



Care & Share

HOW TO RESPOND TO SUFFERING

By Dr Marno Retief

There are few things so challenging to our faith as the reality of trials and suffering. When we find ourselves in the midst of suffering or see how someone we love is suffering, it's so incredibly hard to see how anything good may come from it. In fact, it seems to contradict our faith in the goodness of God. If God is good, how can He allow something so bad into my life? If God is good, why am I struggling for survival? If God is good, why does it seem like all hope is lost? These are some of the hard and honest questions we tend to ask ourselves in times of hardship and struggle. This suffering may come in many different shapes and guises. Some of you might be struggling with chronic illness, or even terminal illness. The medical prognosis is bleak, yet you've been trusting God for complete healing. But despite your fervent prayers and trust in the healing power of God, you still haven't been healed. And you're pleading with God, "Lord, why haven't you answered my prayer?" Some of you might be facing a very difficult time in your marriage. You've tried your best to work things out. You've been praying for God to intervene. You've even gone for marriage counselling, but nothing seems to help. Some of you might be struggling financially. Maybe you've recently lost your job, or some business deal you were working on didn't work out. Maybe you lost your money in some investment scheme and financial situation is desperate. Despite your pleading with God for a financial breakthrough, things seem more difficult than ever. Chronic illness, marriage problems, financial problems – these are just some of the things Christians sometimes have to deal with. You might be struggling with something entirely different or everything might be well in your life at the moment, but the point is believers are not immune to suffering.

How do we as followers of Jesus respond to suffering? Or rather, how should we respond to suffering? For James, the answer is closely connected to the way Christians think. James wants believers to look at their suffering from a totally different perspective – a perspective that transforms our response to suffering. The book of James offers us five practical guidelines on how we should respond when trials and suffering come our way.

Firstly, when trials and suffering come our way, we should choose to rejoice. Yes, I know this sounds contradictory, even somewhat preposterous – but let me say it again: We should choose to rejoice in times of struggle. As James puts it, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2, NIV). What's James saying here? To think about our suffering as a reason for joy seems absurd, but yet this is precisely what James is challenging us to do. What aspect of suffering has anything positive to offer? We find the answer in James 1:3 (NIV): "[Because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance". We should look at our suffering as a reason for joy because it's producing something of great spiritual value in us right now, something that deepens our relationship with God right now. What's it producing? Perseverance, steadfastness, the resolve to keep on going no matter what. When we start thinking about suffering in the right way, when we have the right mindset, it produces perseverance in us and that gives us reason for joy! When suffering and trials come our way – as they inevitably will – let's choose to rejoice!

But secondly, when faced with suffering, let's be patient and let God complete his character-shaping work in our lives. Although we might not feel it or realise it, God is busy working in us to accomplish a specific purpose. He is working in us to make us spiritually mature believers. As James explains, "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:4, NIV). What does James mean by the statement, "Let perseverance finish its work"? He is saying we should let perseverance help us attain Christian maturity. When we go through times of trial and testing, the end-result should be Christian maturity. Notice, I said, "should be", since this isn't always the case. Some people respond to suffering in a very negative and spiritually destructive way. They stop serving God. They rebel against God. They don't want

anything to do with God. But it doesn't have to be that way. Through the grace of God, it's possible for you to start viewing your situation as God's way of shaping you. God's way of bringing you to a place of spiritual maturity. I know it's difficult, I know it's hard, but God is not interested in your and my comfort. He is really not. He is interested in our character – in shaping us into the person He wants us to be.

Thirdly, when faced with suffering, we should ask God for wisdom. We should ask the Lord for practical wisdom for the situation we're facing. "Lord, what do you want me to learn from this situation? Lord, how are you shaping my character through this situation? Lord, help me to see your grace at work even in the midst of my struggle". James issues a clear instruction, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5, NIV). The Bible is filled with numerous examples of men and women who sought God's guidance in some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Think of Moses asking the Lord for guidance on how to lead Israel out of Egypt. Think of King David asking the Lord what's causing the famine in the land of Israel. Think of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane asking God the Father if there is another way besides the cross. But James knew some of his readers might respond, "Yes, James, but all these people had a special relationship with God. I'm just a normal person. There's nothing extraordinary about me". James anticipated this reply – that's why he emphasised that God gives wisdom "generously to all without reproach". No matter who you are, if you ask God for wisdom, He will give it to you.

