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# 1: WHY, GOD?

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## *How to Face Life's Toughest Question*

SOONER OR LATER, you'll come to it, just like the rest of us.

Sooner or later, you're going to face that moment. It's on its way, no matter who you are or how you think. The Question is in your future. You'll run right into it, head-on, in some moment of emotional turmoil.

*Why, God? Why did you let that happen?*

It's as much of a cry as a question, really; a wound; a shout of betrayal of all the rules of life and fairness as you knew them.

So it may be a cry, but it expresses itself, every single time, as a question: *Why?* And it expresses itself, invariably, to one person. *Why, God?*

It comes when you're facing something that doesn't fit into the picture—something terribly, frightfully wrong in every way. And it's the most basic reflex of human nature to want to know the reason.

Perhaps the worst of the moment is knowing, with some awful inner assurance, that no answer is forthcoming—at least not the kind of answer you crave. Not the full and satisfying answer your heart cries out for. In this of all moments, the heavens fall silent. Count on it.

When will you face that question? Or could it be that this is old news, that you've faced the question before. Once. Twice. Maybe more times than you can count. Maybe your mind is full of this question during this season of your life, and it's the very reason you picked up this book.

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Perhaps it came when you confronted the death of a child. Perhaps it was the news of a natural disaster; perhaps some cruel, very personal heartbreak that brought the Question to the forefront of your mind.

You held it there, turned it around, and examined it from every angle, really grasping its implications for the first time—but not the last.

For, like some monster from a B-movie, the Question never dies. No matter how many times you knock it down, it always rises from the dust. There's always a sequel.

It can't be fought off, rationalized away, or overcome by the quantity and kindness of friends. There's no stake to hammer through its heart. The Question is no respecter of persons. You could be the richest person in the world, and still it is relentless, threatening that place in your soul where life makes sense, where all endings are happy ones.

*Why, God? Why did this happen?*

*Why didn't you stop it?*

*Why won't you explain yourself?*

Actually, the Question would never occur to us if the world weren't, overall, such a lovely place. Have you ever thought about that? Weeds aren't ugly unless they're seen in a garden or a beautiful lawn.

Our world is a garden. It's filled with majestic vistas that speak of a divine artist. We see the power of God in a sunset, feel his affection in the warmth of a little child, sense his wisdom and guidance in the cycles of life and nature. This earth is a museum of his magnificence, and we walk through it day by day, letting it fill our hearts to overflowing—until, once again, some horrendous event crashes into our midst, taunting our faith and defying our easy answers.

It's the number one question that people bring to me. *Why?* Why death, disaster, injustice on micro and macro scales? How can these things coexist with the loving, perfect God I've told them about so many times?

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I tell them he is love. I tell them we are his precious, beloved children, and that he has proven it; that he paid the highest of prices to bring us home to him. I tell them he's sovereign, which means that he's got the whole world in his hands.

Their response: "Pardon us, but—*this* world? This world of tsunamis and falling towers and poisoned skies, of death and war and disease? This world in which some of us are losing our homes because we can't find work? He may have the whole world in his hands, but is there not blood on those hands?"

I tell them God identifies with their grief. They tell me, "We don't want identification; we want intervention."

They can and do believe in the God I serve. But they want to know *why*. *Why* won't he step in when life turns inside out?

Can't he?

Or won't he?

I've had a lot of years to think about these things.



I'll never forget my first truly devastating experience with the Question.

It was the afternoon of homecoming at my home church, the happiest of happy days in congregational life. Homecoming is a great reunion, a joining of church present with church past. The prodigals return, and the pews are full. The aromas of home cooking drift through the building.

I was in my mid-twenties then, back for a visit; I was preaching at another church on most Sundays. It felt good to be home. We'd had a joyful worship service that morning, and people sang the hymns with gusto, though their voices were mingled with the rumblings of their stomachs. Incredible feats of cooking awaited, and everyone knew it.

It was a lovely day outdoors. We ate, we laughed, we played, and

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we swapped old church memories. The sounds of children's shouts rang through the air. Then those shouts—well, their tone changed. They became screams.

We came running and discovered the ghastly news. Our preacher, Gerald Comp, had dived deep into the frigid swimming hole while playing tag with some of the kids. One of the kids wanted to know why he didn't come up.

