



UNIT 5

Chapter 4 **Understanding Suffering & Healing**

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Healthcare Chaplains Ministry Association

101 S Kraemer Blvd, Suite 123A

Placentia, California 92870-5094

Phone : (714) 572-3626 | Fax : (714) 572-0585

E-mail : info@hcmachaplains.org | Website : www.hcmachaplains.org

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Chapter 4

Understanding Suffering and Healing

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Understanding Suffering and Healing¹



*God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience,
but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to a deaf world.*

— C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), British scholar, writer



*Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through,
as if something strange were happening to you.*

Instead, be very glad —

*because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering,
and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing His glory
when it is displayed to all the world.*

— 1 Peter 4:12-13, NLT



A question every Chaplain is bound to hear from patients is “Why? Why has God allowed this illness, tragedy, loss . . .?” Most of the time, “Why?” is not a theological question. It is more an exclamation of dismay and distress, for which compassionate understanding is the appropriate response: “It does seem so hard to understand!”

In those quiet moments, almost everyone reflects on the question of why God allows suffering—and why He allows so much of it. People also ask why, if He can heal, to deliver, and intervene and prevent...why does He not do so more often than it seems He does. Indeed, John Stott has said, “The fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith.”²

Volumes have been written on the matter of pain and suffering. This brief paper will not pretend to solve all the problems or answer all the questions. But it is essential that as a Chaplain we have thought through these issues thoroughly and have arrived at some settled convictions about this matter in our heart and mind.

¹ A main contributor to the information in this chapter was Chaplain Rick Rood. Chaplain Rood is a Board Certified Chaplain with HCMA and has been serving at Dallas Regional Medical Center in Mesquite, TX and Green Oaks Behavioral Healthcare in Dallas, TX. He cared for his wife, Polly, during her twenty-year journey with a neurodegenerative illness, until her home-going in 2003.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006): 311.

Suffering According to Different World Views³

Every world view has its perspective on suffering. Those who are pantheistic (as most Hindus are) see evil and suffering as finding its source either in the ultimate divine reality itself (by process of emanation through descending levels of reality), or as resulting from a person's attachment to this illusory world. From the pantheist's point of view, suffering in the life of any individual is due to karma (the effects of bad actions in this life or in previous lives).

Buddhism sees suffering as the result of a person's desire or craving for this passing world. Only by extinguishing desire can suffering itself ultimately be eliminated.

Polytheism and animism see evil and suffering originating in the malevolent acts of gods or spirit beings that have been offended or neglected by the living. Relief comes through appeasing them in some way.

Dualism holds that there are two co-eternal principles in the world, one good and the other evil, locked in perpetual conflict.

Deism sees God as an absent "Landlord" who created the world and its natural laws, but who never intervenes in His creation out of respect for these laws.

Atheistic materialism sees suffering as merely the inescapable outworking of natural processes, and the mechanism by which the weak are eliminated and the strong survive.

Classical theists believe that there is one creator God, that He is good and all powerful, and that He made all things. Opponents of classical theism have objected that the existence of evil and suffering in the world is inconsistent with either His goodness (which would move Him to eliminate evil) or His power (which would enable Him to eliminate evil). Hence, the argument goes, there cannot be such a God, for evil is very much present, disproving in their mind that there can be a good and powerful God who would and could destroy evil.

Some theists have responded to this objection in part by modifying their conception of God. Panentheists (or process theists) for instance, have suggested that God Himself is in the process of evolving into a more perfect being, and that the gradual overcoming of evil or imperfection is part of this process. This is the prevailing view among liberal Protestants in our day. Another view was put forth by Rabbi Harold Kushner in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.⁴ Though he was not the first to espouse this view, he certainly popularized the idea that God is finite and limited in His power and is simply unable to overcome evil and suffering. He can empathize, but He cannot deliver. Some evangelicals have also adopted a similar view known as "Open Theism," which holds that God does not know the future, and that though He is infinitely wise and resourceful, He is limited by the free choices of His creatures. Consequently, though proponents of this view may not be comfortable with this implication, whether evil and suffering will ultimately be overcome by God is an open question. Nothing about the future is certain.

It would seem clear from a reading of Scripture that any view of God which puts Him at the mercy of His creation is a sub-Christian view. Bible believing Christians will hold varying views on the precise relationship of God to His creation, and to evil and suffering. Some will be drawn more to an Arminian view of the matter (emphasizing man's free will), and others more to a Calvinistic view (emphasizing God's

³ For those who want more information on various worldviews and their perspectives on evil and suffering, the following resources are recommended: Sir Norman Anderson, ed. *The World's Religions* (IVP, 1989); John W. Bowker, *Problems of Suffering in Religions of the World* (Cambridge University, 1975); Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed. (Baker, 1989); Dean C. Halverson, ed. *The Compact Guide to World Religions* (Bethany House, 1996); David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002); Jacob Neusner, ed. *Evil and Suffering* (Wipf & Stock, 2007); James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic World View Catalog*, updated and expanded ed. (IVP, 1988); Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Baker, 1991).

⁴ Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Avon, 1983).

sovereignty). But both will agree that however God works out His purposes in this world, He is the ultimate ruler over all, and His purposes will ultimately prevail.

This being the case, the question remains then as to why a good and powerful God would create and continue to sustain a world in which so much suffering seems to go unchecked. No one can deny that though the creation still bears the marks of God's creative handiwork, it is nonetheless terribly marred by evil, pain and suffering. Many have suggested that belief in a good and powerful God is not inconsistent with the existence of the world as it is, if it can be shown that only by allowing evil and suffering can certain things of significant value be preserved or promoted, and other greater evils be prevented. That this is indeed the case is not difficult to see. For by allowing evil and suffering God does preserve the integrity of the nature of His creatures, both angelic and human (which includes the ability to make genuine moral choices, many of which are the cause of a good deal of pain and suffering). By allowing evil and suffering, God also preserves the integrity of the natural world, which is governed by natural law (modern theories of physics notwithstanding). Only by a constant interruption of the natural laws of cause and effect could pain and suffering in the world be entirely avoided. Furthermore, it's evident that there are many virtues and values that are promoted by the allowance of evil and suffering (the human virtues of compassion, humility, dependence on God, endurance, and grace to name a few). There are also many qualities of God that are only experienced in the context of evil and suffering (His own compassion, faithfulness, grace, mercy, longsuffering, power, etc.). And it's not unlikely that there are evils which may be prevented by allowing suffering. This will be commented on more below. Certainly, we can say that the glory of heaven will only be magnified and intensified against the backdrop of God's having overcome the evil of this age by His gracious providence.

Biblical Teaching on Evil and Suffering

Space does not permit an exhaustive treatment of the biblical theology of suffering. But a few points deserve careful attention.

The Bible teaches that evil and suffering originated in the fall of God's creatures into sin (Genesis 1-3). Genesis 1-2 describes the creation as a "good" creation. True, there is something in the original creation that man was called by God to "subdue"⁵ (1:28), in dependence on Him. The text does not describe what this is. But through man's fall into sin, the ability to subdue the creation was lost (cf. Hebrews 2:8), and so rather than exercising authority over the forces of nature, man is subject to them (cf. Romans 8:20). And this fact alone accounts for a great deal of human suffering. Apart from God's gracious intervention, humans are at the mercy of the forces of nature. And some of nature's properties have been impacted by the fall into sin (for example, genetic defects which result in some illnesses).

William Dembski⁶ has suggested that God, foreseeing man's fall into sin, allowed nature to suffer the effects of the curse even before the actual historical event of Adam's sin. This is not at all impossible

Scripture teaches, however, that when God's purposes for allowing human sin and suffering are completed, He will eliminate suffering from His new creation. There will no longer be any death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). This is the wonderful hope of the gospel! As Norm Geisler has said, though this present world may not be "the best of all possible worlds, it is the best possible way to the best of all possible worlds." In fact, the Bible teaches that for the believer, the sufferings of this present age are not worth comparing to the glories that believers will experience in the age to come (Romans 8:18). Indeed, Isaiah said that in the new age the glory will be of such a magnitude that the troubles of the former life "are forgotten" (Isaiah 65:16).

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotes are from the *New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982).

⁶ William Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2009).

Nonetheless, the Bible teaches that during this present age, God is allowing a great deal of evil and suffering. And no doubt, one of the reasons He is doing so is that humanity might learn by experience the terrible consequences of sin, which will for eternity be a matter of “public record.”

Still, the Bible teaches that evil and suffering are limited during this lifetime in certain ways. For one, it is limited by the reality of death. For the believer, death is a means of deliverance from the sufferings of this life, at God’s appointed time (Psalm 139:16; Job 14:5).

Evil and suffering are also limited by God’s permissive will. It is clear from Scripture that God allows evil to exist only within certain boundaries. This is clear, for instance, from the fact that Satan needed to seek God’s permission to afflict Job (Job 1-2), as well as to test Peter (Luke 22:31). In fact, God allows no believer to be tested beyond the ability He makes available to them to withstand without sinning (1 Corinthians 10:13), though obviously we all do sin. The fact of God’s permissive will helps us see how God can still be in control of all that happens in His creation without being directly responsible for the evil that occurs.

Reasons for Suffering

The Bible teaches that God has several possible reasons for allowing suffering in people’s lives. On the broad scale, suffering is due to participation in the sin of Adam, through which the entire human race was plunged into sin and death (Romans 5:12).

But beyond this, there are many possible purposes which God may have in a person’s personal suffering (though we do well to refrain from making judgments about this concerning others!). Here are some of the more obvious ones.

Sometimes, God allows suffering as the consequence of unwise or sinful choices. The Book of Proverbs is full of warnings concerning the consequences of human folly. 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 speaks of believers being judged for sin.

When a person is suffering, it is always wise to ask God to reveal any sin He may be bringing to that person’s attention. In such cases, suffering has a corrective purpose, to divert the person from a path that would lead to even greater destruction.

It is clear, however, that not all suffering is due to a particular personal sin. This was the error of Job’s “friends” who told him he was suffering due to some secret sin. This notion was also behind the disciples’ question about the man born blind: “Who sinned, this man or his parents?” The rabbis taught that people could suffer for their parents’ sins, or even for sins committed in the womb! Jesus said that this man’s blindness was the result of no sin but rather was for the glory of God (in this case through his healing by Jesus, though this is not the only way that God may be glorified in someone’s suffering or illness).

Sometimes, God allows suffering as a means of discipline or training. Suffering becomes the occasion for God to teach people things they would never learn otherwise, and to instill in them qualities that they could never obtain in any other way (Hebrews 12:7-11; Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4). Even Jesus, who was without sin, “learned obedience by the things which He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). He learned by experience what it meant to obey God even when every cell of His body felt like resisting God’s will (for example, during His temptation in the wilderness, and in Gethsemane).

Sometimes, God allows suffering to prevent people from falling into sin that they would if they had avoided it. Paul was allowed to be afflicted in a painful way to preserve his humble dependence on the Lord, and to experience His sustaining power and grace in a way he otherwise would not have (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). It’s interesting that God values people’s preservation from sin far more than their freedom from distress or even pain.

There are many other possible reasons for which God may allow suffering in people's lives.⁷ But even when someone may have no awareness at all of what His reasons and purposes might be, this does not mean that there are none. Some of them may be beyond a person's ability to comprehend. Or they may not be known to them until they are in heaven, if even then. When Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold as a slave, and then later was falsely accused and thrown into prison, it's unlikely that he initially perceived God's purposes for this turn of events in his life. Only later, when he had been promoted to be second in command over Egypt, was he able to look back and say to his brothers, "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). He perceived that God had used his brother's evil actions against him as a means of bringing about a good purpose in the end. And during the intervening years, while God was no doubt using his misfortunes to shape his character, Joseph entrusted himself to the God he trusted. And he found that even in prison "the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy" (Genesis 39:21).

