

# Practical Ministry Skills: Answering Tough Questions



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## **Leader's Guide**

*How to use "Practical Ministry Skills" by SMALLGROUPS.COM in your regularly scheduled meetings.*

*Welcome to SMALLGROUPS.COM. You've purchased an innovative resource that will help you train and direct the leaders of your small-groups ministry. The material comes from respected thinkers and church leaders, and has been selected by the editors of Leadership Resources at Christianity Today International.*

Our "Practical Ministry Skills" training downloads are completely flexible and designed for easy use. Each download focuses on a practical theme that is relevant to small-groups ministry, and is comprised of brief handouts focusing on specific aspects of that theme. The handouts give a succinct and practical overview of the issues most relevant to your goals. You may use them at the beginning of a meeting to help launch a discussion, or you may hand them out as brief primers for new small-group leaders or coaches.

This specific theme is designed to help equip anyone who needs to speak into a difficult situation—for those times when life seems unfair, or when God's good plan is difficult to discern. You may use it either for a training session or to give individually to key people involved in reaching out to others during hard times. Simply print the handouts needed and use them as necessary.

For example, if you've ever wondered about all the injustice in the world, reflect on "Why Is Life So Unfair?" (p. 5). To see how one theologian thinks about God's forgiveness and heaven, see "Will That Person Be in Heaven?" (p. 10). To learn how to understand someone with tough questions, see "Listen Before You Answer" (p. 3).

We hope you benefit from this theme as you equip your small-group leaders and coaches to minister graciously to those who struggle with the difficult questions of how God relates to life's hardships.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at <http://www.SmallGroups.com/>.

To contact the editors:

E-mail [SmallGroups@christianitytoday.com](mailto:SmallGroups@christianitytoday.com)

Mail SMALLGROUPS.COM, Christianity Today International  
465 Gundersen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Listen Before You Answer

*Good counsel comes from those who combine empathy and insight.*

James 1:19

*A psychologist, counselor, and teacher shares his thoughts on how to speak to people in difficult circumstances.*

The most important thing for us to recognize is that what people need most is understanding. While understanding always provides the foundation for other kinds of help, it is important in and of itself. Understanding is a wonderful gift to give others.

Having all the answers is overrated. Ask 20 people to tell you who has had the most influence on their lives, and in the vast majority of cases you will find the notable absence of the phrases “gives good advice” or “always provides great solutions to problems,” and the frequent presence of phrases such as “is a good listener” or “really understands.”

We all want to be understood. We want to be around people who show genuine humility, who empty themselves of their own concerns, and who give us their full attention. We are drawn to people who suspend their own needs to control and dominate and who display openness to our story. We seek relationships with people who really want to tune into the meaning of another’s experience and are willing to express that meaning back to us. And of course, such a posture invites us to look inside ourselves and recognize that we need to be that kind of person.

### Two Steps to Understanding

*1. Work on your listening skills.* Listening is hard work because we are not just processing what others are communicating, we are seeking to pay attention not only to the meaning embedded in their words, but also to what they are not saying. In doing so we are not engaging in a process of evaluation but in a process that seeks to accept and value the other.

*2. Expand your understanding of the problem.* This takes us beyond the skills of listening to a broader view of the problem itself. Doctors are a good example of a combination of these two skills. They need to be good listeners and ask the right questions. But they also need to understand medical problems. Good process needs to be combined with good content.

—ROD J.K. WILSON Copyright © 2006 Rod J.K. Wilson. Adapted from *How Do I Help a Hurting Friend*. (Baker, 2006.) Used with permission.

### Reflect

1. Describe a time when you received understanding and wise counsel from another person.
2. What are some characteristics of a good listener?
3. Why is it so important for church leaders to combine good listening and wise counsel when they face difficult questions?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



### A New Kind of Answer

*Actions answer tough questions when the body of Christ does God's work.*

Job 2:11–13

*More than apologetics or great theological responses, Christians need to commit to loving their neighbors in the face of evil.*

#### Mistakes to Avoid

If these kinds of attitudes accompany your answers to difficult questions, even the best argument will fail.

1. Impatience, unkindness, or intolerance for skeptics or people with genuine questions
2. Appearing brusque or prideful
3. Treating a legitimate question as if it could easily be answered

#### Actions Speak Louder Than Words

When dealing with tough questions about God and evil, the most severe weakness of some Christians has been the tendency to confront the apologetic challenge and fail to hear the voice of suffering behind the question, “Where is your God?” To not weep with the person who suffers, but rather offer platitudes, Bible verses, even excellent philosophical lectures, is like sending greeting cards to people in a burning building. We need to listen to the voice and not merely the words.