Life simply *stopped*. It felt that way to everyone. One moment, there had been laughter and play, the next it was as if death had stolen in, easily overcoming the sum of our joy.

**NEVER** before that moment had I ever seen my father cry.

Even now, I can close my eyes and recall the image of Gerald's wife, Barbara, and their two teenage daughters, standing with pale faces as his lifeless body was pulled from the waters. Some wept, some prayed, but most of us did both. We fell to our knees and pled with God, passionately, desperately, to glorify his name through the healing of Gerald Comp.

A group of men went about the business of resuscitation. It all came to nothing. There was our pastor, our man of God, a lifeless shell. He was having his own homecoming, death's mockery of our church's day.

Never before that moment had I ever seen my father cry.

*Why, God? Why Gerald? Why our church? Were our prayers not sincere enough? Were our tears not wet enough?*

Gerald Comp was a thirty-eight-year-old man, a revered pastor, a model husband and father, and a spiritual leader abounding in fruitfulness. If God wanted to remove one of his most effective servants from the earth, well, he'd certainly done that. How could there even be a reason?

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From Gerald's very mouth we had heard sermons on Romans 8:28, telling us that all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Many of us could rattle the words off our tongues without thinking. But now those words had real weight; now they had implications. The apostle Paul's math seemed like an imbalanced equation—theology that didn't add up.

As the ambulance came, and the rest of us stood huddled in one another's arms, we whispered about what came next. The name *Greg* was among those whispers. *Who will tell Greg?*

Greg Comp, the pastor's fourteen-year-old son, was home with the flu; he could have no idea that his life had changed forever, that in some mundane moment, he had lost something that could never be replaced.

Someone had to go and bring the news to Greg.

Thirty minutes later, a friend and I were heading for the Comp home. I couldn't imagine what I was going to say or do, how I was going to be the harshest messenger of his life.

I was no more than a decade older than Greg. I thought about my own father, and tried to imagine myself in this position. Where would I be now if *I* had been deprived of my dad at fourteen years old? What might my life be like?

As I realized the struggles in store for Greg Comp, I felt so many things: speechless, confused, spiritually disarmed, upset. What words could I possibly say that would not come across as unfeeling platitudes?

In the end, I think I realized that any words I chose, other than the information I bore, were next to irrelevant. Most of the point was simply to be there, to share an unthinkable moment. There were no magic expressions or potions to dull his pain.

And yes, I asked it, within myself: *Where were you, God? Why did you let this happen? How is this family supposed to bear up?*

And from heaven came a profound silence—or so it seemed to me. *Why, God?*

## THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Let's be honest: This is no easy question, the relationship of God to human suffering. The wise and the devout have grappled with it throughout history, and not always to a victorious conclusion. St. Teresa of Avila said, "Lord, if this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder you don't have many!" At least hers was less an expression of doubt than of frustration.

Others have taken hold of the Question as a kind of checkmate in the game of rationalizing God out of existence—or at least diminishing our view of him. Their line goes like this:

- God is purportedly good. Yet there is great human suffering.
- Since God doesn't intervene, he lacks either the will or the power.
- If he lacks the will, he isn't good after all. (If he's God, he isn't good.)
- If he lacks the power, he isn't God after all. (If he's good, he isn't God.)

It's a striking line of reasoning. But it's also a little too cut and dried, right? God, the world, and suffering: These are not simple issues. We all sense that there could be other reasons God would hold back from stopping anything and everything unpleasant in this world.

So we look for other reasons that evil and suffering may exist; we round up the usual suspects.

### 1. Discipline

Maybe it's simple cause and effect. This is the "you had it coming" argument. Once Jesus came across a blind man, and his disciples immediately asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2).

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They are hoping, of course, for a lively philosophical debate with Jesus the teacher. They have been taught that disease or disability is mark of someone's sin. So whose?

Jesus tells his disciples they're asking the wrong question. It's not about who sinned, but how the goodness of God can shine through the situation. And he proceeds to make that happen. As always, Jesus gets to the root of the subject in a startling way. He shows us an old question from a brand-new angle. As we'll see, he has hit upon a key element of the problem of suffering.

We'd like to scoff at the disciples' thinking and say that our God doesn't work that way, punishing sin with suffering. The problem is, the Bible says that he does—sometimes. Moses wasn't allowed to enter the Promised Land because of a certain incident in which he lost his temper and usurped God's glory, a serious offense. Miriam, his sister, was temporarily struck with leprosy for undermining Moses' leadership.