One of the most difficult aspects of this problem is why it often seems that the innocent suffers and the unrighteous many times do not. This was the problem that troubled Asaph as recorded in Psalm 73. We might prefer that suffering always be tied to some specific moral cause in the sufferer. But this was the error of Job's "friends" who thought that the only reason Job could be suffering was because of his sin. But such was not the case. It has at times been pointed out that if only the unrighteous suffered and the innocent were blessed, then only "fools and masochists" would disobey God. And the motives of the righteous would be highly suspect. Their obedience might easily be motivated merely by a desire to avoid pain and experience God's favor. This was Satan's accusation against Job: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" So we must be very careful about making judgments as to the reasons behind someone's suffering.

Simply because God may have purposes in view in allowing suffering in someone's life, He nonetheless is moved by compassion in view of a person's suffering. Speaking of God's attitude toward the suffering of the nation Israel, the prophet Isaiah said, "In all their affliction He was afflicted," even though it was due to their own sin (Isaiah 63:9). This is a great comfort, to know that even though God's emotions are far different from our own, He is not untouched by our sufferings. As it claims in Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18). The Psalmist says of the Lord, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle" (Psalm 56:8, NLT).

God Himself, in the Person of Jesus, has entered human history and experienced all the suffering and injustice encountered by His creatures. As someone has said, "God decided to play by His own rules." He is not a distant deity simply observing human suffering in a dispassionate way. In Jesus there is a great High Priest who is not unsympathetic to anyone's sufferings, but in whom they may find mercy and grace in their time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16), in whatever form that mercy and grace may come to them.

Responding to Suffering

How then should we respond to suffering? First, it is part of our humanity to respond to pain with a sense of sorrow and grief. The Bible never equates unfeeling stoicism with faith. Indeed, many of the godly are described as expressing deep sorrow and grief during times of suffering. The Psalms are full of the lamentations of the godly, who pour out their hearts to God in times of suffering. Job wrestled with God. Habakkuk questioned God about His ways with Judah. Even Jesus cried out "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" There is no virtue in pretending to be unaffected by our pain.

But secondly, we are encouraged to bring our sorrows to God in prayer. "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray" (James 5:13). In addition, we are encouraged to share our heavy burdens with others in the Body of Christ (Galatians 6:2), particularly with those who have experienced similar sufferings and have experienced God's sustaining grace (2 Corinthians 1:3-11). And finally, we are encouraged to put our trust in God for the outworking of His purposes in our life, in His time and His way. We can see this pattern in Psalm 13:

⁷ See Appendix A, "Uses of Suffering" by John S. Feinberg.

Expression of Sorrow (vv. 1-2)

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
 How long will you hide your face from me?
 How long must I take counsel in my soul
 and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
 How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

Prayer to God (vv. 3-4)

*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
 light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
 lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
 lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.*

Trust in God (vv. 5-6)

*But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
 my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
 I will sing to the Lord,
 Because He has dealt bountifully with me.*

Sometimes, all we may be able to do at a point in time is express our sorrow and lament and bring our cry for help to God. This is what we find in Psalm 88, which is simply one long expression of lamentation. Yet it is part of the inspired word of God!

Comforting the Suffering

How then should we seek to comfort those who are suffering? The Scriptures can give us some basic principles of ministry to the suffering.

1. We must resist the temptation to make judgments as to why a person is suffering a particular affliction. Jesus warned the people of His day against concluding from the fate of those who suffered a disastrous end that the reason was that they were greater sinners than others (Luke 13:1-5). And He told His disciples that the fact that one man was born blind was not due to his or his parents' particular sin (John 9:1-3).

2. We want to have a ministry that is encouraging, helpful and patient. According to the Apostle Paul, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). And Job declared, "To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14).

3. We will want to have a ministry that is compassionate and empathetic. We are to "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). We are to avoid trying to pressure the suffering to change the way they feel. Solomon wisely counsels to avoid being insensitive when he says, "Like one who takes away a garment in cold weather, and like vinegar on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart" (Proverbs 25:20).

4. We want to use words in an appropriate and helpful way. The wisdom of Solomon declares, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). Sometimes this means refraining from speaking or waiting until a more appropriate time to say certain things. Jesus understood this when He told His disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). We must especially refrain from giving glib or flip answers to people's questions about their suffering. Even answers that are true, may not always be appropriate or loving at the time (cf. Ephesians 4:15).

5. We want to listen to the person. James instructs us to "be swift to hear, slow to speak" (James 1:19). Job made it clear to his friends that he would have preferred that they simply listen to him. He exclaimed,

“Oh, that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom! . . . Hold your peace with me and let me speak! . . . Listen carefully to my speech, and to my declaration with your ears” (Job 13:5, 13, 17). Sometimes, this means simply sitting quietly with the person who is suffering, as Job’s friends did during their initial week with him: “So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great” (Job 2:13).

6. We want to use Scripture in a way that will bring encouragement and hope. This is what Paul taught: “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

7. We want to pray in a way that will sustain and lift the suffering. Paul had just been talking about the comfort of God in times of trouble, and then he says, “You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many” (2 Corinthians 1:11).

8. We must never forget that our primary obligation to the suffering is to love them. John urges, “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Gestures need not be “great” to be significant!

Biblical Teaching on Sickness and Healing

Though there are many kinds of suffering in life, the kind of suffering that we as a Chaplain will encounter most often is that resulting from sickness or disability. It’s important that we pay close attention to what the Scriptures teach on this matter, and particularly what they say about divine healing.

Not all Christians have come to the same conclusions on this matter. And it is unlikely that every Chaplain in HCMA will hold the same convictions either. But it is essential that we seek to hear and understand what God is saying to us through the Scriptures on this matter. They are the final authority for believers.

The first thing we can agree on is that sickness and death are a result of the fall of humanity into sin. This was seen in the previous section in discussing the origin of pain and suffering.

Though we will find some reference to people suffering illness (and even death) due to personal sin (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:30), there are several godly people spoken of in the Bible who experienced illness. Some were described as eventually healed. Most were not. For example:

- Isaac is spoken of as being blind in his later years (Genesis 27:1).
- Jacob suffered an injured hip that apparently affected him the rest of his life (Genesis 32:25). Later in life he is described as suffering an illness (Genesis 48:1) that would result in his death (Genesis 49:33).
- Ahijah the prophet suffered blindness in his old age (1 Kings 14: 4).
- The prophet Elisha suffered an illness from which he did not recover (2 Kings 13:14).
- Job suffered severe physical maladies for an extended period, though he eventually recovered.
- Many believe that what the Apostle Paul described as a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) was a physical ailment, which God permitted for his spiritual well being. Countless explanations concerning the nature of Paul’s thorn in the flesh have been offered, such as malaria, migraine headaches, and epilepsy. No one can say for sure what Paul’s thorn in the flesh was, but it may have been an eye ailment, which he spoke of in Galatians 4:13-15.
- Paul’s companion Epaphroditus was “sick almost unto death,” though he recovered (Philippians 2:25-30).
- Timothy suffered frequent physical ailments (1 Timothy 5:23).

- Trophimus was left ill by Paul in Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20).

In none of these cases is there any evidence that the reason these believers suffered in this way was due to a lack of faith or to some spiritual deficiency (though in Paul's case God used his suffering for his spiritual benefit).

Furthermore, the Bible encourages believers to use normal means to prevent or alleviate illness, including the use of medical science. In the Old Testament, God gave His people laws regarding sanitation (Exodus 29:14; Deuteronomy 23:12-14), sterilization (Leviticus 11:32, 39-40; Numbers 19:11; 31:22-23), quarantine (Leviticus 13; 1-14:57; Numbers 5:4), and hygiene and diet (Leviticus 11:1-47). We would not expect that God would remove all the consequences of Israel's failing to follow these instructions.

Though in Old Testament times people were encouraged to go first to the priest in time of illness (Leviticus 13), the use of medicine and physicians is spoken of in a positive way in Isaiah 1:6; 38:21 and Jeremiah 8:22. The Babylonian Talmud even speaks of the physician's skill as a gift from God (Berakoth 60a). King Asa was rebuked for going to a pagan doctor rather than to the priest (2 Chronicles 16:11-14), but not because he went to a physician. When King Hezekiah prayed that God would heal him of a deadly illness, God granted his request. But his instructions to Hezekiah included his use of a common medicinal remedy by applying a cake of figs to his boil (2 Kings 20:7). Job also apparently gained some measure of relief by taking the commonsense measure of "scraping" or draining his sores (Job 2:8).

In the New Testament, Jesus recognized physicians and medicine as legitimate healing agents. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matthew 9:12). In His parable about the Good Samaritan, He spoke approvingly of the use of typical medical treatments of His day (Luke 10:34). Paul referred to Luke as the "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14). And he encouraged Timothy to make use of wine as a medicinal treatment for his "frequent infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23).

The use of preventive and curative medical treatments is part of God's common grace to humanity, in alleviating some of the effects of the fall. And a person is wise to make good use of them, and to encourage others to do the same.

We must never forget, however, that we must always turn first to God in times of suffering and illness. And we must read carefully what the Bible says about the matter of divine healing in answer to prayer. Both the Old and New Testaments record instances of God healing His people (and even on occasion unbelievers) in answer to prayer.

Some believe that God promises healing to all who call upon Him in faith. Reference is sometimes made to the promise in the Old Testament that God would spare Israel from disease if they would obey His commands (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15). But we must be very cautious of transferring these specific promises to the nation Israel over to believers today. The same chapter that contains the promise about healing also commands Israel to destroy the pagan inhabitants of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:1-2). We certainly would not apply these verses to the church today!

It is also sometimes suggested that through the atoning work of Christ we are granted healing for our diseases (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24). But it is clear in the two passages cited that the healing referred to is spiritual in nature. The immediate context makes clear that we are healed from our "transgressions, iniquities, and sins." It's true that Matthew applies Isaiah's words about the Messiah bearing our griefs and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4) to Jesus' healing ministry (Matthew 8:16-17). But this does not entail a universal promise of healing to all who believe Him for it.

Sometimes it is said that "healing is in the atonement" (that Christ's atoning sacrifice provides for healing, not only from sin but from sickness). In a sense that may be true. Every blessing that comes to people is indeed a result of Christ's atoning death on behalf of believers. But not every blessing is bestowed *now*. The New Heaven and New Earth are blessings that belong to believers due to the atonement, as are resurrection bodies. But Christians must await God's time for receiving these blessings. The fact that many

godly people are spoken of in Scripture as having suffered illness explains that the promise of physical healing is not something that can be claimed *now* by all who believe God for it. But it is something that God grants in accordance with His will and wisdom in each situation.

It's considering these facts that passages related to healing should be understood (e.g., Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Malachi 4:2; etc.). The passage in James (5:13-18) is of particular interest in this regard. This passage pertains to those who are "sick" (v. 14). This Greek word has a broad meaning, and can include all kinds of weakness (physical, emotional, and spiritual), though it is likely that physical illness is at least in view here.

The promise is that when such a person calls for the elders of the church to pray for him or her, that the "prayer of faith" will result in their being "saved" or "raised up" (v. 15) and "healed" (v. 16). The fact that confession of sin is called for implies that there are times when sickness may be due to sin ("if he has committed sins"), but not always.

