toward these men, but vertically toward God. Thus, Job crosses the line, accuses God of injustice and becomes guilty of spiritual failure. Are you going through a time of trial? Has self-examination given you a clear conscience in regard to any specific behavior that may have brought on your adversity? Do you have a friend who thinks otherwise? Then sincerely consider the validity of what he has to say. If you disagree, then avoid any further discussion, since it may provoke you to cross the same line which Job did. If you have a friend who is suffering, remember this: he doesn’t need you to make the same error in judgment of Job’s sorry comforters.