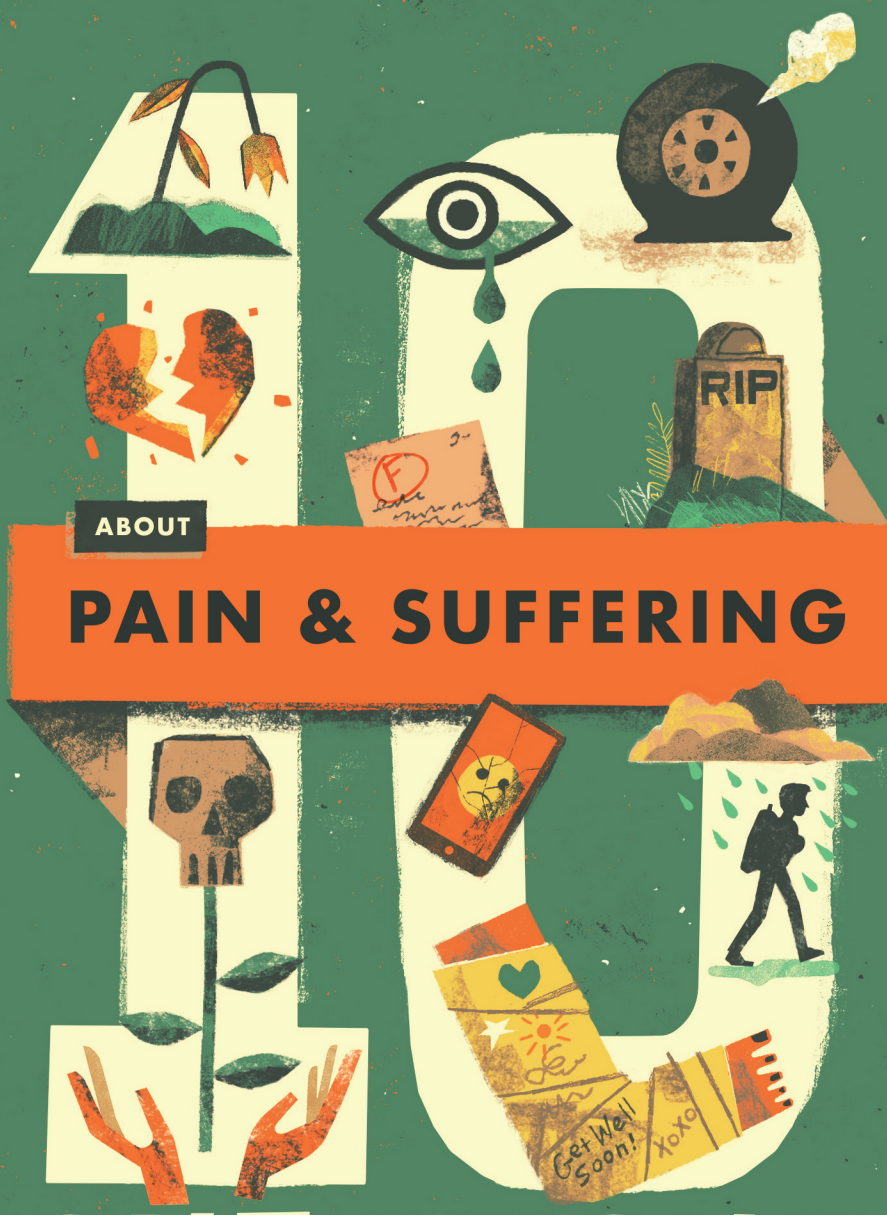




ABOUT

PAIN & SUFFERING

QUESTIONS

30 DEVOTIONS FOR
KIDS, TEENS & FAMILIES

BETH
BROOM

"In a world where suffering touches every life, Beth Broom gently leads families through their hardest questions with the hope of Christ. With warmth and deep compassion, *10 Questions About Pain and Suffering* invites weary hearts to find a gospel hope—one that is honest about sorrow yet unwavering in Christ's steadfast love. For families facing sorrow, these pages offer comfort, gospel hope, and the faithful love of Christ."