And those are not isolated incidents. There's an important passage in Hebrews 12. It tells us that God disciplines us as a father disciplines his children—for our good. Discipline is simply a part of loving training. We do need to distinguish punishment from discipline. The former is simply a penalty dealt out for a misdeed; the latter is a loving form of training. We impose discipline on ourselves not as punishment but to be better people.

So God disciplines. But there are other angles, too.

### 2. Poor Decisions

Sometimes we suffer due to our own willful error. Maybe the warning was on the label all along, and we simply ignored it. The sign said the road was slippery, and we pushed the accelerator down.

**WE** can't rail against God when we're given fair warning.

Let's say Uncle Bob's bad report from the doctor concerned lung cancer. He smoked for years, everyone nagged him about it, and he

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really did mean to stop. But the fact is, he didn't. He foolishly ignored the warning signs. So it's not as if God is suddenly, arbitrarily inflicting this bad medical report like a lightning bolt of sheer wrath. Uncle Bob quite sadly brought this upon himself.

Sometimes we choose the wrong friends, eat the wrong foods, make the wrong decisions in business or in family. The old TV detective Baretta used to say, "Don't do the crime if you can't do the time."

But the Bible puts it better: "Be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Life comes with any number of hazard labels. We can't rail against God when we're given fair warning. Actions have consequences.

### 3. Satanic Attack

Could it be the devil?

It's the simplest and most logical of arguments, in a way: All good things come from heaven, all bad things are the work of Satan. The Bible describes how he attacked a good man named Job, who suffered deeply and thoroughly.

Paul spoke of a "thorn in the flesh," some unpleasant infirmity that God allowed Satan to use as a weapon against the apostle. From the devil's perspective, it was an attack; from God's, it was a tool to protect Paul's humility.

Again, here's a compelling clue to how God relates to our pain. An attack could originate from hell, while shaping us for heaven. The devil himself—as much as he hates it—finds his own place in the vast plan of God, who is all-powerful, capable of using any element as part of the great tapestry he is knitting together.

### 4. The Sins of Others

The disciples suggested that the blind man may have been blind because of his parents' sins. This was logical, from their perspective, because the man had been born with his infirmity; it couldn't be his fault if he was born that way.

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Sometimes relatively innocent people suffer out of all proportion to any argument of sin being the cause. A little child dies. A drunk driver steals the life of a promising young lady. An emotionally disturbed man opens fire in a theater or a school. A child is born with a drug addiction stemming from the mother's use of cocaine.

Surely God is not dispensing "discipline" through such horrendous events; it would be mere punishment, serving no purpose for the victim. No, in these cases, people are clearly suffering for the sin of others. It's an unavoidable conclusion, but not a very pleasing one: We may suffer as the consequence of others' sins.

It brings us right back to the question of God's place in this: Why would he allow the innocent to be victimized for someone else's wrongs?

And yet we read in the Old Testament the idea that the sins of the fathers are visited on the third and fourth generations. It may not seem fair, but it's the way the world turns. We must take into account that our sins put out ripples, in the world around us and the future ahead of us.

### 5. Persecution

Here is another striking idea from the Bible: "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). So maybe, bad things happen to good people *because* they're good people.

Again, this checks out logically. We know that if we take a stand for biblical values in an anti-biblical world, we will face certain consequences: ridicule, rejection, possibly loss of work or even freedom, in some circumstances. People are still punished or even executed for their faith in some parts of the world. We've seen businesses lose income when their prominently Christian leaders stood firm for biblical values. Jesus said this would happen, and there's never been a time when he wasn't proven correct.

## 6. A Fallen World

There's also the distinctly Christian idea that we live not just among fallen people, but in an entire fallen world. In other words, the rebellious sin of Adam and Eve caused all of creation to be corrupted. Paul teaches, in Romans 8, that all of this world "groans" as in child-birth pains, awaiting the birth of a new creation.

This helps us to account for natural calamities: tsunamis, earthquakes, diseases, floods, and even the attacks of vicious animals. We can suffer through non-human agency, and the Bible teaches us that even in these cases, we are feeling the consequences of a world that has rebelled.