Fourthly, when faced with suffering, we should ask God for wisdom, but we need to ask him in faith. We really need to believe that God will give us wisdom. Not maybe. Not possibly. God will – God will give us wisdom if we ask him "in faith". We need to believe that. We need to trust that God will answer our prayer for wisdom. Why is this so important? James gives us the answer: "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt,

because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-7, ESV). This is a very important scripture and a scripture that's been seriously misunderstood in the past. So, it's important we get a clear understanding of what James is saying here. Praying to God "in faith" doesn't mean we have the right to demand a certain kind of response from God. No, it means we firmly believe God knows best – He sees the bigger picture, He knows what is best for you and me. So, in practical terms, we should be open to whatever kind of wisdom or guidance God ultimately gives us. God's answer might look quite different than we expected, but we can know God understands our situation even better than we do and He has got our best interests at heart.

But fifthly and lastly, when faced with suffering, we should recognise how it brings our material circumstances into proper perspective. If we find ourselves in times of financial hardship, we should recognise how this is helping us to develop perseverance and Christian maturity. If we're rich and affluent, we should really value times of struggle, since it helps to shape our character in ways that money never will. As James puts it, "Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation – since they will pass away like a wild flower" (James 1:9-10, ESV). James helps both poverty-stricken Christians and rich Christians to view their material circumstances in the right perspective. If you find yourself in a situation of financial hardship, you should take pride in your situation. Now I know that sounds strange. After all, what is there to be proud about when you're having financial troubles? But James reminds us that, for followers of Jesus, a situation of financial hardship offers something much more valuable than money – the opportunity to grow in Christian maturity. So, even if your financial situation is difficult, as a Christian you can know God's busy working in your life. He is using this situation to shape your character – to produce perseverance, to help you grow in spiritual maturity. In the same way, if you're financially secure, or maybe even quite rich and affluent, you should be grateful for times of struggle. As a follower of Jesus, you know money can't buy you spiritual growth. When you're faced with sickness, or loss, or some other personal problem – these are things money can't fix. Times like these offer you the opportunity to grow in Christian maturity. May the Lord our God grant you and me the gift of perseverance, amid the various struggles we sometimes face in this life.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

This is the second Care & Share since the beginning of COVID. Sunday School is starting, Marno is planning to lead the older students with Catechism, the Education Committee has had a couple of meetings, etc. Slowly we are starting to find new routines. We are thankful for the work that Marno is already doing for our church family, even from so far away. We hope that visas will be granted for them very soon. We look so forward to seeing them face to face.

November stands out with Remembrance Day. We often take for granted that we live in a nation without war. The price paid for our freedom was very high. So many lives were lost. After both World Wars, no one wanted war again. The churches were full with those praising God for their freedom. We still live in a world where there is much conflict. In other parts of the world there is still lots of bloodshed. Refugee camps are full. Here in Canada, we fight our own little wars. By the grace of God, we can live pretty comfortable in our area. In my opinion, the best place in Canada.

Thank you to all those who planned the meaningful Thanksgiving Day service on October 11th. Thanks to Karen Koomans for putting together the “thanksgiving tree”.

The Creation Ministries meeting was well attended. It was a lot of information, a lot to absorb. The most important thing is that God created everything. We cannot understand and imagine how it all worked. We are so thankful for the world he created, that he sustains it and provides a place for us to live.

Eltjo Wiersema is doing much better. We thank God for his improved health.

Ted had successful surgery on Monday in Thunder Bay and was able to come home Wednesday. His pace maker is working fine. Thank you for the many prayers for him.

Ron Sikkema is still very critically ill and in need of much prayer, also for Christine and their boys. Your prayers for them are always very much appreciated.

We received the following update:

Continued prayers for Nathan Bujold who is the grandson of Dove and Larry. Nathan was seriously injured in a work accident on September the 18th. Thank you to all who have prayed for his recovery. His recovery is a slow process.

To our church family: We want to thank everyone who blessed us with your love and support during the passing of John. We appreciate your kindness shown through the food, flowers, cards, phone calls and visits, etc. We feel blessed belonging to such a caring church family. Linda & Family

Ian and Jessica have safely arrived in Kazakhstan. We thank the Lord for their safety.

Glenda Veltman’s health is declining. She is now stomach fed and uses morphine at times for pain. Glenda has a favourite quote, “The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.”

We should keep each other in prayer. Not everyone who is having problems shares his or her concerns but we know that God knows all and we are in his hands.

