



Touching
THE HEM



*a biblical response
to physical suffering*



Elizabeth A. Johnson

**TOUCHING THE HEM:
A BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO PHYSICAL SUFFERING
STUDY GUIDE**

ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON
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Dear Friend,

I hope this study encourages you like it did me! Time spent studying God's Word is never wasted. Learning of His character, meditating on His works, will strengthen your faith and enable a more intimate relationship with Him. Learning His principles, and understanding how He wants you to live, will mature you as a Christian.

For this reason, Paul exhorted Timothy to study the Word and hold fast to sound doctrine. In doing so, Timothy would grow in both His knowledge of God, and his ability to discern truth from error. You can do the same. By faithfully reading the Bible, studying it with the aid of doctrinally-sound resources, and committing to sound teaching that honors God—you can easily learn what pleases God, and know almost instinctively how He wants you to live.

That, my friend, is more crucial than any list of "what to do when you're sick" or any human opinions of right or wrong. Know God's Word, and you will be able to know God Himself. Know His Word, and you will reap blessing upon blessing. Know His Word, and you will have a firm foundation to stand upon, despite the raging storms of life.

Quite simply, that is this book's message in a nutshell: **know God's Word.**

Rejoicing in Him!
Elizabeth A. Johnson

- What questions do you have today about your suffering?

- What are you hoping to gain from this study?

Communicate with God: *Culminate each day's study by communicating with God, not just talking at Him but fellowshiping with Him. Start by repenting of any sin He's convicted you of. Ask Him to help you change, and yield your desires to Him. Then praise Him! Rejoice in His character and works, and worship Him in song. Suggestions are given for each day—but feel free to follow the Spirit's leading!*

Repent of any sin in your life, and yield your desires for wholeness to Him. Ask Him to open your eyes to His truth. Praise Him for how He will teach you throughout this study.

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that speak of commitment or consecration. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Have Thine Own Way, Lord

CHAPTER 5 GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Read Chapter 5

Observe the Facts

- Define *sovereignty* in your own words.

- What can happen outside God's authority? What is too hard for Him to control?

- According to C. H. Spurgeon, why should God's sovereignty be a comfort to you?

- List some specific ways God's authority has been shown throughout history.

Apply to Your Life

- When is it easiest for you to doubt God's complete authority over all things? Be specific.

- How do hymns help us understand God's character?

Apply to Your Life

- What's your favorite aspect of God's character that we studied in Part 1? Why?

- List some favorite hymns and which attributes of God they praise.

Communicate with God

Repent of any hesitation you have toward studying God's Word. Ask Him to give you a love for knowing Him, and grant you understanding as you read His Word. Praise Him for how He makes Himself known to us each day!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that praise God. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: pick your favorite!

- How does the promise of glorification give you *hope* in the midst of suffering? How does it encourage you to remain steadfast in trials?

- Write a Bible verse that includes some aspect of glorification from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of losing sight of God's future plans for you. Ask Him to help you find hope in Him, and His promises. Praise Him for the glory that you will someday experience in His presence!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that speak of our future in heaven. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Until Then

CHAPTER 11 CERTAINTY OF SUFFERING

Read Chapter 11

Observe the Facts

- Explain several reasons why suffering is a sure thing for God's children.

- Why does James say Scripture includes examples of physical suffering?

Apply to Your Life

- What specific questions do you have about the presence of suffering in *your* life?

- How does knowing God's character help you accept the certainty of suffering?

- How does meditating on God's works (atonement, ministry on earth, glorification) affect your acceptance of suffering?

- Write a favorite Bible verse that speaks about God's faithfulness in our suffering. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of losing hope in times of suffering. Ask Him to remind you of His perfect plan for your life, both now and in the future. Praise Him for His wisdom and sovereignty!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that speak of God's help in suffering. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: It Is Well with My Soul

CHAPTER 12 ORIGINS OF SUFFERING

Read Chapter 12

Observe the Facts

- List some biblical examples of afflictions caused by Satan.