A few observations are in order here. First, it's possible that the promises have a spiritual rather than physical healing in view. Some see "saved" as a reference to spiritual deliverance, and "raised up" as a reference to the resurrection. It is more likely, however, that both physical and spiritual blessing are in view here. It does not say, however, whether the person will be delivered immediately or completely from his/her ailment, or apart from medical help as well.

Some see the reference to "anointing with oil" as implying the use of medicine. This is possible (since the Greek word is a medicinal term), though it could also be a reference to a symbolic anointing as a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It may even be a general reference to ministering to the person's physical needs, since anointing (which can be translated "massaging") with oil was a common means of bringing refreshment and comfort to people in this culture.

It's interesting that "healing" is specifically spoken of as being promised to those whose weakness is due to their sin, and who confess their sin (vv. 15-16). This might explain the need for calling the elders: The church leaders would have been responsible for the spiritual discipline of the congregation.

An important question pertains to the nature of the "prayer of faith." Some see this as implying that in certain situations God may grant a special "gift of faith" to the elders, assuring them that it is His desire in this case to restore the one who is weak. This is certainly possible. It is also possible that the "prayer of faith" is simply a prayer that places faith in God to minister to the one who is weak in keeping with His will. The prayer would simply be trusting God to do what is best in this situation.

This promise must be understood in both the broader context of Scripture, and in its immediate context. The broader context of Scripture tells us that there are times when complete physical healing may not be God's purpose. This was seen in the list above of godly people who experienced unrelieved illness. Some illnesses result in death.

The immediate context, however, gives some help in understanding this promise. First, at the end of the previous chapter, James says that we should submit our plans to the will of God — including our expectation as to whether we will even be alive: "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" (James 4:15).

Second, in the paragraph before the one in view (5:7-12), James urges his readers to be patient in suffering. And as an example, he refers to the steadfastness of Job (v. 11), who was called on to endure great physical suffering and even illness for an extended period. These two facts in the immediate context alone should keep us from inferring more from these promises than God intended.

Nonetheless, we should draw great encouragement from this passage that when we are suffering, we should not only pray, but we should call on the leaders of the church to pray in our behalf. We should also examine ourselves to see if there is any spiritual reason behind our weakness. If so, we should confess it to

God and forsake it. And then we should place our faith in God, to act in our behalf in keeping with what He knows is best for us, and in a way that will bring glory to Himself.

Chapter Assignments

1. Read a book on understanding pain and suffering and write a one-page summary. Discuss your insights with the Teaching Chaplain.
2. After spending several minutes in Bible study, reflection and prayer on the issue of pain and suffering, write at least a two-page essay on “The Value of Suffering.” Discuss it with the Teaching Chaplain.
3. Read a book on divine healing and write a one-page summary. Discuss your insights with the Teaching Chaplain.
4. Select a hymn that deals with healing. Write a summary about what each stanza is saying and give your personal response to its message. Discuss your insights with the Teaching Chaplain. Here are some hymns to choose from:
 - At Even, Ere the Sun Was Set
 - Great Physician, The
 - Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer
 - Only Thou Garment’s Hem
 - There Is a Balm in Gilead
 - Thine Arm, O Lord, In Days of Old
 - Thou, Lord, Has Power to Heal
 - Where Are Thine?
5. After spending sufficient time in Bible study, reflection and prayer on the issue of healing, write a two-page essay on “The Hope of Healing.” Discuss your insights with the Teaching Chaplain.
6. Study the “Reproductive System” in the *Medical Terminology Manual* to become familiar with these common medical terms and surgical procedures.
7. Make rounds and debrief with the Teaching Chaplain.
8. Write a verbatim of a patient/resident visit that focused on suffering and/or healing. Have a peer group review team evaluate it. Discuss your learning issues with your Teaching Chaplain.
9. Interaction with your Teaching Chaplain. Write out your response to each of the following scenarios and then discuss each one with your Teaching Chaplain.
 - a. A patient/resident asks you, “Is this suffering because I have sinned?” How would you answer this person?
 - b. What would you say to a patient/resident who tells you that God wouldn’t allow him to experience so many bad things if He really loved him?
 - c. A patient/resident states that suffering is not the will of God and must be resisted. What would you say?
 - d. Someone tells you that mental illness does not happen to obedient Christians. What would be your response?

e. A patient/resident has terminal cancer. He cheerfully tells you that God is going to heal him. What is your response?

Chapter Resources

The following annotated bibliography is not intended to be exhaustive in its content, nor does it contain all the latest resources. HCMA does not endorse all the ideas expressed in all the resources listed here. Some of the sources are given simply to expose the Trainee to a variety of viewpoints on the subject. It is expected that even in places of disagreement that we will reflect upon and think critically regarding our own views rather than simply dismissing views that run counter to our own.

Healing

Anderson, Neil T., and Michael Jacobson. *The Biblical Guide to Alternative Medicine*. Revised ed. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003.

Authoritative, biblically based answers. The book gives you a biblical grid for evaluating medical treatments and systems and alternative therapies-then having separated the fantasies from the hard facts, it shows you how to develop your own "recipe" for holistic health and apply it to your daily life.

Baker, John. *Life's Healing Choices: Freedom from Your Hurts, Hang-ups, and Habits*. Reprint ed. New York: Howard, 2013.

Offers freedom from our hurts, hang-ups, and habits through eight healing choices that promise true happiness and life transformation. Using the Beatitudes of Jesus as a foundation, Senior Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church and John Baker, also a pastor at Saddleback, developed the eight choices shared in this book. In addition to practical, encouraging biblical teaching, each chapter includes two real-life stories of men and women whose lives have been transformed by living out the eight choices in this book.

Bosworth, F. F. *Christ the Healer*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 2008.

This revised and expanded edition of the classic bestseller includes a new foreword and epilogue on the remarkable life and healing of the author himself, written by his son.

Brown, Michael L. *Israel's Divine Healer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

The first complete, systematic treatment of the biblical motif of God as "Divine Healer." It traces the theme of the Divine Healer from the Old to the New Testament, showing the continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments, particularly in Jesus' miracles that reveal God as the world's Divine Healer. The book begins with a study of various Hebrew words on healing. It then explores, within the larger context of the Ancient Near Eastern religions, the roles of medicine, magic, and the physician-priest together with their possible influences upon Israel's beliefs and practices regarding healing. Against this background, the remaining chapters examine, from the Torah to the Gospels, how Yahweh progressively revealed himself as Divine Healer to Israel and ultimately, through Jesus, to the whole of humanity.

Droege, Thomas. *The Faith Factor in Healing*. Philadelphia: Trinity, 1991.

Frost, Henry. *Miraculous Healing: Why Does God Heal Some and Not Others?* Hagerstown, MD: Christian Heritage Pub., 2008.

"Frost sees all healing as coming from God. Miraculous indicates that healing takes place apart from means. He is anxious to "hold all truth in careful equipoise" and writes "in constant prayer". "He presents five cases of healing in which he was involved and parallels them with five cases where the same conditions obtained but healing did not occur. That drove him to bring his belief to the test of the Word of God. "He looks carefully at the teaching of those who claim that the wholeness of salvation includes physical healing for all as well as spiritual. He examines the texts they use and points out where they appear to err, weighing up the arguments for inevitable healing. He sees the Epistle of James as being written to an emerging Jewish Christian church, "spiritually undeveloped", and the instructions in chapter five permissive rather than mandatory."The post-Resurrection promises to apply to the apostles only. Miracles were to provide indisputable evidence that Jesus was the Messiah more than an expression of deep compassion, though they were that as well. "Among his general conclusions he makes it clear that Christ heals today but exercises His own loving sovereignty in so doing - "Christ will choose health, strength and length of days...the saint is ever to remain submissive to God's will whatever this may mean".

The book ends with a moving testimony of healing within his own family." Taken from a review by *Evangelism* magazine.

Gaiser, Frederick J. *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010.

Amid an ongoing debate about health care, what does the Bible say about healing? Here a respected scholar reads biblical texts on health and healing with care and imagination, engaging the reader in lively conversations with the text and with questions of contemporary theological and pastoral concern. Gaiser offers close readings of fifteen key Old and New Testament passages, considering their significance for the church's understanding of healing and its ministry today. The book examines such significant matters as God's role in healing, the relation between sickness and sin, healing and prayer, God's healing and medical science, and healing under the sign of the cross, offering fresh insights for anyone interested in Christian views on healing.

Hagin, Kenneth E. *Healing Scriptures*. Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1993.

This book contains scriptures about healing, a commentary by Brother Hagin, and a real-life illustration about a woman who diligently took God's medicine—His Word—and was raised from her deathbed, miraculously healed of an incurable disease.

Healing Thoughts. Unity Village, MO: Unity School of Christianity, 2005.

Keefauver, Larry. *When God Doesn't Heal Now*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000.

The book examines the myths about healing that are built on partial truths and looks at the profound relationship between prayer, healing, and the sovereignty of God. This guide offers a balanced look at teachings on healing, faith healers, and ways to bring biblical clarity to beliefs that often foster guilt, defeat, and despair when believers are not immediately healed.

Koenig, Harold. *The Healing Power of Faith: How Belief and Prayer Can Help You Triumph Over Disease*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

In this extraordinary book, Dr. Harold G. Koenig presents groundbreaking scientific evidence that provides answers to these puzzling medical mysteries. You will read about the pioneering study that found nonreligious patients with heart disease to be three times more likely to die following surgery than their religious counterparts. You'll learn why saying prayers regularly can be as effective as taking medicine, and why prayer and medicine together are such a potent combination. Here you will meet the unforgettable patients who taught the doctors so much as they triumph over life-threatening disease, heartbreak marital problems, dangerous addiction, and more. With simple, practical methods for harnessing the power of faith, this potentially lifesaving book provides an astonishing and immensely effective strategy for healing.

Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: Harper, 2001.

Argues that a Christian must not only accept but rejoice in miracles as a testimony of the unique personal involvement of God in his creation.

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martin. *Healing and the Scriptures*. Nashville: Oliver-Nelson, 1988.

Relates a biblical view of healing without neglecting the physical component in dealing with the whole man.

Ludwig, Garth D. *Order Restored: A Biblical Interpretation of Health, Medicine, and Healing*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1999.

This book urges a return to the healing ministry by ministers, congregations, and Christians, through prayer, faith, and worship. It examines the concept of disease as a state of disorder and the importance of faith, attitude, and community in healing and wellness. It lays the foundation for a holistic understanding of human behavior by establishing a synthesis between theology and behavioral sciences.

Masters, Peter. *The Healing Epidemic*. London: Wakeman Trust, 1988.

Master's Healing Presence Bible, The. Nashville: T. Nelson, 2003.

Matthews, Dale A., with Connie Clark. *The Faith Factor: Proof of the Healing Power of Prayer*. London: Penguin, 1999.

Drawing from the latest scientific research, as well as numerous illustrative case studies, the book offers convincing proof that religious practices can and do enhance the healing powers of medicine. The author offers a program any patient can follow to incorporate faith into their own healing. Dr. Matthews points out that

encouraging an integration of religious beliefs and practices in medical settings can have important benefits for the entire medical community—from patients and doctors to national health policy makers. He shows how the national trend toward rediscovering religious values has led many patients to use prayer in conjunction with conventional treatment, and that the results have already confirmed that faith and religious practice can be valuable medicine. Finally, Dr. Matthews helps readers explore the connection between faith and medicine in their own lives through methods of prayer, community worship, and study of Scripture.