As a matter of fact, we find this subject arising much more frequently in recent days. Monster storms have devastated New Orleans and New York; and even near my home, an F4 tornado twisted its way through the community at 170 miles per hour, killing eleven people and doing untold damage. These are the times when people come to me with haunted eyes and ask, "Why?"

The answer is that our planet and our people suffer from the fall of humanity. For this life, we will see the result of rebellion against God again and again, and we call the natural disasters "Acts of God."

Even so, I suspect Jesus would point out that we're still asking the wrong questions. We're quick to brand horrendous things as acts of God, but what about all things bright and beautiful? What about a gentle spring rain, a day of glorious weather, a field of ripe corn? Are these not also acts of God?

In the same way, we look to the heavens in the midst of a bad day and say, "Why me, Lord?" Bad moments are quickly dubbed "God moments." But when something good happens, we tend not to see it in that way. Fathers don't tend to hold a first newborn child, look to heaven, and cry out, "Why me, Lord? Why do I deserve such a beautiful blessing?"

When was the last time you rose in the morning and asked God

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why he gave you another precious day of life? Three square meals? Family, church, health?

Maybe that's one of the right questions.

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## WHAT EXACTLY IS EVIL?

Everyone knows that some believe God doesn't exist. You might be surprised to know that some don't believe evil "exists"! How can that be?

Augustine, the early Christian leader, believed that evil does not exist as a created entity, but as a corruption of the good that God created. Satan, he argued, cannot create at all—only God can do that. So the devil is limited to twisting good things into bad ones. For example, lust is a warped version of proper desire.

Through this argument, Augustine was one of the first thinkers to explain why God allows suffering. God is infinitely good, and nothing evil can come from him. What we call evil is the result of the free will of people, whose disobedience warps God's wonderful creation.

The entire world is impacted by the rebellion of Adam and Eve (and the rest of us, each day) as a consequence of the free will God gave us to choose—and the way we dishonor that gift. Thus we have evil, human and "natural."

Evil is never an act of God, but the result of the acts of men and women (even if indirectly so).

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## THE QUESTION REMAINS

We can name all these *sources* of suffering and more, but none of them get to the root of the *why* question. Wherever the bad things

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came from—why didn't God do something about them?

After all, we're told that God has loved us with an everlasting love. The Bible goes into incredible detail to show us the depth of that love; the fact that he has loved us as his very children, that we are God's handiwork, created by him to do good works.

Meanwhile, we're also told that God is infinitely powerful, that nothing is impossible with him. He is *sovereign*, which means that the buck stops here; he created everything, he knows when the smallest bird falls from a tree, and his hand utterly controls human destiny.

So how do we put these two realities together? How can God be both wonderfully good and ultimately powerful, while allowing all the evil that we see and experience?

**EACH** one of us,  
if we intend to  
be serious about  
pursuing God, must  
wrestle through  
the night with the  
mysteries of  
good and evil.

Like everyone else, I wish God would phone me and clue me in. I know all the big theological issues, but I get frustrated; I long for him to just give me the short answer. I almost wish he wouldn't trust me so much to handle the hard questions of faith—but that's exactly what he does.

When I was in school, my mathematics text sometimes had the answers in the back of the book. I knew that no matter how difficult any problem seemed, no matter how inside out it twisted my mind, there was a wonderfully logical, perfectly neat answer on the final pages of that book.

I do believe the Bible has the answers. The “back” of the book, known as the New Testament, has the solution to every problem. But these are not encapsulated in simple numbers or a few words. They must be worked out within the human heart, and held together by the glue of faith.

I think I realized this even as my friend and I took that nightmare ride to the Comp home to tell a fourteen-year-old boy about the death

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of his father. I knew I'd be grappling with that *why* as long as I drew breath, and no matter how deep my faith grew. I knew that as I grew ever closer to God, my questions would only add up. Far greater minds than mine had done battle with these things. Why should I even jump into the ring?

Except that I knew I must. Just as *you* must. Each one of us, if we intend to be serious about pursuing God, must wrestle through the night with the mysteries of good and evil. Jacob did that in Genesis 32. At a crossroad moment of his life, a dark night of his soul, he was visited by a messenger of God. The two of them literally wrestled until sunset.

Jacob fought for all he was worth, and wouldn't let go until he had his blessing. Neither should we. I believe we are blessed by the courage we show when we squarely face our doubts. Conversely, we are diminished by looking the other way, closing our minds, and "protecting" our faith as if it were some weak and fragile thing.