- List some biblical examples of afflictions sent by God.

- Does God have the right to cause physical suffering? Why or why not?

Apply to Your Life

- Read over Exodus 4:11. How does that help your acceptance of physical suffering?

- What do you think is the difference in *purpose* between afflictions caused by Satan and afflictions sent by God?

- Even when Satan causes our suffering, he is still under God's authority. How does that comfort you?

- Look back over the truths about God's sovereignty in Chapter 5. Write a favorite verse from that chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of anytime you've doubted God's sovereignty in your suffering. Ask Him to remind you of His authority over all things. Praise Him that nothing can happen outside His control or awareness!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that offer praise for God's unfailing character. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Day by Day

CHAPTER 13 PURPOSES OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING

Read Chapter 13

Observe the Facts

- What are the five major purposes of physical suffering, shown throughout Scripture?

- List 2-3 biblical examples for each purpose considered.

Purpose 1:

Purpose 2:

Purpose 3:

Purpose 4:

Purpose 5:

Apply to Your Life

- How do you see any of these purposes at work in your own experiences with physical suffering?

- Have you matured spiritually as a result of physical suffering? How?

- Write a favorite Bible verse from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of any time you've doubted God's perfect plan for your life. Ask Him to help you see His purposes at work through every circumstance. Praise Him for His wisdom, goodness, and love!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that speak of trusting God's plan. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Like a River Glorious

CHAPTER 14 **EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING**

Read Chapter 14

Observe the Facts

- Why does Scripture share so many accounts of people who suffered physically?

- List 5-6 biblical examples of physical suffering.

Apply to Your Life

- Job and Paul are perhaps two of the most well-known examples of physical suffering. What are some things we can learn from their lives?

- John 4:6 tells us that even Christ, God Himself, suffered physically. How can that be a comfort to you?

CHAPTER 15 SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR HEALING

Read Chapter 15

Note: Due to the significance and length of this chapter, the study guide has been divided into three separate sections (Prayer, Faith, James 5).

PRAYER (pg.97-102)

Observe the Facts

- Why should our spiritual well-being be a higher priority than our physical well-being?

- What are some verses that instruct us to pray about everything?

- List 7 specific things that should characterize our prayers for healing.

- What does God promise if we pray according to His standards? What about if we fail to pray?

Apply to Your Life

- Consider how your personal prayer time reflects your relationship with God. Is it an accurate picture? Why or why not?

- Have you ever prayed for healing? How did those prayers adhere to the standards in God's Word?

- How do you need to change the way you pray about physical suffering?

- Write a favorite Bible verse about prayer from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of any ways you've failed to pray according to God's standards. Ask Him to help you grow in regular communication with Him. Praise Him for the privilege of prayer!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns about prayer. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Sweet Hour of Prayer

Apply to Your Life

- What are some things you've placed your faith in, rather than God?

- Paul tells Timothy to *follow after faith* (1 Timothy 6:11). How, specifically, can you do this?

- Read James 2. How can you *show your faith by your works* during times of suffering?

- Write a favorite Bible verse about faith from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of any failure to have unwavering confidence in God. Ask Him to strengthen your faith in His promises. Praise Him for always remaining faithful!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns about faith. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Trust and Obey

Apply to Your Life

- Has this study changed your understanding of James 5:13-16? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been so physically run-down that you couldn't pray? How did you respond? How *should* you respond?
- How does this passage support the need for being involved in a local church?
- How can this passage encourage you in times of physical suffering?

Communicate with God

Repent of anything God has convicted you about from this chapter. Ask Him to help you grow in the knowledge of Him and His ways. Praise Him for giving us His Word!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that speak about prayer or faith. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: What a Friend We Have in Jesus

CHAPTER 16 PHYSICAL MEANS OF HEALING

Read Chapter 16

Observe the Facts

- List some biblical examples that uphold the use of doctors and medicines.

- What are two warnings God gives us about rejecting medical help?

- Why is wrong to *tempt God*? Specifically, how does that relate to our search for healing?