Mayhue, Richard. *Divine Healing Today*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1983

_____. *The Healing Promise*. Fearn: Mentor, 1997.

God can heal is a truth clear from scripture. We can agree, with absolute certainty, that God still possesses the power to do the miraculous. In the book, Richard Mayhue Provides straight answers without compromising the Bible or God's miraculous power. It includes a special interview with Joni Eareckson Tada where she talks about coping with the attitudes towards healing she encounters every day; a chapter by André Kole, the man behind many of David Copperfield's illusions, on techniques used in healing meetings; and a special interview with John and Patricia MacArthur about their experiences when Patricia was badly injured in a car accident.

Mayhue, Richard L. *The Biblical Pattern for Divine Healing*. The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian, 2008.

McMillen, S. I., and David E. Stearn. *None of These Diseases: The Bible's Health Secrets for the 21st Century*. Third ed. Grand Rapids, MI: F. H. Revell, 2000.

Extraordinary medical benefits are available to those who follow the Bible's teachings. The authors deal with stress, sex, anger, circumcision, tobacco, and more.

McNutt, Francis. *Healing*. Anniversary ed. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 1999.

Provides a context within which to understand healing. MacNutt covers topics that include the basis of the healing ministry, kinds of healing, and the connections between sacraments and healing. MacNutt discusses new discoveries of connections between the spiritual and the physical, including scientific inquiries into the healing power of prayer.

Miller, James E., with Susan C. Cutshall. *The Art of Being a Healing Presence: A Guide for Those in Caring Relationships*. Fort Wayne, IN: Willowgreen, 2001.

On being with others in a compassionate, nurturing, healing way. Chapters include, "There's only one place to begin—with yourself" and "Healing is about something much larger than curing." Includes many carefully selected quotations for each of the fifteen chapters. Appropriate for both professional and lay caregivers.

Murray, Andrew. *Divine Healing*. London: Diggory, 2007.

There are many questions about divine healing. Find the answers to these questions, including: Why are some people healed while others are not? Does sickness come from God or from Satan? Is it God's will to heal the sick? What part do doctors play in divine healing? Why do many Christians doubt the gifts of healing? What is the biblical perspective on healing? Writing from his own experience, Andrew Murray examines what the Bible says about sickness and how to obtain health—body, mind, and spirit.

Numbers, Ronald L., and Darrel W. Amundsen, eds. *Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions*. New York, Macmillan, 1986.

Most religious traditions have a rich, if largely forgotten, heritage of involvement in medical issues of life, death, and health. Religious values influence our behavior and attitudes toward sickness, sexuality, and lifestyle, to say nothing of more controversial subjects such as abortion and euthanasia. The essays in this important book illuminate the history of health and medicine within the Judeo-Christian tradition. Bringing together 20 original articles by expert scholars in the fields of the history of religion and the history of medicine, *Caring and Curing* provides a fascinating and enlightening overview of how religious values have come to affect the practice of medicine and medical care.

Osborn, T. L. *Healing the Sick: A Divine Healing Classic for Everyone*. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1992.

Throughout his ministry, T.L. Osborn has personally witnessed the miraculous healings of multitudes of individuals who have heard and believed on the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. This is a powerful book, so powerful that thousands of people have been healed just by reading and acting upon the truths in this book! Now in an expanded and easier-to-read format, this Living Classic will continue to be a miracle blessing to all those who read it. Written in a clear, simple and straight-forward style, *Healing the Sick* has been and will continue to

be one of the Body of Christ's foremost authoritative teachings on divine healing. The dynamic and powerful words, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," will spring to life and become reality to you as you read.

Payne, Franklin E. *Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine: Choosing Life and Health or Disease and Death*. Augusta, GA: Covenant, 1993.

Pilch, John J. *Healing in the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.

How are we to read and understand stories of Jesus healing the lame, deaf, blind, and those with a variety of other maladies? Pilch takes us beyond the historical and literary questions to examine the social questions of how the earliest followers of Jesus and ancient Judeans understood healing, what roles healers played, and the different emphases on healing among the gospels. In his comparative analysis, the author draws on the anthropology of the Mediterranean as well as the models employed by medical anthropologists to understand peasant societies and their health-care systems. Utilizes social-science models Features a complementary web- site with additional resources

Price, Dilwyn. *Is Any One of You Sick? The Biblical Basis for Healing the Sick*. Fearn: Mentor, 1997.

Price, Frederick K. C. *Healing Series*. Los Angeles, CA: Crenshaw Christian Center, 1980.

Eight audios on "Seven Ways to Scriptural Healing, #1 and #2," "Is Healing for All, #1, #2," Is God Glorified through Sickness?" "Paul's Thorn, #1, #2, and #3."

Reed, William Standish. *Healing the Whole Man: Mind, Body and Spirit*. Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell, 1979.

Reveals the principles and the facts behind holistic medicine and the treatment of mind, body, and soul.

Reiner, Troy. *Principles for Life: Using Biblical Principle to Bring Dynamic Psychological Healing*. Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2005.

Our world is full of hurting people. The Word of God is the answer but somehow attempts to apply Biblical principles to bring psychological healing have fallen short of the deeper needs of many of these hurting people. This has been true for several reasons. Most models of Biblical change have been limited to either confronting and demanding change or acting and practicing new Biblical ways of doing things. These methods do not deal with the entire person: will, spirit, past experiences, mind, perceptions, needs, motivation, actions, and emotions. They do not consider the complexity of the human heart and the interactions between its members. This book addresses these problems with the "Train of Psychological Wholeness," a concept developed from Proverbs Chapter Three. It provides an understanding of many these principles, a detailed method for developing counseling plans using Biblical principles, and counseling methods and techniques for their application to bring about dynamic psychological healing. This book explains 44 of the most important principles in the Bible from a psychological perspective and provides an in-depth method for developing counseling plans using biblical principles for common psychological problems. This material includes a discussion of 13 classical methods of biblical change, a new model for understanding the human heart and techniques for applying biblical principles in counseling. It includes counseling plans and methods for treating anxiety, panic attacks, obsessions, compulsions, sexual abuse, domestic violence, marital problems, and Borderline Personality Disorder.

Sanford, John A. *Healing and Wholeness*. New York: Paulist, 1977.

John Sanford has written a book for anyone interested in more wholeness and health in his or her life. He says, "The stream of human knowledge is like a great river; many streams and rivulets make up its volume. Of course, not every prophet of healing today contributes to our knowledge, for some are fraudulent, their waters polluted; and some dry up and never reach the flowing river of valid human knowledge. Yet it remains true that we must expect insights from many different sources if our knowledge of the sources, enriched by the sufferings and discoveries of the people who have consulted me over the years, the insights into healing from wells ancient and modern: ancient Greek healing mysteries, the lore of shamanism, the wisdom of the American Indian, the healing emphasis in early Christianity and the very modern perspective on healing furnished by C. G. Jung. The hope is that the reader will, through this book, see a little more clearly where healing comes from and where he or she as a person can learn to help himself or herself. But it is not a complete book on healing, nor does it pretend to be. There is far more to be said about healing that this book, or any one book, can say, though hopefully the reader will find some insights that are new and helpful."

Smith, David J. *How Can I Ask God for Physical Healing? A Biblical Guide*. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen, 2005.

In a fascinating reflection of biblical truth, modern medicine is proving the beneficial role of prayer. Yet countless individuals who need to be healed-faith-filled Christians included-do not really know how to take hold of this promise of Scripture. Where does healing prayer start? What if nothing changes? Are there specific directions that anyone can follow? In this comprehensive step-by-step guidebook, readers will find the supportive counsel they need for approaching God wisely and confidently for physical healing. Filled with Scripture, reflection questions, and prayers, *How Can I Ask God for Physical Healing?* Covers every aspect of the life-giving process as it helps readers draw closer to Jesus, the Great Physician.

Stevens, David, with Gregg Lewis. *Jesus, M.D.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Jesus—the ultimate doctor. His touch extended grace to the sick and sinful of ancient Palestine and left a miracle in its wake. And his ministry hasn't ceased. Today, he looks for willing hearts and hands through which he can heal a needy world. Dr. David Stevens knows. His eleven years at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya have shown him more than the drama and sacrifice of missionary medicine. In *Jesus, M.D.* Dr. Stevens shares the insights he has gained into the character, power, and purposes of the Great Physician and what it means for you to follow in his footsteps. This is more than a book of dramatic, true-life stories. It is an inspiring and challenging invitation to partner with Jesus in his "practice," accompanying him on his rounds to people whose lives he wants to make whole. Discover how to participate with him in bringing his healing touch to your corner of the world. You don't need a medical education—just determination to trust God as your "attending physician," your mentor, your source of guidance, discipline, and encouragement. Dr. Stevens takes you inside stories from the Bible to obtain challenging perspectives and life-changing truths. You'll also get an inside look at life-or-death surgeries; the tense, powerful relationship between resident and attending physicians; the overcrowded patient quarters of a missionary hospital; what it's like to improvise an emergency facial reconstruction; and much more. Best of all, you'll gain surprising insights from the life and methods of Jesus, the ultimate doctor, in his ministry to desperately needy people two thousand years ago . . . and today.

Sullivan, Lawrence E. *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in World's Religious Traditions*. New York: Macmillan, 1989.

Book on health and medicine based on world religious traditions.

Tada, Joni Eareckson. *A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mystery of Suffering, Pain and God's Sovereignty*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010.

In this eloquent account of her current struggle with physical pain, Eareckson Tada offers her perspective on divine healing, God's purposes, and what it means to live with joy.

Thomas, John C., and Gary Habermas. *What's Good About Feeling Bad? Finding Purpose and a Path through Your Pain*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008.

When you are tightly clenched in the grip of suffering, hearing that God has a purpose and a plan may feel like adding salt to a raw wound. How can you be sure that there is a greater good to be gained? In *What's Good about Feeling Bad?*, John Thomas and Gary Habermas thoughtfully explore the impact of pain on our lives, explain fifteen spiritual benefits to suffering and offer scriptural and practical advice to help you walk with God through even the hardest of times. If you are hurting—or know someone who is—this book is the road map you need to make it through your pain and emerge a stronger, wiser, and more complete person than ever before.

Tournier, Paul. *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible*. New York: Harper, 1960.

Here is a wise and thoughtful book by a physician of profound religious faith who believed that man's physical and emotional health are rooted in a wholesome spiritual life. Drawing on his own long (over 50 years), rich medical experience, the author examines many of the problems that doctors face in their daily practice and shows how the Biblical understanding of human nature is an invaluable help in solving them—the spiritual meaning of illness—the failure of scientific medicine to treat the whole person—religion and magic—psychoanalysis and the Bible—sin and disease—life and death—a doctor's relation with the patient—social medicine—love, marriage and celibacy. Dr. Tournier's discussions are abundantly illustrated by actual brief case histories from his own practice.

———. *The Healing of Persons*. New York: Harper, 1965.

The renowned Swiss physician and psychiatrist opens wide the doorway to hope for the sick, the lonely, the troubled in spirit--a hope founded on a new awareness of the importance of the mind and spirit in healing. His approach to medicine treats the patient as a person, rather than as a mere case. He insists that the problems of the patient in his personal life, his relationships with his family, with his friends, with society, with the world, with God--all of these are contributing factors to physical illness. "All men," he says, "are struggling more or less consciously with personal problems which have a considerable influence on their health--conflicts, rebellions, negative attitudes, moral failings and spiritual anxieties." In his own medical practice Dr. Tournier deliberately restricts the number of his patients to give more time and personal attention to those he treats. *The Healing of Persons* includes many of their case histories, illustrating again how the healing of the spirit is allied with the healing of the body.

Vogel, Susan Sonnenday. *What About Divine Healing? A Study of Christian Healing*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004.

Warrington, Keith. *Healing and Suffering: Biblical and Pastoral Reflections*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005.