Sid and Carrie Smid have moved to the Golden Age Manor. We wish you well and that you may adjust in time. Their phone number has remained the same.

On November 8th, the Lord willing, Lydia Carolyn (daughter of Doug & Rindy) will receive the sign of baptism along with her cousin, Reuben Nicholas Harold (son of Mike & Carly) .

From the Church Library:

We have noticed a larger number of items being taken out of the church library that are coming back with the cards still in the pockets. Please make sure to sign the cards out and put them in the card box specific to that on the Library table. This is very important! We then know that the items have been taken out by a member of the congregation rather than thinking it may be missing when another member is interested in checking it out. We have noticed this in the past, especially with books in a series.

Also, due to the expense of replacing items, it is also very important that when you take out library items, that they be returned and in good condition when you are finished with them.

Those students who are away and will be celebrating birthdays in November are:

Hailey Arpin on November 3rd. Her email address is arpinhailey@gmail.com.

Skylar Aprin on November 10th. Her email address is sparpin@lakehead.ca.

Hannah Veldhuisen on November 13th. Her email address is hannahveldhuisen13@gmail.com.

Congratulations and God bless all those celebrating birthdays in November. Louis Byma is our only senior with a birthday this month. He will celebrate his birthday on the 22nd.

We are also happy to add new birthdays to the calendar for November. First, Allegra Retief will celebrate her 6th birthday on the 10th of November and I cannot forget my youngest grandson, Haiko van Zwol on the 26th of November.

For those celebrating over 40 years together are Nico & Jeannette Veldhuisen on the 24th of November.

Pastor Marno and Benita will also celebrate an anniversary in November on the 7th. Congratulations to all those celebrating anniversaries this month.

Greetings from Dorcas! The picture below was taken at our last meeting last Spring. We are always so very thankful for all the support we receive from our church family. Because of COVID19, the opportunities that we have for fundraising have become slim. We have not been able to do luncheons for funerals or other occasions, we were not able to have our annual stampot supper and we will not be able to serve desserts at our upcoming congregational meeting. We plan to have our annual shopping spree with the World Renew Gift Catalogue on the 30th of November. Thank you again for your support.





We all have these moments. Moments when we feel our own limitations. Moments when we are faced with a major decision and we honestly are not sure what to do. Well, I (Justin) am having one of those moments.

I've been praying about this for a couple of months. I should have asked you to pray for me in this decision right at the beginning.

So what's this about? you might ask. As Americas Area Director for [*SIL](#) (Wycliffe's main field partner), I need to find someone to fill a very important role for the Americas Area: Human Resources (HR) Director. The current director, Rachel, has done a stellar job over the past seven years. However, she feels that it is time to step aside and allow a younger leader to come forward. Rachel has been a wonderful friend, someone I look up to, and someone from whom I have received much wise counsel.

This HR role is intense. There are a lot of heavy issues that are dealt with as we lead and manage over 300 people spread out in many countries of the Americas, speaking different languages, etc. I really want to make a wise decision. Ultimately, I want this process to honour God and honour the candidates who I am speaking to about the role.

And now I trust that you know how to pray for us at this time. I thank you ahead of time for your prayers for wisdom and discernment.

*[*SIL](#), Wycliffe's closest partner, is a faith-based nonprofit organization that serves language communities worldwide, building their capacity for sustainable language development by means of research, translation, training and materials development.*



[Liv Hettinga Photography](#)

Thanks for the part you play on our team, whether by praying, giving, or cheering us on. We are grateful for you.

Serving together,

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wycliffe.ca

Finance Update:

As missionaries working with Wycliffe Bible Translators (giving leadership to the work of Bible translation and language development in the Americas), we trust God to supply our financial needs through churches and individuals who wish to partner with us. Part of our reliance on God is to make our needs known as we have them. **We are currently lacking about \$300/month to reach 100% of the ministry budget that Wycliffe Canada has set for us.** Please consider becoming a financial partner or increasing your regular monthly donation.