The way to strengthen faith is to walk forward in it, facing all the hard questions and trusting in the goodness of God for resolution. I've tried to do that as long as I've known Christ, and here is what I've found: The mysteries, to some extent, endure. God must be God, and can't be reduced to the easy and rational and comfortable.

We can't make him smaller and easier to carry around in our minds; instead, our own minds and spirits must expand. They must grow stronger and wider, so that they can allow for the things that must be taken on faith. As we walk forward in that way, we do find out just how good, *and* how powerful, God really is.

As a matter of fact, I find that this is even true of people. They too are mysterious in many ways. Every ordinary person you know is a unique creation, filled with surprises and impossible to pigeonhole—the living sum total of a life no one else has lived, a uniqueness no one but God could have designed. Should we expect to understand every little thing about the Creator himself, when his people are so wonderfully unpredictable?

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So God wants me to know him; he even wants me to have intimacy with him. But he doesn't want me to live under the illusion that I can get him all figured out—he would then be less than God. What he wants is for us to accept his mystery and trust his character. As I've sought to do that, I've discovered that the other questions often reveal their answers in startling and wonderful ways.

Take the story of Greg Comp, who lost his father.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT SEEDS

As members and friends of the church, we stood with broken hearts as our pastor's lifeless body lay there in the grass. God could not have seemed more absent to us—his heart colder than the waters that had stolen breath from our spiritual leader. But was God truly absent, or did our tears simply blind us from seeing him? Was his heart truly too cold, or was it too deep for us to fathom the plans that he had?

I sat and talked with Greg, and saw the shock roll across him, slowly preparing him to take on the long siege of grief that would follow. Our church, too, had a period of mourning. As a matter of fact, a strange thing transpired through our sadness: Our relationships deepened. We learned to depend upon each other, to minister to each other through our personal gifts, in ways that frankly wouldn't have come about otherwise. Most of the people ultimately turned from their anger at God, simply because they needed the comfort only he could offer. They went deeper with him not in spite of their pain, but because of it. And they went deeper in their fellowship together as his children.

The day came when we reflected on our little group, no more than 150 members, and realized that we had somehow produced dozens of preachers, missionaries, and powerful servants of Christ, each of whom impacted larger circles of humanity for the sake of God's kingdom. Among those servants is Greg Comp, who at one time would pastor the same church in which his dad spent his final days. To the world at

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large, that would seem more than peculiar. Greg would be expected to get as far away as he could from such a tragic place that dealt him such a blow; many would predict him to walk away from God himself.

Greg sees it differently. He is his father's last and most significant gift. Gerald's life was too short, but his legacy is deep and wide and full and nowhere close to its conclusion.

That's how God does things. If you come to be a member of Greg's church, and you experience some kind of emotional turmoil, Greg can minister to you with a power and sensitivity only available to those who have known what it is to suffer, to ask the questions, and to grow in the faith even when the answers didn't come easily.

Jesus liked word pictures in his teaching, and one of his favorite visual images was the simple idea of a seed.

He said the following: "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (John 12:24).

Ordinary human bitterness would see the death of Gerald Comp only for the pain it brought. Trust in God sees Gerald as a seed—for that's what we all are in God's spiritual economy, seeds capable of eternal harvesting. Gerald fell to the ground, his life and devotion took root, and through him God has produced a bounty that will only be fully measured when we reunite in heaven.

And on that great day, I imagine Gerald will laugh with us and shake his head in awe over the wisdom and ultimate goodness of God. And he wouldn't change a thing. Gerald, of course, would have a heavenly perspective that, from his position, would make all things beautifully clear.

One of the deepest secrets of life is to be able to view reality through that kind of lens that now—to see earth through eternal eyes. "We fix our

**IT'S ONE** thing to possess an eternal mindset while hearing a sermon or reading this book. But can you do that when the darkness falls?

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eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen” (2 Corinthians 4:18). Can you do that? It’s one thing to possess an eternal mindset while hearing a sermon or reading this book. But can you do that when the darkness falls?

Matt Davidson was a gifted and godly worship leader in our church. During his mid-thirties, as the father of three children, he was taken suddenly and unexpectedly by an aneurysm. Again, an entire church was devastated.