My hope is that Christians will *become* the apologetic—choosing to live in a way that is much more important than spoken words, no matter how articulate, profound, and convincing the arguments. They will, instead, work where there is human suffering and demonstrate to the world that God *is* doing something about it: he is sending us into the heart of it to heal it.

Christians are not likely to produce many new and satisfying answers to why and how God acts in pain and evil. But, in the future, they can come alongside others in hardship as they, with their lives as much as their words, try to show others how God enters the places of dark suffering. In these situations Christians can demonstrate how God does deal with evil—not as a theoretical challenge to be solved but as a tragedy to be remedied. In this way, Christians can live as people who have been enlightened by Jesus Christ, who was both victim and victor over evil and suffering.

—CHUCK SMITH JR. AND MATT WHITLOCK, Copyright © Chuck Smith Jr. and Matt Whitlock. Adapted from *Frequently Avoided Questions*. (Baker, 2005; ISBN 801065437) Used with permission.

#### Reflect

1. Describe a time when God’s love was demonstrated to you in difficult circumstances.
2. Describe a time when a bad attitude got in the way of a good answer.
3. What ministries does our church have that allow church members to be involved with people in the midst of their suffering?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Why Is Life So Unfair?

*Innocent and good people suffer. What kind of God would allow that?*

Isaiah 55:8–9; Joel 2:25–27

*A pastor reflects on life's injustices—and how to face them with a Bible-based faith.*

### An Unjust World (It's Not an Illusion)

Life is unfair. Sometimes the innocent are murdered, and the murderer is protected. Situations like these give rise to questions: What is right in a world where little children die and genocidal despots live in luxury? Where hard-working men go bankrupt and swindlers go on swindling? Where all the wrong people, it seems, suffer?

In Genesis 4, Abel experienced injustice when he was murdered. How could this happen? He, according to Hebrews 11, was the one who pleased God. He had faith; Cain didn't. In fact, how is it that so many models of faith in Hebrews 11 were the victims of murder?

Surely the saints of Hebrews 11 carried within themselves a keen sense of life's unfairness. "Some faced jeers and flogging... others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned. They were sawed in two. They were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, mistreated... They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground" (Hebrews 11:36–39).

Abel did the right thing. God loved Abel. God accepted Abel. God showed favor to Abel. But that favor was expressed only in accepting Abel's gift. It was not expressed in protection. In fact, God provides far more protection to Cain than he ever did to Abel. He marked Cain to keep at bay the avengers. Aren't things supposed to go well for those who please the Lord?

### An Unsafe God (Is What We Want)

God's definition of life going well is unique, distinct. His definition of wellness is not about health or finances. It's not even about protection. It's not at all about life being fair.

It's about acceptance. It's about God accepting us as his own. It's not about being spared from untimely or difficult death. It's about being spared the "second death"—the death of unbridgeable separation, the death that is oblivion and torment and unending aloneness.

Because of Jesus Christ, we have received God's *unmerited* favor. God doesn't make the injustices of life vanish. He redeems them—their unfairness, their brokenness, their disease and death—and he gives us back sevenfold all the years the locusts have eaten.

Ultimately, we are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there. But meanwhile, we walk by faith and not by sight. Meanwhile those who walk by faith discover that life rarely gets easier. It often gets harder. Safe? Who said God was safe? Fair? Who said God was fair? The Bible doesn't.

—MARK BUCHANAN; adapted from our sister publication LEADERSHIP Journal, © 2001 by Christianity Today International. For more articles like this, visit [LeadershipJournal.net](http://LeadershipJournal.net).

### Reflect

1. How can our church more faithfully teach that God's acceptance does not necessarily grant a life free from evil?
2. What are some times in our church that leaders have needed to step into difficult, unfair situations and offer hope?
3. How will acknowledging the unfairness of life strengthen our church?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Why Does God Allow Abuse?

*How one leader navigated this difficult terrain.*

Psalm 27:10

*A tough question can come at any time and can take an unexpected angle. This is the story of how one pastor dealt with such a question and responded with honesty while avoiding the temptation of the pat, easy answer.*

### Crash Course in Dealing With Evil

A woman in her early thirties who had attended worship several Sundays in a row stayed around after the service. She walked up to me and asked in a desperate tone, “Can we talk ... right now?”

We sat in a pew, and she began to tremble, but she came to the point: “I usually don’t come to church. I have a hard time with God.” She paused to catch her breath.

“My father and my uncle molested me all through my childhood until I moved out and joined the army. How could God allow that?”