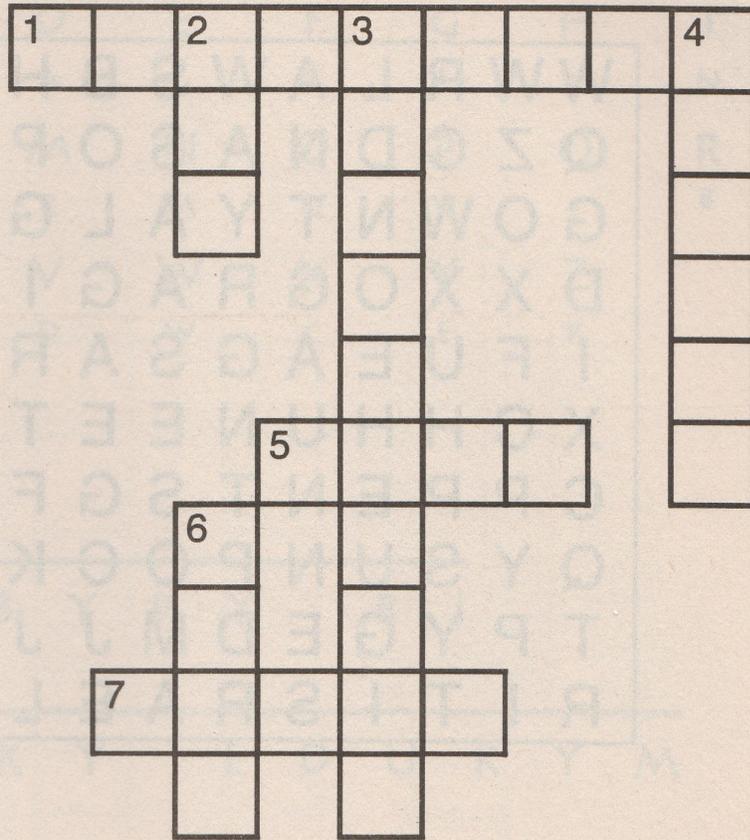
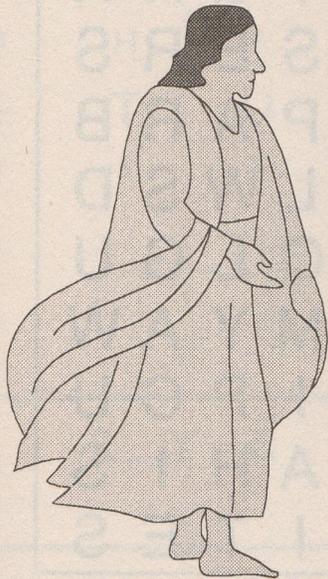
To Partner Financially:

If you would like to make a one-time donation or set up a recurring donation (pre-authorized payments), visit Hettinga.ca, and click "Give Now." For pre-authorized giving from your bank account, simply fill out and submit this "[Pre-authorized Monthly Debit Agreement](#)" form. To donate by credit card over the phone, please call 1-800-463-1143 (9am-4pm Mountain time) and ask for the Receipts Department. To donate by mail, please make cheque(s) payable to Wycliffe Canada and mail to the Wycliffe address above. (Please include a separate note that states "for the work of Justin & Tammy Hettinga.") If you have any issues with any of these giving options, please do