Two of Matt’s fellow ministers stood outside his room as the family wept and prayed by Matt’s lifeless body in the hospital bed. One of them, Kurt Saunder, said to Greg Allen, the other one, “You and I believe all things are possible with God. What do you think? Should we go in and pray for God to raise Matt from the dead? Because he is all-powerful—he can do it. What a victory that would be!”

It eventually hit those two pastors that their request for resurrection would have been a very selfish one. Matt was in heaven! Why would he want to come back? If they could have spoken with Matt at that very moment and said, “Matt, we’re praying for you to come back to earth,” they were confident he would have responded, “Are you kidding me? Don’t do that! I’m in heaven, man! I have never been so happy, I’m in the presence of Jesus. I’ve never felt this good. Sorry, I’ll stay here and wait for you!”

### **THE POWER OF MINDSET**

For most people today, those two preachers’ conclusions would seem like an upside-down way to think about losing a close friend. It’s because most people have minds attuned only to earthly things. The more we live that way, the more we come to believe this world is all there is. Eternal thinking liberates us from the desperation of that idea; it constantly refreshes us with the understanding that there is a better life, one with no more tears, no more suffering—one where we finally

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see Christ face-to-face.

Now, does that mean we smile and laugh when we lose someone? Of course not! Our grief is as real and as strong as the truth that we are separated, for now, from those we love. But genuine faith brings remarkable power in these situations. Our tears are tempered by the quiet joy of knowing someone we love faces no more pain, and is waiting for a reunion that we'll someday enjoy.

This book is about learning to think about the hardest question with godly wisdom. You and I face many questions, many trials. But we can face them together. Through the topics we'll approach here, we have an opportunity to focus on the practical realities of living in a fallen and hurtful world. Here are some of the issues we will explore:

- Much of the pain today is rooted in hurting families, in which children needlessly suffer. How can we take on that problem?
- What about the endless temptations we face? What happens when we're falsely accused? Again we ask: *Why must I go through these things, Lord?* And I believe there are answers and strategies for us to discuss.
- What about long periods of discouragement? Why would God have us suffer through these, and what can we do to change things? We'll talk about it.
- Conversely, what about those times when life goes well? These are the occasions when it would never occur to us to ask, *Why, God?* And therein lies the danger. The devil can be very effective in his disguise as an angel of light.
- Then there are times when others attack us. We expect people to be held accountable for their wrong actions, yet it doesn't happen. Why?
- Finally, let's return to the area of grief. These are the occasions when we ask God the hardest questions. Why must

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we lose the ones we love? Why must the separation be so lengthy and painful? There are many questions here, as well as many wise approaches to the grief we all must face.

For better or for worse, we think of all these tough times as “acts of God.” Maybe that’s unfair of us. Yet those three words are a good start. Every time you hit a rough spot in life, you’ll find it can become a true act of God, a staging area for him to do something incredible—something that grabs the attention of a world that craves answers.

When the darkness comes, we simply have to learn the art of night vision. We must see the outlines of God’s hand, acting for our benefit out of his infinite love and wisdom. A man named Joseph once did that. In the pitch-black of a dungeon, he held on to the light of God’s goodness, which can’t be shut out no matter how deep the pit we’ve entered.

We’ll use Joseph as our focal point for these lessons, because his struggles are so human, so recognizable, and because they give us invaluable clues to the acts of God in the midst of the struggles of people. Joseph’s story is found in the book of Genesis.

But in the end, this is a book not about Joseph but about *you*. Each of the challenges noted above is one you’ve either faced or will face. Each represents a defining moment in your identity as a human being. Will it finally be revealed as an act of God, a cross that gives way to a crown? Your choices will make the difference.

For now, we have some unfinished business with life’s toughest question. Let’s discover some practical strategies for facing the *Why* by asking a better question: *How?* How can we take these trials and see them through to triumphs? In the next chapter, we’ll discover some keys.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. Describe the occasion when you first questioned God’s goodness. What happened? How did your friends or family

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- view the incident? How was your view of God affected?
2. Several causes of evil are discussed. Which have been most common in your life? Which do you feel are the most difficult to deal with?
  3. In an encounter with a blind man, Jesus showed the disciples they were asking the wrong question. Explain his point. How can this insight help us deal with our suffering?
  4. What are some practical ways we can develop an eternal mindset, viewing our experiences in terms of God's eternal purposes?