

# What Do You Say?

*"All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments.  
If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children.  
When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply"*

*Psalms 73:14-16 (NIV)*

**M**ost of us know people who talk and talk and talk. Some of us have "the gift of the gab" and speak endlessly of things that are usually not of much significance. Others of us seem speechless most of the time, preferring to listen than to talk. The world needs both kinds of people.

When we seek to help people in pain, we need to be cautious about what we say and how we say it. Occasionally a person in sorrow will tell someone about their problem only to have their situation belittled by the listener when they respond. The insensitive person may say something like, "Is that all that is troubling you? I can solve that in a moment."

The one in pain believes their issue is very significant, and the "comforter" put them down for feeling

distressed. To solve the issue in a "moment" suggests that the person in pain is perhaps a bit foolish for not solving their own problem in a "moment". Such speech is insulting at best and highly painful at worst.

The Psalmist writing our verses today tells us that when he was in the middle of his sorrow he simply could not divulge his thoughts to anyone for fear of upsetting their faith. Instead he suffered in silence.

Sometimes when in the presence of someone in pain it is helpful to simply say, "If you want to talk I know how to listen. I may not have a solution for your issue but I can listen and pray with you if you like." Then be quiet and listen carefully to the complaint of the individual.

Never think it is your place to defend the ways of the Lord. If you pray say some-

thing like, John 11:3 (NIV) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

Call on God Who is 2 Corinthians 1:3 (NIV)

"... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort"

Ask the Lord for relief, for strength, for peace of heart. You shall be heard in the court of Heaven.

Listening may be the best gift you can give to the sorrowing person. Offer your ear to someone in pain today and the Lord will bless both you and the one who speaks to you about their suffering.

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