Darby Strickland, Faculty, Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation; author, *Something Sad Happened*

"Tackling tough topics such as pain and suffering and responding to common questions for both teens and adults require remarkable skill. Beth Broom makes a difficult area of theology understandable and practical. Written with both theological depth and a counselor's heart and eyes, this book will serve a variety of people and audiences."

Jonathan Holmes, Executive Director, Fieldstone Counseling

"*10 Questions About Pain and Suffering* is a remarkably honest and helpful guide for kids, teenagers, families—anyone, really. Beth Broom walks us through difficult questions, addressing them head-on with great care and humility. Each question is given the space for earnest and multifaceted reflection, with answers and discussion flowing out in successive layers of biblical truth and wisdom."

Scott James, MD, author, *The Sower; The Expected One; When Your Child Is Ill*; and *Deep Breath, Little Whisper*

"Speaking directly to kids, teens, and families, this devotional-style book puts God's love and comfort on full display amid our hardest moments. Beth Broom doesn't just help readers understand suffering; she shows us how to find hope and healing in the middle of it. Whether your family is going through a tough time or you just want to understand why bad things happen, this book will not only inspire meaningful conversations in your home but will help you feel God's closeness and care."

Eliza Huie, author, *Raising Emotionally Healthy Kids; Trauma Aware*; and *Count Yourself Calm*

"We live in a broken world. Children and teens are not immune from shards of this brokenness impacting their lives. Beth Broom provides brief, accessible devotions to help young people be less disoriented by the suffering they face. Parents will appreciate the conversations these 10 Questions devotional prompts provide. If you want to protect the faith of your children, don't leave them ignorant about how to face suffering."

Brad Hambrick, Pastor of Counseling, The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina; author, *Angry with God: An Honest Journey Through Suffering and Betrayal*

"Beth Broom offers clear, biblical comfort for kids who are going through pain and suffering. In this devotional, she walks through the main questions people ask as they experience times of pressure and difficulty, pointing readers continually to God as the ultimate source of comfort and rest. This will be a trusted resource I constantly reuse as a counselor and parent!"

Joseph Hussung, Director of Ministry Partnerships and Recruitment, Fieldstone Counseling; author, *Learning to Listen: Essential Skills for Every Counselor*

"Genesis 3 is the common denominator of life in this fallen world. Everyone, including kids, experiences suffering, pain, and sadness. But there is hope. I'm thankful for Beth Broom's work in this honest, theologically rich, enjoyable, and accessible book. *10 Questions About Pain and Suffering* shows the compounding hope of the gospel that continues to be good news for sinners and sufferers."

J. A. Medders, Director of Theology and Content, Send Network; author, *Humble Calvinism*

“Saturated with Scripture and written in a wonderfully accessible way, Beth Broom’s *10 Questions About Pain and Suffering* is loaded with helpful guidance for the whole family on a particularly tough topic. Built on the timeless truths of God’s word, this book offers clarity and practical help to see God’s heart in the midst of pain and suffering.”

Andrew Dealy, Executive Director, Austin Stone Counseling Center; Founder and CEO, Ever Rise Care & Consulting

10
Questions
About
Pain and Suffering

10 Questions

Edited by Champ Thornton

10 Questions About Pain and Suffering, Beth M. Broom

10 Questions About Salvation, Champ Thornton

10 QUESTIONS ABOUT PAIN AND SUFFERING

**30 Devotions for Kids,
Teens, and Families**

Beth M. Broom

 **CROSSWAY®**
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To Sarah, Levi, and Elijah.

I am inspired every day by your wisdom, joy, and courage.

Thank you for being three of my greatest teachers.

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Series Preface

Jesus loved questions.

If you open your Bible and read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (the Gospels), you can count over three hundred places where Jesus asked questions and over one hundred times where he answered questions.

So if you bring questions to Jesus, you've come to the right place. The Lord invites all of us to pursue him with our questions, and he will answer. "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened" (Matt. 7:8).

You may have tons of questions, but the ten questions in this book will get you started. The *answers* to those ten questions are given in three daily devotional readings—three days for each question. These readings take you to the Bible, the word of God, where you can find answers to your questions. And these answers are all listed at the end of the book.

