

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”*

Psalm 73:14-16 (NIV)

“What things?” he asked.

Luke 24:19 (NIV)

We have considered the initial approach to someone who is suffering. Today I wish to have you think with me about the next step in assisting in the recovery of someone in distress.

The most important assistance you can give and the very first step in resolving the matter is to get the person talking about what is troubling them. Jesus began to walk with two disciples en route from Jerusalem to Emmaus. He knew they were troubled by His crucifixion three days ago so He got them talking about it by saying, “What things?”

Don’t push the issue if the person wants to remain silent. Just say something like, “When you want to talk I am ready to listen.” Give them control over something because their problem is clearly in control of them.

As the individual pours out their complaint you might make affirming comments like, “I cannot understand it

either. No wonder you are in distress. When Jesus was in Gethsemane facing the cross we read that He was greatly distressed also.” These comments affirm the person’s view of their dilemma. They need affirmation for their sorrow over the matter at hand.

If you know of someone else who has endured a similar situation and overcame the matter in God’s grace, you might say, “I know someone who suffered in a similar manner. Would you like to talk to them? The way the Lord got them through their suffering may not be the way He will help you but it is a start.”

Now you have introduced the element of hope into the mix. To hear of someone else who has gone through this valley and come out victorious is light in a dark valley. Self-help groups have a good point when they gather together people with similar problems. The first point is that the person realizes that they are not alone. Next they may learn

strategies to cope that helped others.

Paul speaks of this very helpful strategy in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV) where he writes, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

In dealing with someone in pain, or if you are in pain yourself, find another believer who has risen above their issues through the grace of God. Ask that person how the Lord helped them. Ask them to tell you what things to avoid. These people are of enormous assistance in or times of trouble and we need to access them.

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