Apply to Your Life

- Scripture tells us King Asa died because he refused to seek God’s help in his illness. What is *your* first response whenever you face suffering? Who do you look to for help?

- Think about the times you've rejected medical help (doctors, prescriptions, etc.)—why did you refuse it?

- Have you ever *tempted God* through your refusal to use medicine? How can you change that?

- Write a Bible verse that speaks of the proper means for seeking healing. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of any times you've tempted or rejected God in your search for relief. Ask Him to help you seek Him first, then to have wisdom in seeking help from others. Praise Him for providing such a beneficial creation!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns about God's ability to uphold and sustain you. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: The Solid Rock

CHAPTER 17 **SINFUL ATTEMPTS AT HEALING**

Read Chapter 17

Observe the Facts

- What are some of the roots of faith healing? Be specific.

- Why do so many people flock to faith healers? Consider James 5:13-16.

- What types of diseases do faith healers claim to fix? Are those people truly healed?

- What was the main reason Christ came to earth? How did His healing ministry authenticate that purpose?

- Compare New Testament healings with faith healings of today. Be specific.

- How are today's faith healers similar to the NT church at Corinth?

- Explain what a *miracle* is. Does that support or negate *faith healing*?

Apply to Your Life

- Have you ever thought about attending a faith healing service? Why or why not?

- Are faith healers a biblical means to physical healing? Give specific reasons for your answer.
- How does this chapter support the need to study God's Word carefully and thoroughly?
- Write out a Bible verse that speaks of one of the *right* responses to physical suffering. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of seeking satisfaction in anything other than God. Ask Him to give you discernment, to know what is in accordance with His Word. Praise Him for giving His Spirit to lead and guide us!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that assure you of God's sufficiency. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: How Firm a Foundation

CHAPTER 18 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Read Chapter 18

Observe the Facts

- Reflect on the previous 4 sections. Note some truths that have stood out from each section.

God's Character:

God's Works:

Our Circumstances:

Our Response:

Apply to Your Life

- Explain in your own words how these truths fit together.

- What questions do you still have?

- Write out one of your favorite Bible verses from this study. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of anything God has convicted you about during this study. Ask Him to continually your eyes to His truth. Praise Him for how He faithfully leads and teaches His children!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that assure you of God's guidance and care. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: He Leadeth Me

CHAPTER 19 WAITING FOR HEALING

Read Chapter 19

Observe the Facts

- Why must we keep our hearts pure before God? How does that relate to seeking healing?

- Name some qualities that should characterize our prayers while we wait for God's answer.

- Who should our prayers for healing include? Give examples to support your answer.

Apply to Your Life

- Explore the idea of being clay in the Master Potter's hands. How does surrender come into play?

- Why is it important to *keep* praying for healing? What hinders you from being faithful in that?

- Why is it so crucial to remain steadfast in faith and sound doctrine? How can you strive to do that?

- Write a Bible verse from this chapter that instructs you how to wait. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of whatever God has convicted you from this chapter. Ask Him to help you grow and mature through your suffering. Praise Him for His unchanging faithfulness!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that praise God for His trust-worthiness. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

CHAPTER 20 LACK OF HEALING

Read Chapter 20

Observe the Facts

- Does God always heal when we ask Him to?

- Name some examples of people whom God chose not to heal. How did God use them, despite their continued suffering or death?

- Why is death not a thing to be mourned over?

Apply to Your Life

- Have you known anyone who prayed for healing, and yet continued suffering? How did their example affect you?

- How do God's character and works provide comfort, despite continued suffering?
- How can you maintain a correct response to your circumstances, whether God heals you or not?
- How can you keep trusting God, even if He chooses to *not* heal you?
- Write out a favorite Bible verse from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God

Repent of however you've doubted God's character in your response to suffering. Ask Him to help you trust Him more. Praise Him for who He is!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few hymns that praise God for everything He is. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty!

Questions or comments? I'd love to hear from you!
Email me at ejohnson@touchingthehembook.com.