Divine healing is accepted by most Christians. However, some Christian literature does not provide objective analysis of the issues involved and sometimes moves in a wonderland of unreality with harmful pastoral consequences. Other believers doubt whether God supernaturally heals at all today. A healthy balance is needed to remind believers that God is with them in the shadows of suffering as well as health and wholeness. This book offers that balance, providing analysis, reflection and testimony concerning the relevant issues from a biblical and pastoral point of view. Drawing on the teachings of the New Testament, Keith Warrington offers a comprehensive and user-friendly resource that maintains biblical integrity whilst engaging with the issues in a context of objective evaluation and sensitivity. He argues that whilst the New Testament encourages us to pray for healing, it does not always lead us to expect that all sickness and suffering will be removed.

———. *Jesus the Healer: Paradigm or Unique Phenomenon*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006.

Jesus chose to heal and exorcise to teach. Through them he taught about himself and his mission. As a result of them his would be followers were guided concerning important aspects of their lives. He taught the crowds the disciples and the religiously minded. He ruffled religious feathers, he astonished the milling crowds, he clashed with demons, and he made the hearts of the expectant leap. The healing ministry of Jesus is still an enigma to many who want to believe it is valid, but who recognize the significant difference between the best of healing today and the unique ministry of Jesus. God still heals, but does Jesus gift believers with His unique power?

Suffering

Arthur, Kay. *Lord, I Need Grace to Make It*. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1989.

The "Lord" study series is an insightful, warm-hearted Bible study series designed to meet readers where they are—and help them discover God's answers to their deepest needs.

Baker, Don. *Pain's Hidden Purpose: Finding Perspective in the Midst of Suffering*. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1984.

Focuses on the pain that Christians will inevitably suffer in this world. Baker analyzes the Book of Job and shows how the book may apply to our lives.

Biebel, David B. *If God Is So Good, Why Do I Hurt So Bad? An Understanding Look at the Journey from Pain to Wholeness*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1989.

When his son died of a rare genetic disorder, David B. Biebel heard the well-meaning advice of his friends and family, but still struggled with one question: why? Why did this happen and why is speaking the truth about pain and suffering so hard? In this powerful book, Biebel leaves behind the typical but ineffective words of comfort and instead offers the unvarnished truth about illness, death, divorce, financial ruin, and more. His Christian perspective, real life examples, and keen insight will help readers sort through their pain and see the value in their trials. Through it all they'll discover that God is more loving, understanding, and forgiving than they could ever imagine.

Black-Moench, Cynthia. *Binding Up the Broken-Hearted: A Handbook of Hope for the Chronically Ill & Disabled*. Joplin, MO: College, 1991.

With great insight from the author, who also suffers from chronic illness, **BINDING UP THE BROKENHEARTED** will help the reader learn to deal with the pain, misunderstanding, and seeming hopelessness of the situation. It will teach those who are sick or disabled how to gain a clearer understanding of the need to restructure their faith. Based on solid biblical teaching, this book will give both the patient and the caregiver comfort and hope and help to restore life's balance which can be lost in suffering.

Blocker, Henri. *Evil and the Cross: An Analytical Look at the Problem of Pain*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005.

Grapples with the problem of evil in a world supposedly ruled by a God who is all-loving and all-powerful.

Bourke, Dale Hanson. *Sacred Surprises: When God Turns Your Life Upside Down*. Dallas: Word, 1991.

"If God was in control, why had he allowed my baby to die? Why had he created her, let her grow happily beside her twin brother, and then taken her before I could know her, before she could know life outside my womb? Was he trying to punish me? To teach me something?" That's what wife, mother, and businesswoman Dale Hanson Bourke wondered when tragic events dismantled her well-organized life. Just as they began to recover from the painful loss of one of their twin babies, the Bourke family learned that Dale's father had an inoperable brain tumor. And then they weathered the agonizing death of a close family friend. In this emotionally open book, Dale re-examines the preconceived notions of her Christian faith and chronicles the recognition of God's sovereign hand in her life. She discovers that sacred surprises can bring joy or pain. But mostly she learns that they are the only way God can help us grow. Life has a way of barging in on our security, upsetting our "best-laid plans," and leaving us out in the cold with awkward bundles of pain, anger, and misery. Dale echoes the feelings of doubt we all experience as she says, "I have learned that I should pray in faith, believing...but mostly I realize that I pray in fear, hoping." Dale Hanson Bourke turns us toward our pain, opens our eyes, and comforts us with the knowledge that something good can come from life's trials. And she helps us see that God can teach us through tears and laughter.

Bridges, Jerry. *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1990.

In an effort to strengthen his own trust in God during a time of adversity, Navigator author Jerry Bridges began a lengthy Bible study on God's sovereignty. The revelations changed his life. In *Trusting God*, Jerry shares the scope of God's power to help you come to know Him better, have a relationship with Him, and trust Him more—even when unjust things happen. Tragedy, grief, loss, and death are part of life. Discover how *Trusting God* can reveal biblical truths about God. A study guide is also available separately.

Carson, D. A. *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*. Second ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

This clear and accessible treatment of key biblical themes related to human suffering and evil is written by one of the most respected evangelical biblical scholars alive today. Carson brings together a close, careful exposition of key biblical passages with helpful pastoral applications. The second edition has been updated throughout.

Christenson, Evelyn. *Gaining Through Losing*. Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1982.

Can help you understand how God can turn your most traumatic setbacks into gains. Discover how such setbacks as death, separation, divorce, sickness, suffering, and financial loss can be used by God to make you spiritually richer. This book has touched countless readers with the comfort, encouragement, and hope that only the truth of God's word can bring. It is 12 chapters making it perfect for a bible study or Sunday school class.

Crandall, Gary. *Gold Under Fire: The Christian and Adversity*. Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word, 2005.

Suffering . . . trials turned to gold "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7). "This is one of the best books we've seen on the delicate subject of why Christians suffer. The author has dug deeply into the Word of God for answers . . . We add our commendation and recommend it highly. To sum up in a single word: 'outstanding'!"—Dr. Charles Sumner in *The Biblical Evangelist Trials* are closely followed by questions. Adversity calls for answers. Questions like: "If God loves me, why does He let me suffer like this? If God is in control, why is my life so out of control? What is God trying to teach me through this trial? Why is this happening to me?" haunt us when we walk through tough times. *Gold Under Fire* brings biblical light to these and other troubling questions. Trials bring questions; God has answers. The ultimate goal of this study, however, is not just to answer questions but to experience "the oil of joy for mourning . . . that He might be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3). "One of the ways God has brought encouragement to us during these days is through

reading this outstanding book by my former student and dear friend, Gary Crandall. I warmly commend this book to every Christian who needs God's comfort and encouragement on a moment-by-moment basis."—Dr. John. C. Whitcomb

Davis, Ron Lee. *Gold in the Making: Where Is God When Bad Things Happen To You?* Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983.

———. *The Healing Choice*. Waco, TX: Word, 1986.

DeHaan, M. R. *Broken Things: Why We Suffer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 1989.

Dr. De Haan writes compassionately to broken Christians and shows how their suffering can usher in a treasure of maturity and wholeness. He applies the healing principles of God's Word to encourage those who have been scarred by loss of employment, health, or by the death of a loved one.

Dembski, William. *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World*. Nashville: B & H, 2009.

"*The End of Christianity* towers over the others in profundity and quality . . . I have read very few books with its deep of insight, breadth of scholarly interaction, and significance. From now on, no one who is working on a Christian treatment of the problem of evil can afford to neglect this book."—J. P. Moreland

Dobson, James. *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1997.

An immensely practical book for those who are struggling with trials and heartaches they can't understand. Why does disease, natural disaster, divorce, rejection, death, or some other sorrow seep into our lives when we are trying to serve the Lord? It just doesn't seem fair! This book deals unflinchingly with life's most troubling question—"Why?" Drawing on his long experience as a Christian psychologist and family counselor, Dr. Dobson brings hope to those who have almost given up.

Elliot, Elisabeth. *A Path Through Suffering: Discovering the Relationship Between God's Mercy and Our Pain*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1990.

Must we stumble through sorrow and tragedy without understanding or is there a lighted way--a path--through suffering? Elisabeth Elliot plots the treacherous passage through pain, grief, and loss a journey most of us will make many times in our life. Through it all, she says, there is only one reliable path, and if you walk it, you will see the transformation of all your losses, heartbreaks, and tragedies into something strong and purposeful. In this powerful moving book, Elisabeth Elliot does not hesitate to ask hard questions, to examine tenderly the hurts we suffer, and to explore boldly the nature of God whose sovereign care for us is so intimate and perfect that he confounds our finite understanding.

Feinberg, John S. *Deceived by God: A Journey Through the Experience of Suffering*. Wheaton, IL: Good News, 1997.

You've prayed for God's will. You're living for Him. And still, you encounter pain like you've never imagined. Doubt threatens to shatter your faith at Its core. What then? Philosopher and theologian John Feinberg explores the problem of pain and suffering as it manifested itself in his own family. He shows how Christians can find hope and strength in the midst of painful circumstances.

———. *The Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problems of Evil*. Revised expanded ed. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.

In this examination of the questions posed by the problem of evil, John Feinberg addresses the intellectual and theological framework of theodicy. Beginning with a discussion of the logical problem of evil, he interacts with leading thinkers who have previously written on these themes.

Geisler, Norman L. *The Roots of Evil*. Second ed. Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 1990.

In this book we will examine some philosophical options that have been proposed to answer the apparent contradictions between evil and a good God. We will look at such systems as Illusionism, Dualism, Finite Godism, Atheism, Open Theism, and Theism. Each will be evaluated for strengths and weaknesses. It is obviously impossible to cover every aspect of these systems in rigorous detail in this short work; therefore, those who are interested in further detail are encouraged to refer to the list of references under the Bibliography for further reading located at the end of the book.

Graham, Billy. *Hope for the Troubled Heart*. Dallas, TX: Word, 1991.

Reach for the happiness that lies beyond hardship and heartache. A lost job, a shaky marriage? Loneliness, frustration, or feelings of failure? A family tragedy or a serious illness? Life is full of tough times that can leave us feeling lost and helpless. But Dr. Billy Graham, who has brought wisdom and inspiration to millions of people around the world, shows you how to triumph over pain and uncertainty and discover an inner strength you might otherwise have never known. You'll learn: How to turn the "why" of suffering into the "how" of faith. How to stop resentment and bitterness from stopping you. How failure can groom you for future success. How to store up strength for storms before they break. Prayers as a way of life—a first resort, not a last gasp! Life as a schoolroom for the afterlife. And much more...

Grayshon, Jane. *A Harvest From Pain: Discovering God's Goodness in the Midst of Your Suffering*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1991.

———. *A Pathway Through Pain: Pressing On Despite Chronic Pain and Suffering*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1990.

For more than a decade, Jane Grayshon walked the pathway of excruciating pain. Pain that, at times, left her helpless. Pain that devastated dreams. Pain that challenges faith. Yet Jane is confident God has a plan for her life. Writing with sensitivity and insight, Jane Grayshon shares her journey from the depths of despair to the peace and comfort she found in allowing God to work through her life. She deals openly and honestly with tough issues such as: **How can a compassionate God allow suffering? **Why do prayers for healing sometimes go unanswered? **Why me? "My acceptance of God's will be not a passive submission to what I could not change, " writes Jane. I had not resigned myself to God's will. I had done something much more positive than that. I had begun to embrace God's will, and as a result I discovered that some precious fruit was growing even within my suffering." In this sensitive book, you'll find encouragement, strength and hope for your own pathway through pain.

