

“Pain, Death and Suffering: Life Lessons from Elihu”

Job 32:1-12

(Introduction)

YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqZuhrDM5vE>



I. Who is Elihu?

- * A young man named Elihu appears in chapter 32.
- * After observing the interaction between friends, his speech goes all the way through chapter 37.
- * “So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became angry. He was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God; he was angry also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong.” (Job 32:1-3)

Why is Elihu 'angry'?

* “Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became angry. He was angry at Job because he justified himself rather than God; he was angry also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong.”

* Definition of ‘anger’:

“Anger is an emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong.

Anger can be a good thing. It can give you a way to express negative feelings, for example, or motivate you to find solutions to problems.

But excessive anger can cause problems. Increased blood pressure and other physical changes associated with anger make it difficult to think straight and harm your physical and mental health.” (APA)

Two sides of 'anger'?

When is anger 'good'?

- * Biblically, anger is God-given energy intended to help us solve problems.
- * Examples of 'good' anger include :
 - David being upset over hearing Nathan the prophet sharing an injustice (2 Samuel 12).
- * Jesus' anger over how some of the Jews had defiled worship at God's temple in Jerusalem (John 2:13-18).

When is Anger 'abusive'?

- * When anger is motivated by pride (James 1:20),
- * When it is unproductive and thus distorts God's purposes (1 Cor. 10:31),
- * When anger is allowed to linger (Ephesians 4:26-27).

Deep felt Anger:

- * "Persistent anger issues are usually the result of unmet expectations of the past".

Biblical Rights for those in an abusive 'angry' relationship:

1. **Be safe from physical and emotional harm.** "... do not associate with one easily angered" (Proverbs 22:24).
2. **Set personal boundaries.** "The highway of the upright avoids evil; those who guard their ways preserve their lives" (Proverbs 16:17).
3. **Enforce boundaries with consequences.** "A hot-tempered person must pay the penalty; rescue them, and you will have to do it again" (Proverbs 19:19).
4. **Defend the cause.** (Matthew 18:15–16) "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

Three Ways to Make Peace with 'Angry' People:

- 1) Be honest and speak (Ephesians 4:15, 25).
- 2) Stay current (Ephesians 4:26-27).
- 3) Attack the problem, not the person (Ephesians 4:29, 31).

II. Three Reasons why we should listen to Elihu's counsel:

- * 1. Elihu's words are contrasted with the 3 friends (6 chaps.)
- * 2. Elihu's Explanation of Suffering is Revolutionary.
- * 3. He Offers A New Perspective.

III. Three Takeaways:

- * First, he dealt with the real issues of the situation rather than looking at the situation from a human perspective.
- * Second, he emphasized God and His greatness rather than focus on a human response to problems.
- * Third, he responded with respect, allowing others to speak first before offering his own response.

Three Step Anger Management Program from the Bible:

* “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”
(James 1:19-20)

* **Three Step Program:**

Step 1: Be Quick to hear

Step 2: Slow to speak

Step 3: Slow to become angry

Exercise:

What makes you angry the most often? Who makes you angry the most often? When do you get angry the most often?

Reflection Questions:

- * 1. How do you deal with your anger?
- * 2. Who do you need to make peace with?
- * 3. How has Elihu added to Your Understanding of Suffering?