

## Job 11-14, part one

1. There is something called a “god concept.” It is not a “god complex.” A “god complex” is a psychological condition where you act as if you are a god and all others are lesser beings. It is closely related to narcissism and sociopathy. The “god concept” refers to our view of God, how He acts, what He cares about, how He will react to us and our successes as well as our failures.
2. Psychologists often point to parents or other close family members as the most important sources of the god concept. To the eyes and mind of a child, parents are the key holders of all good and terrible things. They control the food, entertainment, location, movement, bedtimes, and more. If they are wise, kind and benevolent, it is more likely than not that the child will grow up thinking that God is wise, kind and benevolent.
3. They get this concept honed and reshaped as they go through other interactions with powerful people: teachers, police, coaches, etc.
4. Job had a confused god concept for a good reason: there weren't books of the Bible for him to reference, no prophets or priests to consult. His speech in chapter 10:12-15 indicates that he does not see God as love. His god concept is more akin to the Norse and the Hindu than it is to Jesus.
5. His view of the afterlife is also confused for lack of education and direction. He believes he is going into the darkness with no coming back. 10:20-22.
6. When we hear someone in pain, we often leap to console them...too quickly or with platitudes. And sometimes we go the full Zophar: defending God even if it means destroying the sufferer.
7. Remember the first sin of Eve was not eating the forbidden fruit: it was over-speaking for God, saying more than He said as a way to prove His wisdom and law. (dancing and lasciviousness).

8. Confronted by Job's pain and his anger and broken heart over the silence of heaven, Zophar leaps to defend God. **11:1-6**. Sheesh. Let's unpack this.
9. First, Zophar calls Job "a man of lips" ("talker" in the NIV). The Bible warns us that multiplying words is not a good thing (**Proverbs 10:19**) and Jesus warns us to let our yes be yes and our no be no. Okay, agreed. But Zophar isn't against words...he's just against THESE words.
10. He begins by misquoting Job (**11:4**). Job didn't say that. And then, in verse 6, he says that "true wisdom has two sides." Have you ever heard or said, "there are two sides to every story"? Then, you were wrong. Some stories have many sides and some stories have one side. To say there are two sides to every story makes a rape victim or a domestic violence victim party to their pain. (elders telling me that the innocent party in a divorce can be remarried but "there are no innocent parties")
11. Zophar is not done here. He goes on a several verse rant about how righteous God is – okay, that's good – but then claims that Job's pain proves that Job has sinned and forced God to punish him. Enough? Nope – then he calls Job a donkey (**11:11-12**).
12. Zophar then goes on to demand that Job repent and apologize and promises, in return, that God will pour out blessings on his head. In fact, Job will even forget all his momentary pain and grief!!! The loss of his children? Wow. Remember: when we speak for God, stay within the boundaries of what God would say...and we get those boundaries by watching Jesus very, very carefully.
13. Job responds in anger and sarcasm...and with a reminder. (**12:1-3**) The worst possible thing we can do when we are faced with someone in pain...is to quit listening to the person in pain. They have something to say, some information to share.
14. Don't forget what we learned from Ecclesiastes. Current, external circumstances do not necessarily reveal inner realities. (**12:5,6**). Job tells his friends that even the animals know that life can turn toward blessing or death at any moment (**12:7-10**).

15. Job warns them that the judgement they use can and will come back on them...the same warning Jesus gave us in Matthew 7.
16. It all comes back to that original sin. We are not the judges of good and evil. We were created for love and good works, not for judging. Instead of judges, we are called to be paracletes – companions along the road so that no one in pain walks alone.
17. God did that for us. He calls us to do that for others.