Groves, Nancy. *Faith & Illness: Reflections on God's Sustaining Love*. Dublin, OH: Patient, 2002.

Heart-touching poetic prose, reflective questions, and prayers create a comforting companion for anyone living with illness. A gentle guide to fuller understanding of the emotional impact of serious illness.

Haggai, John. *How To Win Over Pain: A Practical Formula for Successful Living*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1987.

Hall, Douglas John. *God and Human Suffering: An Exercise in the Theology of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987.

Professor Hall has written a major work on an agonizing subject, at once brilliant, comprehensive, and thought provoking. In contrast to many writers who gloss over one or the other, Dr. Hall is true both to the reality of suffering and to the affirmation that God creates, sustains, and redeems. Creative is his view that certain aspects of what we call suffering — loneliness, experience of limits, temptation, anxiety — are necessary parts of God's good creation. These he distinguishes from suffering after the fall, the tragic dimension of life. Unique is his structure: creation-suffering as becoming the fall—suffering as a burden redemption—conquest from within. Professor Hall succeeds in moving the reader beyond the customary way of stating the problem: "How can undeserved suffering coexist with a just and almighty God?" He also evaluates five popular, leading thinkers on suffering: Harold Kushner, C.S. Lewis, Diogenes Allen, George Buttrick, and Leslie Weatherhead.

Holmes, Marjorie. *To Help You Through the Hurting: A Loving Guide to Faith, Hope and Healing*. New York: Bantam, 1983.

Kaiser, Walter. *A Biblical Approach to Personal Suffering*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1982.

Kreeft, Peter. *Making Sense Out of Suffering*. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1986.

This book is for anyone who has ever wept and wondered, "Why?" Peter Kreeft observes that our world is full of billions of normal lives that have been touched by apparently pointless and random suffering. This account of a real and honest personal quest is both engaging and convincing. It is written from a deep well of wisdom derived from experience and careful observation.

Kushner, Harold S. *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. New York: Avon, 1983.

When Harold Kushner's three-year-old son was diagnosed with a degenerative disease and that he would only live until his early teens, he was faced with one of life's most difficult questions: Why, God? Years later, Rabbi

Kushner wrote this straightforward, elegant contemplation of the doubts and fears that arise when tragedy strikes. Kushner shares his wisdom as a rabbi, a parent, a reader, and a human being.

Lewis, C. S. *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan, 1962.

Examines a universally applicable question within the human condition: "If God is good and all-powerful, why does he allow his creatures to suffer pain?" With his signature wealth of compassion and insight, C.S. Lewis offers answers to these crucial questions and shares his hope and wisdom to help heal a world hungering for a true understanding of human nature.

Littauer, Florence. *Make the Tough Times Count: How To Rise Above Adversity*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1990.

"...valuable insights learned in the crucible of personal experience..."

Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994.

Does God care about the sin and suffering in the world today? Why doesn't God put a stop to the violence? Does He really answer prayer? These are just a few of the themes Dr. Lloyd-Jones discusses in this challenging and stimulating book that offers insight into the mystery of God's ways.

Martin, James. *Suffering Man, Loving God: Reflections and Prayers for Those Who Hurt*. New York: Harper, 1990.

Out of his experience as Church of Scotland minister, the author looks at suffering, taking account of tragedies such as the Lockerbie air crash or AIDS and shares the strength he finds in the New Testament.

Mayhall, Carole. *Help Lord My Whole Life Hurts*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988.

This is a helpful, beautifully written book intended for everyone who feels like they are facing insurmountable difficulties and would like God's help and the encouragement of others who have risen above difficult times.

McCartney, Dan G. *Why Does it Have to Hurt? The Meaning of Christian Suffering*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998.

Dan McCartney delves into Scripture to help Christians understand the meaning of suffering and why they suffer. Avoiding trite responses, he moves us to a better knowledge of our heavenly Father's purposes in our suffering and leads us to the rest and peace we have in Jesus Christ.

McGrath, Alister. *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2000.

There are no easy answers to the problem of suffering. An honest engagement with biblical faith, however, can bring genuine help and understanding to even the darkest of situations. These personal reflections will bring hope to all who struggle intellectually, spiritually or physically with this real and difficult aspect of life.

Meier, Paul, and David L. Henderson. *Finding Purpose Beyond Our Pain*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 2009.

The authors teach readers how to face painful struggles head-on in a way that allows them to grow and mature emotionally and spiritually. In this timely book they explore the seven most common life challenges: Injustice, Rejection, Loneliness, Loss, Discipline, Failure, and Death. In addition, they offer the three reasons we often miss the gifts these challenges can be. This unique approach to an age-old problem will encourage and challenge readers to grow through their struggles instead of wasting energy trying to avoid them altogether.

Meyer, F. B. *The Gift of Suffering*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1980.

Minis, Margaret D. *I Don't Mind Suffering as Long as It Doesn't Hurt*. New York: Crossroad, 1995.

This little devotional book, written by a retreat leader for the Episcopal diocese of Georgia who also serves as a trainer in the education for ministry program at the University of the South, is an exercise in autobiography as spiritual journey. The focus is on meeting God in the ordinary and meeting God in spite of oneself. In keeping with the title, it offers relatively painless inspiration to readers caught up in the rat race or straining so hard for the extraordinary that they are unable to encounter God in the ordinary. If it succeeds in alerting readers to what Elizabeth Barrett Browning called an earth "crammed with heaven," where "every common bush" is "afire with God," it is a worthwhile effort. —Steve Schroeder

Morgan, Christopher W., and Robert A. Peterson. *Suffering and the Goodness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

It presents biblical truths concerning suffering and challenges believers to promote justice and to emulate God's grace as they minister to others. It brings insight to many contemporary concerns of suffering by outlining Old and New Testament truths and tackling difficult questions concerning God's sovereignty, human freedom, and the nature of evil. It offers believers biblical truths concerning suffering and then challenges them to promote justice in the harsh, unsure world around them and to emulate God's grace as they minister to those who are suffering.

Morley, Brian. *God in the Shadows: Evil in God's World*. Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006.

The Bible sheds light on the ultimate resolution of the problem of evil, a problem so central to human experience. Dr. Morley explores how there can be a God who is loving, just and righteous although the world is full of pain and evil. Are you putting the blame in the right place? Morley looks at the major reasons for pain and evil: investigating misconceptions about God and illness, the origins of poverty, birth defects and the causes of war. You will be gripped by the thought-provoking nature of his arguments and enlightened by a coping strategy for pain and evil - one that builds a fully-connected world-view into a realization of our personal part in resolving the problem of evil. God has understandable and wonderful reasons for bringing about a world like ours—a place of tragedy...and a place of grace.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Wounded Healer*. New York: Image, 1990.

A hope-filled and profoundly simple book that speaks directly to those men and women who want to be of service in their church or community but have found the traditional ways often threatening and ineffective. In this book, Henri Nouwen combines creative case studies of ministry with stories from diverse cultures and religious traditions in preparing a new model for ministry. Weaving keen cultural analysis with his psychological and religious insights, Nouwen has come up with a balanced and creative theology of service that begins with the realization of fundamental woundedness in human nature. Emphasizing that which is in humanity common to both minister and believer, this woundedness can serve as a source of strength and healing when counseling others. Nouwen proceeds to develop his approach to ministry with an analysis of sufferings—a suffering world, a suffering generation, a suffering person, and a suffering minister. It is his contention that ministers are called to recognize the sufferings of their time in their own hearts and make that recognition the starting point of their service. For Nouwen, ministers must be willing to go beyond their professional role and leave themselves open as fellow human beings with the same wounds and suffering—in the image of Christ. In other words, we heal from our own wounds. Filled with examples from everyday experience, *The Wounded Healer* is a thoughtful and insightful guide that will be welcomed by anyone engaged in the service of others.

_____. *Turn My Mourning Into Dancing: Finding Hope in Hard Times*. Nashville: W. Publishing Group, 2001.

In times of suffering, simplistic answers ring empty and hollow. But Henri Nouwen, beloved spiritual thinker and author, offers real comfort in the concrete truth of God's constancy. Nouwen suggests that by greeting life's pains with something other than despair, we can find surprising joy in our suffering. He suggests that the way through suffering is not in denial, but rather in living fully amid the trials life brings our way.

Oates, Wayne E. and Charles E. Oates. *People in Pain: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.

From the vantage point of psychology, the authors look at the perception of pain and the believers that result from physical discomfort. They discuss positive ways to fashion a life that outwits, outmaneuvers, and out-prays the power of pain to dominate life. Finally, they consider the spiritual concerns of the pain victim, emphasizing the pastor's role in helping individuals find in their relationship to God a way of transcending pain and its power to control their lives.

Pennel, Joe E., Jr. *The Gift of Presence: A Guide to Helping Those Who Suffer*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009.

Offers practical help to give confidence and skill to clergy and laity serving the broken hearted. With a central message on the importance of simply being there, Pennel combines practical "how-to's" with prayers, readings, and services. This small, case-bound book outlines real ways to help through planning visits, writing notes, finding scriptures and prayers to read, avoiding clichés, and thinking through the theology of God, humans, and suffering. The Gift of Presence includes pertinent topics such as the ministry of presence, quietness, sincerity, and the art of helping.

Piper, John, and Justin Taylor, eds. *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006.

The writers explore the many categories of God's sovereignty as evidenced in his Word. They urge readers to look to Christ, even in suffering, to find the greatest confidence, deepest comfort, and sweetest fellowship they have ever known.

Plantinga, Alvin C. *God, Freedom, and Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001.

In his discussion of natural theology (arguments to prove the existence of God) and natural atheology (arguments for the falsehood of theistic belief) Plantinga focuses on two of the traditional arguments: the ontological argument as an example of natural theology, and the problem of evil as the most important representative of natural atheology.

Powell, Paul W. *Why Me, Lord?* Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1981.

One reviewer found this book weak and full of clichés.

Schaeffer, Edith. *Affliction*. Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell, 1978.

Comes directly to grips with the eternal question of why we face suffering and affliction in this life, showing us how to trust in God alone for comfort.

Skoglund, Elizabeth. *More Than Coping: God's Servants Can Triumph Over Emotional Pain*. Minneapolis: World Wide, 1987.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil*. Second ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009.

In a world riddled with disappointment, malice and tragedy, what rationale do we have for believing in a benevolent God? In this book, John Stackhouse explores how great thinkers have grappled with this question—from Buddha, Confucius, Augustine, Hume and Luther to C. S. Lewis. He suggests that perhaps instead of asking the question, "Why does God allow evil and suffering," we should instead ask "Can God be trusted to be good and do good, even when appearances are strongly to the contrary?" Without brushing aside the serious problems posed by a God who allows incurable diseases, natural disasters and senseless crimes to bring misery into our lives, Stackhouse boldly affirms that this world is the world we actually need. Finally, he points to Christian revelation which promises the transformation of suffering into joy as the best guide to God's dealings with the world.

Stanley, Charles. *How to Handle Adversity*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1989.

Adversity is a reality that no one can avoid. Everyone asks *why* when adversity strikes. Yet Dr. Stanley contends, "As much as we all want to know the answer to the *why* question, it is really not the most significant question. The real question each of us needs to ask is, 'How should I respond?'" The book will help you learn to: Ask the right questions about adversity, Become a comfort to others, Rediscover the faithfulness of God, Deal with pride and weakness, Look at adversity from God's perspective, and Glorify God in your adversity.

Sproul, R. C. *Surprised by Suffering*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1989.