You can use this book however you like. You can skip straight to the list at the end. Or you can devour all thirty devotional readings at once, though it might take a few hours. You can read through all ten questions in order—one reading per day. Or your family could read one devotion together, perhaps at breakfast before the day or in the evening after dinner.

Find a way that works for you. But what's most important is that you listen to God's word. Whatever question is on your mind, let Jesus provide the answer through his word. If you're going to find, you must seek.

Ask him, and he will answer.

Champ Thornton

Introduction

Not everyone wants to read a book about pain and suffering. I don't know your reason for reading this book. But I'm very glad you picked it up. Usually when people read a book like this, something sad or scary has happened. They want help to understand that sad or scary thing. They want someone to show them how to get through it.

Maybe that's you. Or maybe you just want to learn what the Bible has to say about pain and suffering. That's a good thing to learn, because everyone suffers. At some point in your life, you will need help understanding suffering. You will need God's help. And you will need other people's help.

In this book we'll learn what the Bible teaches us about suffering. We'll answer questions like:

- Why do we suffer?
- If God is good, why does he let bad things happen?
- When Christians suffer, is it punishment?

We'll also talk about what we should do when we are in pain. Here are some questions we'll answer:

- How does God help me when I'm suffering?
- How should Christians respond to suffering?

- What gives someone help when bad things keep happening?

In this book we'll talk about difficult things. But you will learn to know God better. You will learn that he is full of love and kindness. You'll learn that he wants to listen and come close to you when you suffer (Pss. 55:16–17; 121:5–6). And you will find that you can have hope even when life is hard.

Question 1

**What Is
Suffering?**

DAY 1

Everyone Suffers

Have you ever broken a bone? Maybe you've been really sick. Or maybe you have trouble finishing your schoolwork. These are all painful things that can happen to us.

Suffering can be something that happens to your body, like breaking a bone. You can also suffer in your emotions or thoughts, like when a friend says something bad about you that's not true. And sometimes suffering is really big and lasts a long time. Other times you feel better after just a day.

But here's something about suffering that's always true: Everyone deals with painful things in life. Suffering is, for now, part of what it means to be human. No person has ever experienced only good things. Everyone knows what it's like to hurt.

So, when you're suffering, what can you do to feel better? Sometimes people try to ignore their pain. They pretend it's no big deal. They think if they push down their pain, it will stop. Can you tell what's wrong about this idea? Have you ever shaken a bottle of soda? The pressure builds up pretty fast. Then you open the bottle, and soda sprays everywhere. It's the same with suffering. Ignoring or hiding our pain creates pressure inside us. That pressure can sometimes cause other problems in life. Did you know that God says it's good to talk out loud to someone who can comfort you?

Suffering

The state of
experiencing pain
or distress.

Let's look at an example in the Bible. In 1 Samuel 18 and 19, David was almost killed by someone he thought was a friend. David expressed his pain in these words:

My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me. (Ps. 55:4–5)

David was sad, afraid, and angry that his friend had hurt him. He didn't pretend everything was fine. He talked to God, and he asked God to comfort him.

Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he hears my voice. (Ps. 55:17)

You can't keep away from suffering, but you can talk about it. You can talk with someone you love, and you can talk with God. This does not always make the pain stop. Yet you can receive care from someone who loves you. And that's a good feeling—like being wrapped up in a warm blanket during a snowstorm.

What is suffering? *Suffering is the experience of pain that everyone feels.*

PRAYER

*Dear God, I want to talk with you when I am suffering.
I know you hear me. Thank you for listening to my
problems. Please comfort me when I am in pain.*

REFLECT

*Who do you turn to when you are in pain?
How does it feel to have someone care for you?
On a separate page, you can write or draw a
picture about how it feels to be comforted.*

DAY 2

God's Design

Suffering didn't always exist in the world. There was a time when nothing bad ever happened. No one was sick or sad or hopeless. We see this world in Genesis 1 and 2. God made the world, and he called it good. The sky, the ocean, the animals, and the plants were all very good creations. Imagine what it must have been like to live on earth with no weeds or spider bites or algebra tests.

