

How God Can Redeem and Heal Our...

#4 – Chronic Pain
2nd Corinthians 12:7b-10

“Life is pain, Highness. Anyone who says differently is selling something.”

- Wesley in the movie *The Princess Bride*

“If hairs were hurts, we’d all be grizzly bears.” - Max Lucado

“Everybody hurts sometimes.” - REM

Our Pain Has a Purpose

1. Author Philip Yancey calls pain the “_____ nobody wants.” While pain is painful (duh!), it is not always negative. It can serve a positive purpose.
 - a. God designed our physical pain system to be _____, it warns of danger or possible damage.
 - b. It is often only through emotional pain that we develop the _____ of compassion, mercy, empathy, etc. Historically, many (perhaps most) great works of art and literature were birthed through anguish and torment.
 - c. Pain often motivates _____, beneficial life changes.
2. Some ability to feel physical pain did exist as a part of God’s original “_____” creation (Genesis 1:31). Pain is not a result of the entrance of sin into creation. It did, however, have a catastrophic impact on the level and scope of pain humans would now experience. For man, work became “toil” or “labor” (Genesis 2:15 → 3:17). For women, pain in childbirth would “multiply” (Genesis 3:16). For all, physical death awaits (Romans 5:12).
3. Christianity is the only belief system that realistically acknowledges the positive and negative aspects of pain, while also revealing a God who chose to enter into the human condition and _____ pain and suffering with us (see esp. Isaiah 53:3; Philippians 2:5-11)!

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” - Matthew 16:21 (NIV)

Theologies of Pain & Suffering

	Nature of Pain & Suffering	Purpose(s) of Pain & Suffering
Islam	Primarily Punishment	Punishment for the faithless Testing for the faithful
Buddhism	Merely an illusion caused by a focus on self	Learn to “transcend” pain through elimination of “self”
Hinduism	Results from Karma	“Do/be better next time”
Atheism	Real, with no purpose	“Life is a beach or a b-----, then you die”
Christianity	Real, with purpose(s) and a definite end	John 9:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4

God is Our Partner in the Midst of Pain

1. The Lord _____ the cries and is near those who hurt (Psalm 34:17-18). He even keeps a record of every _____ we shed (Psalm 56:8).
2. The Lord can and does _____. One of the self-revealed names of God is *Yahweh Raphah*, the “*Lord your healer*” (Exodus 15:26). Our spiritual healing through salvation in Jesus is the highest priority (1 Peter 2:24). Physical healing, if it is God’s will (1 John 5:14), may also require confessing sin (James 5:16) or anointing and prayer by Elders (James 5:14).
3. The Lord _____, especially by His mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:15-16). Pain is not evidence of God’s absence or abandonment.
4. The Lord gives _____. Pain will be no more (Revelation 21:1-4).

Jesus Provides a Path Through Our Pain

1. Pain is often tolerable when we know it will only have to be endured temporarily. Ongoing pain or a chronic condition is a huge burden to bear. A great example of someone who had to deal with such difficulty was the Apostle Paul. Learn from him. Let your pain push you toward grace. Let weakness increase your _____ upon God.
2. Some pastoral “do’s and don’ts”:
 - a. Do involve yourself with other people, don’t _____ socially.
 “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” - Galatians 6:2 (ESV)
 - b. Do risk honesty, don’t _____ yourself emotionally.
 “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” - Romans 12:12-15 (NIV)
 - c. Do pursue healthiness and _____ in all other areas of life: mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual. Don’t devolve into wallowing in anger or bitterness toward God, others, or the world. Don’t let your hurt turn to hate.
 - d. Do seek to serve & comfort others, don’t obsess about _____.
 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and 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 receive from God.” - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV)
 - e. Do _____, don’t lose heart. The same sun that hardens the clay, melts the wax. The disposition of your heart is your choice.
 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”
 - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)