The problem of suffering is often raised by those who question the goodness or the power of God. In this book, newly revised and expanded, R.C. Sproul provides biblical answers to the questions all of us ask about suffering and addresses some of the many unbiblical conclusions that are put forth today. In the end, he shows that suffering is not outside the realm of God's providence and His good purposes.

Swindoll, Charles R. *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back: Persevering Through Pressure*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1980.

Talks about standing firm when faced with life's deepest problem, growing and finding spiritual help in lonely times of crisis and pain, and walking through setbacks to emerge a stronger person on the other side.

Tada, Joni Eareckson. *A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mystery of Suffering, Pain and God's Sovereignty*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010.

In this eloquent account of her current struggle with physical pain, Eareckson Tada offers her perspective on divine healing, God's purposes, and what it means to live with joy.

Tada, Joni Eareckson, and Steven Estes. *When God Weeps*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Waters, Larry J., and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *Why O God? Suffering and Disability in the Bible and Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.

The writers do more than offer a biblical perspective on suffering and disability; they draw from very personal experiences to explore Christians' responsibility toward those who suffer—all the while reminding us that as we seek to help the hurting, they will minister to us in return.

Wenham, John W. *The Enigma of Evil: Can We Believe in the Goodness of God?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *When Life Falls Apart.* Grand Rapids, MI: F. H. Revell, 1998.
You should read this book.

Wise, Robert L. *When There Is No Miracle: Finding Hope in Pain and Suffering.* Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984.

This book is highly recommended for anyone searching for answers in the midst of what seems to be unanswered prayers.

Wright, Linda Raney. *Hope for the Sick and Hurting: Help for You or Someone You Love to Cope with the Pain, Stress, and Discouragement of Being Ill.* Nashville: T. Nelson, 1990.

Learn how you can cope with the pain, stress, and discouragement of being ill. Written for both those in pain and those taking care of someone in pain.

Yancey, Philip. *Disappointment with God.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.

The author poses three questions that Christians wonder but seldom ask aloud: Is God unfair? Is he silent? Is he hidden? This insightful and deeply personal book points to the odd disparity between our concept of God and the realities of life. Why, if God is so hungry for relationship with us, does he seem so distant? Why, if God cares for us, do bad things happen? What can we expect from God after all? Yancey answers these questions with clarity, honesty, and biblical assurance. He points us beyond life's disappointments and the cynicism they can breed to a stronger, wiser faith, a confidence in God's deep love for us, and a thirst to reach not just for what God gives, but for who God is.

———. *Where Is God When It Hurts?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977.

If there is a loving God, then why is it that ... ? You've heard that question, perhaps asked it yourself. No matter how you complete it, at its root lies the issue of pain. Does God order our suffering? Does he decree an abusive childhood, orchestrate a jet crash, steer a tornado through a community? Or did he simply wind up the world's mainspring and now is watching from a distance? In this Gold Medallion Award-winning book, Philip Yancey reveals a God who is neither capricious nor unconcerned. Using examples from the Bible and from his own experiences, Yancey looks at pain—physical, emotional, and spiritual—and helps us understand why we suffer. This book will speak to those for whom life sometimes just doesn't make sense. And it will help equip anyone who wants to reach out to someone in pain but just doesn't know what to say.

Zurheide, Jeffry. *When Faith Is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death* (Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series) Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.

Written by a new generation of recognized experts in pastoral care, these brief, foundational books offer practical advice to pastors on the most frequent dilemmas of pastoral care and counseling.



Appendix A

Uses of Suffering⁸

By John S. Feinberg

1. “God may allow affliction for the same end as in the case recorded in John 9:1-3. In that situation, affliction *provided an opportunity for God to manifest His power....* Sometimes God may allow affliction in the life of the righteous as a basis for some future working in that person’s life, a work that demonstrates the power and glory of God.”
2. “God may use affliction to *remove a cause for boasting*. When things go smoothly in life, we tend to feel self-sufficient. Affliction reminds us that we aren’t, and that we must rely on God” (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:7).
3. “God allowed Job’s afflictions at least in part to *demonstrate true or genuine faith to Satan....* Satan saw that there are those who serve God out of genuine love, not because ‘it pays to do so.’ ... Not only will Satan see this, but others will as well.... This is also why Peter tells us that in the midst of affliction we must be ready to explain why we continue to hold on to our hope in God (1 Peter 3:15).”
4. “[A]t times God uses affliction as an opportunity to *demonstrate to believers and nonbelievers the body-of-Christ concept*” (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Galatians 6:2). “Suffering allows the afflicted person to experience the compassionate love of God through other believers.... In addition, suffering gives other believers the chance to express Christian love to those in need.”
5. “Scripture teaches a number of ways in which the afflictions of the righteous *promote their sanctification.*”
 - a. “[S]uffering helps the believer to put away sin” (1 Peter 4:1-2).
 - b. Suffering “*refines one’s faith*” (1 Peter 1:6-7).
 - c. “God uses suffering to *educate believers* in ways that cause them to grow closer to the Lord and be more Christlike” (cf. James 1:3-4; Romans 5:3-4; 1 Peter 5:10). “Likewise, Hebrews 5:8 says that even Christ in his humanity learned obedience through suffering.”
 - d. “Through experiences of affliction believers can also draw closer to the Lord by *catching a glimpse of His sovereignty and majesty* such as they have never seen before” (Job 42:5).
 - e. “God may use affliction to *challenge the righteous to growth, rather than to fall into sin.*” James 1:13ff tell us that affliction is the occasion for temptation (for example, to be angry at God). We can grow through affliction by resisting the temptation that accompanies affliction.
 - f. Affliction “offers the sufferer tremendous opportunities to *imitate Christ*” (cf. 1 Peter 3:17-18).
6. “Sometimes God permits affliction into the life of the righteous because of the *ministry that is possible in suffering....* God uses suffering to prepare us to minister to other believers (and nonbelievers) who undergo affliction” (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
7. “God also uses affliction to *prepare us for further trials.*” He is instilling in us, through our present trials, the grace that will be needed for future trials.

⁸ From Chapter 14 of *The Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problem of Evil* by John S. Feinberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994).

8. God can use affliction in the life of believers “*to prepare them for judgment of their works for rewards*. In 1 Peter 1:7, Peter says affliction helps prepare sufferers for that judgment so that their faith and actions will ‘be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’”
9. “God may use the afflictions of the righteous as a *basis for ultimately exalting them*.... Affliction has a way of bringing us low so that God may some day exalt us” (cf. 1 Peter 5:6).
10. “God may use affliction as a *means to take a believer to be with Himself*.”
11. “God may simply want to *teach us that His ways are ultimately beyond our scrutiny*.”

*Do not pray for easy lives;
pray to be stronger people!
Do not pray for tasks equal to our powers,
pray for powers equal to our tasks.
Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle,
but you shall be a miracle.
Every day you shall wonder at yourself,
at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God.*

— Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), American clergyman, author

Appendix B

Eight Kinds of Suffering in the O.T.⁹

By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

1. Retributive Suffering

This is “suffering that comes as a result of sin because sin must call down the judgment of God.” For example, God’s judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem.

2. Educational or Disciplinary Suffering

This is the “constructive use of suffering for our growth as believers and for the shaping of our character.” For example, Solomon tells us not to scorn the “chastening” and “correction” of the Lord (Proverbs 3:11). In the context of Job’s suffering, Elihu declared, “Who is a teacher like God?” (Job 36:22). The writer of Hebrews defended God’s discipline as being equivalent to that of a loving father (12:5-11).

3. Vicarious Suffering

“It is the enigma seen at times in the prophets, where in their roles as the messengers of God they experience suffering and abuse from the very people they want to rescue from the coming destruction.” One example of this is the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53:4-5). Jeremiah also suffered abuse from the people he tried to rescue from judgment (Jeremiah 4:19-22; 8:18-21; 15:15).

⁹ From Chapter 3 by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., in *Suffering and the Goodness of God* (Theology in Community), edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008).

4. Empathetic Suffering

“Often the pain and grief that come from suffering affect not only the sufferer, but also the lives and feelings of those who know, love, and watch the sufferer.... This type of suffering also affects our Lord, for ‘in all their distress he too was distressed . . . [yet] in his love and mercy he redeemed them . . . all the days of old’ (Isa. 63:9).”

5. Evidential or Testimonial Suffering

In such cases, “suffering produced a strong testimony or evidence of God’s faithfulness.” For instance, in the case of the testing of Job, the faithfulness of God was as much on trial as was the faith of Job (Job 1—2; cf. Hebrews 11:25-26).

6. Revelational Suffering

“Often our Lord uses suffering to bring us into a deeper knowledge of himself.” For example, Hosea’s suffering by which he came to understand experientially the suffering love of God.

7. Doxological Suffering

“Sometimes our Lord calls us to go through suffering not as a result of our own sins or to teach us some needed lesson but in order to show his own purpose and glory.” Joseph’s suffering brought glory to God and His ability to use evil for good (Genesis 45:4-5, 7; 50:20), as did the man born blind (John 9:1-3).

8. Eschatological or Apocalyptic Suffering

“The historical period of this present world age ends, according to the plan of Scripture, with a period of intense suffering.... Out of this furnace of affliction will emerge a purified people ready to face a whole new day in God’s eschaton (Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3)” (cf. Isaiah 24—27; Jeremiah 30—33; Ezekiel 33—38; Daniel 2—12; Zechariah 12—14).

Appendix C

Spiritual Suffering¹⁰

Positive Spiritual Themes	Possible Negative Indicators of Spiritual Suffering
Love (community, connection) Love, affection, commitment, compassion Relationships, community, connection, fellowship, companionship, esteem from others Forgiveness, grace, mercy, reconciliation, trust Self-connection, self-worth, self-love, self-respect, identity	Separation, loneliness, alienation, isolation, withdrawal, avoidance, disconnection Anger, hatred, rage, bitterness, revenge, grudges, despising, contempt Betrayal, abuse, lust Selfishness, self-centeredness, apathy Insecurity, self-loathing Toxic guilt, remorse, shame
Faith (worldview) Faith, worldview, personal philosophy Worship, awe, wonder, reverence, humility, reaching for the transcendent Prayer, contact	Doubt Self-worship, self-importance, solipsism Ignoring the spiritual Discarding one's faith Bitterness toward God Fear that God is only punitive Difficulties praying, ceased praying, self-only prayers
Hope (vision) Hope Meaning, purpose Courage, perseverance Perspective, vision	Despair, anguish Depression, discouragement, disappointment Meaninglessness, pointlessness, aimlessness, emptiness, drifting, confusion, lack of goals or vision
Virtue (ethics) Virtue, integrity, morality, ethics Consistency, character, loyalty Goodness, kindness Patient Honesty Humility Wisdom Justice Gratitude	Lying, falsity Appearances, not being who I am Arrogance, conceit Untrustworthiness Chronic denial Blaming others, not taking responsibility Dependency Ignorance Injustice Ingratitude, envy, jealousy, greed, pettiness
Beauty (renewal) Beauty, art, music, aesthetics, balance, elegance, nature Creativity, expression, imagination, curiosity Exploration Renewal, rest, quiet, meditation Humor, diversion, fun, play, laughter, joy	Chaos Fatigue, exhaustion, weariness, drudgery, overwork, burnout, depletion, over-involvement Dreariness, ugliness Repetition, dull routine, boredom, ennui Noise

¹⁰ Mark Bartel, "What is Spiritual? What is Spiritual Suffering?" *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 58.3 (2004):187-201.

Appendix D

Finding Benefit through Suffering¹¹

By Jeffrey Funk

I know God cares, but then why do I hurt so much?

We have a problem: a fallen world.

What is God doing to solve this problem?

I know God cares, but why does He wait to do something?

Would you know there's a problem without evil?