Then God created people. People are a special kind of this very-good creation; we are made in God's image. He gives us special work to do on earth: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26).

But what about suffering? When God created the world, pain and sadness were not part of his universe. He wanted Adam and Eve to live in the garden of Eden with each other and with himself. He gave them instructions for taking care of the earth. He was with them in the garden. He gave them his wisdom and love.

But when Adam and Eve sinned for the first time, suffering came into the world (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; 8:18–22). Adam and Eve hid from God because they were afraid. They knew the pain

of guilt and shame. Then the earth started making weeds and thorns. Now work was painful. And relationships suffered too. Adam and Eve felt angry with each other for the first time.

Sin

Doing wrong in
disobedience
to God.

Sin always causes suffering. You have probably seen this in your own life. When you disobey your parents, you might be grounded from something you enjoy. If someone else sins by hitting you, your body suffers a bruise. When someone makes fun of you, you feel sad, angry, or lonely. Suffering is an effect of sin.

But here is something really important: God hates sin, and God also hates suffering.

God did not enjoy sending Adam and Eve out of the garden. His plan for his people will ultimately remove all pain and suffering. But to help their pains of shame in the present moment, God gave Adam and Eve a gift. They were ashamed because they realized they were naked, so God gave them clothes to wear (Gen. 3:21). God was doing more than keeping them warm. He was providing a way for people to go out and survive in the world. He wanted them to keep living even though they were suffering. And even though they could not live in the beautiful garden anymore, God was still with them. He did not punish their sin by leaving them alone.

So what is suffering? *Suffering is the experience of pain that everyone feels. God did not design us to suffer, but sin caused suffering to enter the world.*

PRAYER

God, I am grateful that you made everything good, including me. Thank you for never leaving me even though I am a sinner. Please help me trust you more.

REFLECT

Do you think of God as a loving Father who wants to have a relationship with you? Think and talk about this with someone you love.

DAY 3

God's Rescue Plan

God hates suffering. But he also understands it. He does not stand far off and simply watch it happen to us. Psalm 23:4 says:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me.

When we suffer, God comes close.

We see this in many Bible stories. Joseph was thrown in prison, and God was with him (Gen. 39:23). When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God heard their cries for help (Ex. 2:23–25). One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3. These three men refused to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's statue. So he threw them in a furnace of fire. Yet God saved them. The three men did not burn. And guess what else happened? People could see a fourth person walking around in the fire with them. Many Bible experts believe this fourth person was the Lord himself. God was with them in the fire.

God's people suffered a lot in the Old Testament. Yet God always promised to be near to them when they cried out to him. He never failed them or left them alone. The Bible has many names for God, and one of my favorites is *Immanuel*. This word

Immanuel

One of the names
given to Jesus;
it means “God
with us.”

means “God with us.” Isaiah 7:14 says, “The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” This verse is written again in Matthew 1:23 to describe the birth of Jesus. It’s amazing to me that

God shared his great plan to send Jesus into the world hundreds of years before it happened. He wanted people to have hope that someone was coming to rescue them.

When Jesus came to this earth, he became one of us (Phil. 2:7–8). This means he suffered in the same ways you do (Heb. 4:15). It also means Jesus understands our pain. Why? Because he has had the same kind of pain. And he comforts us in our suffering. He reminds us that God is near (2 Cor. 1:3–5). He also suffered the greatest kind of pain so that we could be adopted into God’s family. He died in our place because he loves us: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The good news declares that suffering has an end date. When we see Jesus face to face, all suffering will end. And while we live on this earth, we have a friend in Jesus. He sees our suffering, and he is with us.

So what is suffering? *Suffering is the experience of pain that everyone feels, because sin caused suffering to enter the world. But suffering doesn’t last forever for Christians because God sent his Son into the world to suffer with us and rescue us.*

PRAYER

Dear Father, thank you for sending Jesus into the world to be one of us and to die for us. Thank you for understanding my pain. Please be with me and help me to depend on you when I suffer.

REFLECT

Do you believe that Jesus is Lord? Have you given your life to him? He invites you to become part of his family.