She said it that quickly and that bluntly. At which point she crumpled and began to cry. Soon she looked up at me. She waited for my answer.

I gave her the only answer I know: “I don’t know.”

“What do you mean, ‘you don’t know?’ ” she retorted with an edge of anger.

“I know it doesn’t sound like much of an answer,” I said, “but the reason I say that I don’t know why things like that happen is that I really don’t know. I don’t know why God does what he does, or why he allows what he allows, or why bad things happen at all. God doesn’t tell me. I really don’t know.

“I don’t have a lot of answers for this kind of stuff, but I can tell you this—I believe you. I believe every word you’ve told me. I know that God honors your honesty. And who knows, maybe, with time, love, and prayer, you can receive some healing for all this.”

### What You Need To Know

In pastoral care we have two choices: we can bring God to people, or we can play God with people. I have learned I don’t need to answer people’s questions so much as I need to bring the answer to them in the form of compassion.

Theological honesty is a form of compassion with power to soothe. As I spoke to her, I thought about how much I really do believe in God’s providence in our lives. But just because I believe God is sovereign doesn’t mean I have the slightest idea why things happen, or how or why he allows things to happen.

To respond blithely that God didn’t have anything to do with her situation, that somehow stuff like this just happens by chance or is caused by the devil and that God doesn’t have any say in the matter at all, would have failed her grievously. It would have been tantamount to saying that God does not exist. The problem of evil is incomprehensible, but it is not insoluble; compassion dissolves it.

—DAVID HANSEN; copyright 2008 by the author and Christianity Today International.

### Reflect

1. How can this case study inform the way we approach people who have deep problems with the way that they perceive God?
2. List several biblical examples that exemplify faith and compassion in time hardship.
3. What are some ways that our church can reach out to victims of abuse to offer them healing and grace?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Is God to Blame for Natural Disasters?

*Tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding, and other tragedies raise tough questions.*

Jeremiah 10:12–13

*Major natural disasters are often described as being “of biblical proportions.” That description raises profound questions about the nature and power of God—questions you will be asked, particularly if the disaster occurs close to home.*

### Faith-Shaking Events

Many were troubled by the tragic tsunami that struck Southeast Asia in late 2004 and killed nearly 300,000 people. Theologian and bishop Tom Wright expressed the confusion and despair of many when he said: “What’s the point in saying, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God,’ if tidal waves declare his incompetence?”

In the West, it is easy to think of nature as serene and safe—the way that many people who enjoy the comforts of the modern world experience it. We are used to nature when and how we like it. But natural disasters are faith-shakers. As one commentator wrote in 2004: “God, if there is a God, should be ashamed of himself. The sheer enormity of the Asian tsunami disaster, the death, destruction, and havoc it has wreaked, the scale of the misery it has caused, must surely test the faith of even the firmest believer.”

### Dealing With a Mystery

Edward Spence, an Australian philosopher, observes: “Ultimately, the problem of evil confronts us not as a puzzle to be solved but as a mystery to be experienced.” Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams notes this experience in the lives of those who serve the victims: “The odd thing is that those who are most deeply involved... are most aware of two things: a kind of strength and vision just to go on; and a sense of the imperative for practical service and love. Somehow in all of this, God simply emerges for them as a faithful presence.” Armchair philosophers toil over God’s will while those on the scene work with His strength.

A week after the tragedy in Southeast Asia, Barney Zwartz wrote, “...mystery remains. Why isn’t Love-without-suffering the meaning of things. Why does God endure His suffering? Why does He not at once relieve His agony by relieving ours? All I can say is, God alone knows—and that’s enough.”

True to history, theologian Stanley Hauerwas shows, for the early Christians, suffering was not a metaphysical problem needing a solution but a practical challenge needing a response of faith. Apparently it never occurred to them to question their belief in God or his goodness because they were unjustly suffering. Rather, their faith gave them direction in the face of persecution and general misfortune.

### Talking About God

Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says Christians ought to respond as the Bible does. “A faithful Christian response will affirm the true character and power of God—his omnipotence and his benevolence. God is in control of the entire universe. And God’s goodness and love are beyond question. The Bible leaves no room for equivocation on either truth. ... We must speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Scripture is silent. Christians must avoid offering explanations when God has not revealed an explanation.”

—ROB MOLL AND TED OLSEN; copyright 2006 by the author and Christianity Today International.

### Reflect

1. Has our church (or its members) dealt with a natural disaster? What happened and what lessons can we learn?
2. What are some natural disasters that occurred in the Bible? How does Scripture relate God to them?
3. How should the church respond to crises of faith such as a natural disaster? How can we respond practically to such a disaster?