We would probably settle for only a partial removal of evil.

He's waiting for us to turn to Him. (2 Pe 3:3-9)

Can any good thing come from suffering? (cf. Ro 8:28)

No simple answers are adequate for the piercing cries of the soul who yearns to know why. One can only agree with Job:

For man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward (5:7, emphasis added).

Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil (14:1, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, God's Word does give some insights into a positive understanding of suffering. Here are twenty-plus of them. They are not placed in any order of importance.

1. To draw us closer to God and to make us fully dependent on Him alone.

Jb; Ps 14:6; 119:67; 71; Am 4:6-13; 5:4; 2 Co 1:8-10; 12:7-10

A good splash of ice-cold suffering can certainly wake us out of a spiritual slumber and cause us to turn to God and lean on Him.

2. To demonstrate our total commitment to God / Christ.

Jb 42:7-17; 2 Co 4; 1 Pe 1:7; Ja 1:3

It's certainly difficult to straddle the spiritual fence while going through suffering. We usually stand on either one side or the other of staying committed in our trust of God in difficult times.

3. To refine our character.

Pr 17:3; Ro 5:3-5; 8:28-29; 1 Pt 1:6-7; 5:10; Ja 1:2-4; He 12:10-11

Picture a gold or silver smith subjecting his crude ore to intense heat, causing the impurities of the molten mass to rise to the surface so that they may be skimmed off. The smith is patient with the purification process, at times even increasing the heat to make sure he gets rid of all the impurities. From time to time, he investigates the pot to see if his face is mirrored in the clear surface of the molten metal. When he can clearly see his image reflected in the molten metal, he knows that the gold or silver has reached its purest state.

Many people believe that the greatest "quality of life" is experiencing the absence of pain and suffering. But that's not the right perspective. The best quality of life is being conformed into Christ's image and

¹¹ From a seminar presentation given by Jeffrey Funk, 10/17/2013, and based on a long-time Bible study of the issue due to the suffering of his son, Joshua. Used by permission.

reflecting the fruit of the Spirit. And suffering is what God most often uses to refine our character. It's the chisel He may need to use to shape our character. Like agates in a tumbler, suffering can be allowed by God to smooth out the jagged edges of our character. We need to understand that God is more concerned with our *character* than He is with our *comfort*.

- To manifest the life of Christ in and through us (2 Co 4:7-11)

Pressure can be pernicious or productive. The Chinese have a character for the word "crisis." It includes the Chinese character *wēi 危* (dangerous, perilous) plus the Chinese character *jī 機* (incipient moment, crucial point, suitable occasion, opportunity). Within pain and suffering is the potential for embitterment (i.e., negative consequences—the danger) or increased sensitivity and depth (i.e., opportunity for growth—the incipient moment). Events and circumstances do not determine the outcome. Our resources (those within and those without) and our reactions play a major role in our healing recovery.

God allows suffering in our lives, not to knock us down and crush us, but to build us up into the image of Christ. These painful moments are life-changing opportunities. Let's face it: pressure produces. We enjoy the wonderful benefits of productive pressure when it's applied to an orange (orange juice) or peanuts (peanut butter). Remember: It's the fiery furnace that produces the hardened steel; it's the bruised flower that produces its fragrant perfume to add pleasant fragrance to our lives.

- To teach us patience and endurance (Ro 5:1-5; 1 Pe 2:18-25; Ja 1:2-4)

The word "patience" is from the Latin *patiōr*, which means "to suffer." We tend to only learn patience (longsuffering, perseverance) by going through affliction. Sometimes God is willing to sacrifice our comfort to strengthen our character.

- To teach us obedience and self-control (He 5:8)

It is often only in the crucible of life that we learn the true essence of what it means to be submission and self-disciplined.

- To strengthen us (1 Pe 5:10; Ph 1:14)

Clay that is put into the kiln is stronger than clay left in its natural state. Be assured of this fact: the Good Potter does not try to ruin or crack the pot when He puts it into the fire. His primary purpose is to make the pot stronger and more usable. When we experience trials, that suffering is being used by God to improve us and produce good things in our lives. God is able to use it in order to make us stronger and more usable for His purposes in our lives.

4. To increase our faith in God.

Ge 22; Jb 13:14-15; 42:7-17; Ps 46:1; Je 29:11

While knocked flat on our back in a tempest, we can look up and find that He is faithful and worthy of our trust amid the storms of life as well as in the calm.

5. To produce a broken and contrite heart.

Ps 32; 51; Jb 42:5-6; 2 Co 12:7; 1 Pe 5:6-7

A "contrite heart" is a broken, humble, penitent heart. God can use sorrow to turn us from sin and to seek salvation. He uses suffering to help soften the hardest of hearts. And when we hurt, God is there to heal our broken heart.

Self-centeredness and self-sufficiency can block spiritual progress; suffering can humble us before the living God.

6. To bring God glory.

Jn 9:1-3; 21:18-19; 1 Pe 1:7; Re 11:13

Sometimes God allows people to suffer (like the man born blind), not because they deserve it as a result of their sin, but so He can receive glory because of how He is going to deal with it.

7. To bring future glory (a basis for rewards).

Mt 5:10-12; Lk 24:26; Ro 8:18; 2 Co 4:16-17; 2 Tm 2:112; 1 Pe 1:7

To help in understanding Romans 8:18, imagine an old-fashioned scale. On one side of the scale is our present experience of suffering; on the other side is our future pleasure. By comparison, no matter how great today's suffering, it's totally outweighed by the glory, thrill and excitement of future victory guaranteed by God. Even Jesus had to go from the cup to the glory.

8. To cause us to consider our own mortality and focus on eternity.

Psalm 90:7-12; 103; Ec 7:1-3

God uses suffering to draw our attention away from this fleeting existence on earth and to help us focus on eternity, where He culminates the full expression of His love and justice.

9. To cause us to reevaluate our priorities; to help us keep things in proper perspective.

Ec 7:1-3; Ph 3:8

Trials help us to boil life down to its very essence. And when it comes right down to it, nothing else really matters but our loving relationship to the Lord (vertical love—the greatest commandment) and our loving relationship to others (horizontal love—the second greatest commandment).

10. To cause us to fix our hope in Christ's return.

Ro 8:18; 1 Pe 1:3-7; 4:13

Suffering reminds us that this imperfect world is not our perfect home. We're waiting for the ultimate end to all suffering in the eternal presence of the Prince of peace and King of kings.

11. To punish for sin.

Ge 3:14-19; 6:5-7; 11:1-9; 19:1-29; Ex 7—11

Sometimes, but not always, pain is the direct consequence of our sinful conduct—we reap what we sow (Ga 6:7).

12. To chasten us for personal sin to correct our ways and purify us.

Ex 20; Ps 107:17; Is 1:25; 24:5-6; Ho 8:9-10; Ac 5:1-11; 1 Co 11:29-30; He 12:4-13

Just as good parents discipline their children, so God disciplines His children. When suffering comes as a direct consequence of our sin, we should admit our guilt, confess to God, make appropriate restitution, and accept the consequences.

13. To teach us God's statutes: producing discernment and knowledge.

Ps 119:66-67, 71

Trials have a way of making us look for sufficient resources outside ourselves. One of the best resources always available to us is the Bible. From God's Word we gain good judgment about life. Even when afflictions come from bad sources, they can result in beneficial outcomes, especially when that outcome is a better understanding of God's Word.

14. To encourage us to keep God's Word rather than to stray from it (Him).

Ps 119:66-67

Trials can act like a hedge to keep us in the good pasture, whereas prosperity and pleasure can be a gap through which we can go astray.

15. To serve as a preliminary warning of the judgment to come.

1 Ki 15:5; Lk 16; Re 20:10-15

Whether people like it or not, there is a judgment day coming (He 9:27). Present suffering can be a warning to avoid eternal suffering.

16. To win the lost.

Ph 1:12-13; 2 Tm 2:8-10; 4:5-6; 2 Co 1:1-11

Paul said about his suffering, “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (Ph 1:12). Paul was in prison and saw his circumstances as part of God’s greater purpose of sharing the Good News about Jesus Christ.

17. To inspire others.

Ph 1:12-14

The word “progress” is the picture of woodcutters carving a road through a forest for an army to advance. Paul’s godly response to trials had cut new paths for the spread of the Gospel through believers being inspired by his example. How we personally meet trials will either be an inspiration or a discouragement to others.

18. To use the hurting who have hope (and have been comforted) to help the hurting who don’t (and are in need of comfort)—from comfort to comfort.

2 Co 1:3-11; 7:6-7; He 2:18

Suffering is not a path to desperation, but a channel of God’s comfort. God prepares us individually, by different trials, to have a special ministry of comfort to others that no one else can have. Who can best comfort a widow? Who can minister best to a cancer patient? Who better understands the ordeal of the paraplegic? Those who have been comforted by God during a similar trial are best equipped to come alongside others to bring them the same comfort available by faith in a loving God.

19. To be a deterrent to continual suffering.

Ex 20:20; Ps 139:19-24

To paraphrase David’s words, “Lord, as I look around, I notice that evil causes a lot of suffering. It would seem to me that the best way to solve this problem is to get rid of evil people. Oh, but wait a second! What about my hurtful ways that causes suffering? Okay, Lord, start with my heart!”

20. To bind believers together in a common purpose.

1 Co 12:26; 1 Pt 5:9; Re 1:9

The members of our natural body are made to have a care and concern for each part. So should it be in Christ’s body; all the members should sympathize with each other. As in the natural body, the pain of one part afflicts the whole, so Christians should share in the sufferings of one another and grow in grace together.

21. To teach us to give thanks “in” everything (2 Co 1:11; 1 Th 5:18) and even “for” everything (Ep 5:20)

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, that little phrase *en pante* in the Greek means in connection with everything that occurs. In connection with everything in our life, we are to give thanks no matter what it might be, with the obvious exception of personal sin. Paul is saying that no matter what happens to us in life, we are to be thankful. No matter what circumstance, no matter what struggle, vicissitude, trial, testing—we are to give thanks to God.

I can be thankful for the pain that I go through in a surgery if I know that that there's "healing" coming because of it. I can be thankful for the difficulty I go through in preparation if I know that the product of that preparation is going to change lives. I can be thankful for the process of pain that I might inflict on my body if I know that in the end, I'm going to be healthier because I exercise. There are many things in life that involve that perspective. If we look at the result, we can be thankful even for a process that's less than happy, joyful.

I know God cares, and I see some benefits of going through suffering, but I still hurt! How do I respond to the pain?

In my opinion, there are only two ways to handle trials/suffering: We either react with (1) a clenched fist or (2) an open palm. Either response has significant results for our lives. The choice is ours.

Option 1	Option 2
Clenched Fist – anger	Open Palm – acceptance
Resistance – blame God	Submission – pursue God
Bitterness – alienation from God	Joyfulness – identification with Christ
Self-centeredness – limited perspective	God-centeredness – eternal perspective
Despair – retrogression	Hopefulness – growth



In Acceptance Lieth Peace
By Amy Carmichael¹²

In acceptance lieth peace, O my heart be still;
Let thy restless worries cease and accept His will.
Though this test be not thy choice,
It is His—therefore rejoice.

In His plan there cannot be aught to make thee sad:
If this is His choice for thee, take it and be glad.
Make from it some lovely thing
To the glory of thy King.

Cease from sighs and murmuring. Sing His loving grace.
This thing means thy furthering to a wealthy place.
From thy fears He'll give release,
In acceptance lieth peace.

¹² Copied from *The Speaker's Quote Book*, Roy B. Zuck, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2009): 376-377.