

## Today's Quick Word Job 12:5

*By Bruce Christian*

**JOB 12:5** Men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.

Although the general thrust of Job's response in Chapter 12 to the hurtful words of his 'friend' Zophar is clear, this verse is not easy to translate (as is evidenced by the different English versions!). I find Eugene Petersen's paraphrase in "The Message" very helpful: "It's easy for the well-to-do to point their fingers in blame, for the well-fixed to pour scorn on the strugglers." The godly, God-honouring sufferer, Job, is issuing a timely warning to all of us. The outworking of our Sovereign God's providence in our broken, hurting world is often so mysterious, enigmatic, and seemingly (from our limited perspective) out-of-character, that we would all do well to be careful about 'judging' others. It is not helpful to anyone, or glorifying to God, to make the same mistakes and have the same misunderstanding as Zophar did and had in Chapter 11! Perhaps the most dangerous aspects of his speech are the statements that are theologically 'correct' in a general sense, but quite wide-of-the-mark when applied to Job's particular circumstance! This is because Zophar didn't have the full picture from God's eternal, comprehensive, spiritual perspective. The warning for us here is included in Jesus' command, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." (Matthew 7:1), and is possibly the sentiment behind the

Greek word 'epieikes' which Paul uses in Philippians 4:5 - "Let your GENTLENESS/MODERATION/FORBEARANCE/REASONABLENESS be evident to all. The Lord is near." Liddell & Scott's Lexicon says of this word, 'epieikes', that it is "opposite to 'dikaios', not insisting on strict justice, equitable". Again, "The Message" is helpful in understanding 'epieikes' in Philippians 4:5: "Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them." This certainly couldn't be said of Zophar! Are we good at "weep[ing] with those who weep" (Romans 12:15 KJV), or are we more concerned with 'dikaios', getting their theology 'correct' and 'RIGHT'? It is very helpful to reflect on the Apostle Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 1 as we read of Job's perplexing struggle and his response to Zophar: "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 have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer." (verses 3-6).