



Biblical Perspectives in Everyday Life

HOPE: FROM ONE FRIEND TO ANOTHER

I once heard someone give advice on a Christian radio station concerning our response to a friend's plea for help in marital difficulty. The speaker started off well. She encouraged us to resist being critical of our friend's spouse, to resist the temptation to give the latest counseling technique, and to pray for our friend. Unfortunately, we were also told that not to "throw" Bible verses at our friend. Instead, we were encouraged to be empathetic to our friend's feelings and offer practical help (like volunteering to baby-sit while she and her husband go to counseling).

Although some of this advice is helpful, I was saddened to hear that using the Bible was listed among those things that we should avoid. Not giving our friends God's perspective of their situations as revealed in the Bible is like not throwing a lifeline to a person who is drowning.

Our friends need to know what God has to say about their situations. They need to be reassured of God's love for them. They need to be reminded that God knows what they are going through, not in theory but in reality. They need to know what God has to say about how to deal with their painful situations. They need to know that marriage is important to God. It is a covenant with God, and He is committed to helping them in their marriages. And, the only way for them to know this truth is to hear it from God's Word.

What could be more helpful and hopeful for our friends than to hear that they are loved by God, and, if they have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, to be reminded that they are His children?

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1)

Shouldn't they be encouraged that marriage is God's idea and that He knows it is a good idea?

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:21-25).

Shouldn't they know that God is not only aware of their situation[s] but He left them a Helper?

Jesus said:

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:16-18).

Shouldn't they be reminded of the fact that what they are experiencing isn't unique to them?

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Bible is not simply a book that should (or should not) be utilized along with other "counseling" books. The Bible is the very Word of God: It is "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [or woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Bible offers more than mere advice on relationships, including marriage; it offers hope from God’s perspective. Shouldn’t we be good enough friends to offer the only true hope that is available? The answer is an unqualified, “Yes!” Providing God’s perspective to our friends who are in trouble is the most loving thing we can do. Let’s be ready and willing to throw our friends a true lifeline—the hope that is available in the Word of God.