CHILDREN'S PAGE

PUZZLE 32 THE 12 APOSTLES

Hint: You'll find help in Matthew 5 & 10, Mark 3, Luke 6 & 11 and John 1



ACROSS

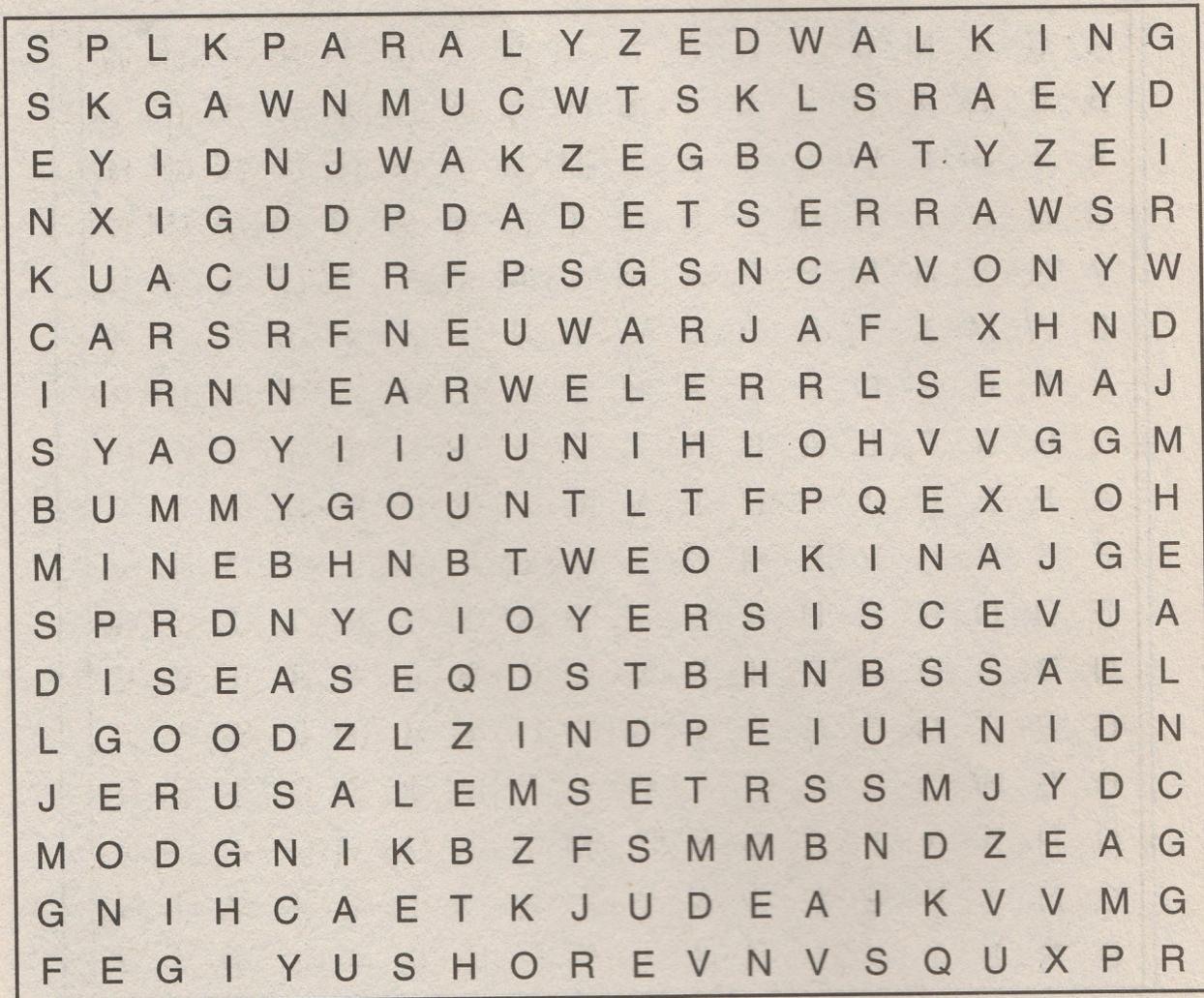
- 1 Philip was from ____
- 5 A fisherman
- 7 A fisherman

DOWN

- 2 Matthew was a ____ collector
- 3 Jesus taught in the ____
- 4 Simon Peter's brother
- 6 Jesus gave his disciples the power to ____

puzzle 60

MATTHEW 4:12-25



B0198

ANDREW
ARRESTED
BOAT
BROTHERS
CAPERNAUM
DEMONS
DISCIPLE
DISEASE
FISHERMEN
FOLLOWED
GALILEE
GOOD

HEAL
HEAVEN
JAMES
JERUSALEM
JESUS
JOHN
JUDEA
KINGDOM
MENDING
NEAR
NETS
NEWS

PARALYZED
RETURNED
SEA
SHORE
SICKNESS
SIMON
SINS
SYNAGOGUE
TEACHING
TURN
WALKING



NOVEMBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	2 Jarvis Esselink *Harold & Chantel Kelly (18th)	3 Haley Arpin	4 Theo deGroot jnr John Redford	5	6 Janine Webb	7 Adam Esselink Ashton Veldhuisen *Marno & Benita Retief (11th)
8 Ed Dykstra 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	9	10 Skylar Arpin Carol Kaemingh Allegra Retief	11 Megan Kaemingh  REMEMBRANCE DAY	12 Kristine Kaemingh	13 Hannah Veldhuisen *Dale & Kathy Kaemingh (38th)	14 Easton Veldhuisen
15 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	16	17 Wilma Kooistra	18	19	20 Ayseling Foster	21
22 Louis Byma 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	23	24 *Nico & Jeannette Veldhuisen (41st) 7:30 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING	25 Bonnie Toles	26 Annie Van Rozen Haiko van Zwol	27 Katy Esselink	28 Susan Crans
29 Elliana Kooistra Donna Osadchuk Andrea Van Zwol Marcus Veldhuisen 10:00 WORSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL	30 Jake Esselink					