

Are you hurting?

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The psalmist gives us a glimpse into his dark night of the soul with six questions he asks God—questions every hurting man has no doubt asked. As I find myself in my own season of suffering, I'm being reminded of deep truths along the way.



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We teach in our [No Man Left Behind training](#) that five types of men are in every church: the Natural Man (a man who hasn't yet placed his faith in Christ), the [Cultural Christian](#), the Biblical Christian, the Servant Leader, and, overarching all of those, the Hurting Man.

The overarching nature of that fifth type holds two realities: first, hurting men exist all across the other four types, and second, every single one of us will find ourselves in a season where we are a hurting man.

The Dark Night of the Soul

“Hurting” could also be called suffering. Many men are suffering—financially, physically, relationally, even spiritually. It’s rare we get easy answers.

[The problem of suffering](#) is threefold; humanly speaking, in our pain, we assume that either—

1. God doesn’t know,
2. God doesn’t care, or
3. God can’t do anything about it.

One psalm that conveys these feelings in a powerful way is Psalm 77. The psalmist is experiencing a dark night of the soul—a sleepless night caused by some unnamed anxiety. He is reflecting on his past experiences with God, and wonders where those feelings and assurances have gone.

[Psalm 77:2](#) starts with him crying out, “When I was in distress, I sought the Lord.” Next to it in the margin of my Bible, I had written, “Why only then?”

But I know why. In *my* distress, far more than in the good times, I truly do seek Him—His words of comfort and hope and His tangible presence.

In [Psalm 77:7-9](#), the psalmist goes on, in his pain, to ask six questions rapid fire that I would guarantee every hurting man has asked in some form at some time:

- Will the Lord reject me forever?
- Will He never be favorable again?
- Has His lovingkindness ceased forever?
- Has His promise come to an end forever?
- Has God forgotten to be merciful?
- Has He in anger withdrawn His compassion?

In other words: Doesn't God know? Doesn't He care? Can't He do something about it?

The Whys of Suffering

Today I find myself in a season of suffering—landing hard in the category of “hurting man.”

Three months ago, my wife of 48 years suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. I'm still in shock, and still go through the first stage of grief (denial) on a daily basis.

I've not asked God all six of those questions penned by the psalmist, but I do go through the whys. Why this? Why now?

And although I have yet to hear any kind of audible voice, really I *do* know why. Scripture tells us we are called to suffer. Numerous verses remind us that part of being in this world is suffering. Christ Himself wasn't exempt.

Yet, there are more layers to it, I know. I've repeated these verses, as a pastor, in literally hundreds of funerals: “Blessed is the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” ([2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#)).

And now, it's my time to live out these verses—these truths.

The God of All Comfort

Since my wife's death, I have heard of no fewer than seven close friends who have lost their spouse. I have been called upon to comfort them—offering encouragement, hope, and peace—in the same way that I have received it from God.

Are you experiencing any trouble right now? Pain, sorrow, loss, anxiety? God has most likely placed someone in your life who has gone through something very similar, to bring you His comfort.

It isn't easy, especially as men, to reach out to someone else, but I would encourage and challenge you to do so. During a season of suffering, we are all prone to withdrawing from God and others. Instead, allow your dark night of the soul to drive you *toward* Him and others.

Who around you may be able to relate to what you're going through? Call them, ask them to meet you for a cup of coffee, and listen to their story, their hope, their counsel. Ask them to pray with you.

If you don't have that person, [you can get in touch with me](#). We may do a lot of crying together, but we can also find and rest in the blessed assurance that God is sovereign.

His truth is your solid foundation and the anchor of hope in the midst of whatever storm you're going through.

"For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ" ([2 Corinthians 1:5](#)).

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