

Job 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

Analysis

Eliphaz begins tentatively: 'If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?' The Hebrew 'nasa' (assay/venture) and 'la'ah' (be weary/grieved) suggest he fears Job might find speech burdensome. Yet this apparent courtesy masks the coming accusation. Eliphaz's politeness cannot conceal that he will ultimately blame Job for his suffering, demonstrating how even well-intentioned counsel can wound when it lacks divine wisdom (Proverbs 18:2).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom teachers valued rhetorical courtesy, especially when addressing someone of high social status. Eliphaz's diplomatic opening reflects this convention but also his uncertainty about Job's fragile state.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you balance honesty with sensitivity when counseling those who are suffering?

2. In what ways might polite speech mask faulty theology or accusation?

Interlinear Text

הַנִּסֵּה	דָּבַר	אֵלַי	תִּלָּאָה	וְעָצֹר
If we assay	to commune	H413	with thee wilt thou be grieved	withhold
H5254	H1697		H3811	H6113
בְּמַלְאִי	מִי	יִכָּל:		
himself from speaking	H4310	but who can		
H4405		H3201		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 4:20 (Parallel theme): For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Jeremiah 6:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days.