## Why Doesn't God Always Cure Those Who Pray?

*Because he is in control, a cure for illness isn't beyond his power.*  
2 Samuel 12:15–20

This is a question that arises in our darkest hours—in the hospital ward, in the doctor's office, when the unfavorable test results return. Our need often arises unexpectedly and then consumes us.

Embedded in the question are two key assumptions. First, that ours is a God of miracles, including healing. And second, that believers are instructed to pray fervently.

A quick evaluation of Scripture attests that miracles display God's power (Jer. 10:12), arouse wonder (Ex. 4:21), and function as a sign to confirm his message (Matt. 12:39-40). We also are commanded to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) because habitual prayers express dependence on God. And as little children, we anticipate "good things" from our heavenly Father (Matt. 7:11). Yet three additional points are critical.

*1. God does not always respond to our desires, and he frequently allows circumstances we wish he would not.* Theologically we call this sovereignty. Inherent in our faith is the scriptural truth that God is in control. And yet God repeatedly chooses to veil the ways in which he exercises his right to control circumstances. Hence our requests will not always coincide with God's response.

*2. Our tendency is to doubt God's sovereignty in the midst of tumultuous times.* Unfortunately, when we doubt we presume to comprehend more than he does. Instead, the nature of our faith is to be "certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1). While the world looks for proof in signs and wonders, we should never forget that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). It is in this power that he asks us to trust in him.

*3. We must embrace the sufficiency of God's grace in all circumstances.* In other words, it is imperative that the God of the mountaintop also be the God of the valley. The apostle Paul requested three times to be healed of his "thorn in the flesh." The response from the Lord? "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). The sufficiency of God's grace is found in that we can endure suffering just as Jesus endured the Cross!

So we are left with this: We do not know why God allows one to be healed and others not. We have all been touched by situations where God did not heal despite the faithful prayers of his people. The words of Alister McGrath in *Mystery of the Cross* (Zondervan, 1990) are well posed:

As with the Cross, our darkest hour may be God's finest moment. It may be there that he does his greatest work—albeit unseen to us. Thus instead of letting circumstances consume us, we are to be consumed with God. To that end, we pray without ceasing, trust in his sovereignty, and find comfort in his hope.

—MARK M. YARBROUGH; adapted from our sister publication CHRISTIANITY TODAY, © 2006 by Christianity Today International. For more articles like this, visit [ChristianityToday.com](http://ChristianityToday.com).

### Reflect

1. Discuss a time in your life when God's way didn't make sense but turned out to be best.
2. Describe the power that God revealed on the cross. What does it mean to trust in that power?
3. What are some ways our church can be built up to place a greater trust in the sufficiency of Christ?



## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Where is God in Suffering?

*The better question is: where are you?*

Job 2:9–13

For Christians in the midst of a crisis, the primary focus should not be assigning blame but being salt and light. Beyond practical help, there are two particularly pressing questions of faith. The first is, “How could God let such horrid things happen?” The second, “How could we let such horrid things happen?”

Both of these questions deal with theodicy: Why does God allow evil to exist? Can’t God stop both human and natural evil? If he can, why doesn’t he? That these questions arise in every generation shows the enduring nature of our doubt and the magnitude of the question. Both “natural” evil (natural disasters, disease, suffering of animals) and “human” evil (wars, genocides, injustice) mock our ability to make the reality of an omnipotent, loving God sensible in the wake of suffering.

### Is Human Sin God’s Design?

With human evil, the explanation comes slightly easier: God allows us freedom; thus we are free to choose to do evil. Only by seeking and yearning for God’s will to be done in our lives can we begin to combat the evils of the world.

### When Blame Cannot Suffice

But even with the issue of human evil “settled,” the issue of “acts of God” remains. We can plausibly blame the evils of Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot on Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot. But who could be at fault for cancer or hurricanes or earthquakes but God? How does theodicy ultimately answer the question “Why is life unfair?”

As it was in the days of Job, it is wrong to assume that every illness or sudden misfortune must somehow be the fault of the sufferer. Affliction comes to those who don’t deserve it. There comes a point where the issue of blame simply must be left aside. Only then can we truly begin to serve those who are suffering.

John Stackhouse, summarizing what he calls “the challenge of evil,” notes the ultimate impossibility of understanding the plan of God. He argues that trust in God must come first, and only then can we begin to learn to accept his purposes. The inherently subjective and personal nature of the problem serves to keep us humble and avoid pat answers to explain away the pain of others.

In the end, he suggests that the question “Where is God when people suffer?” was best answered by Mother Teresa: “God is there, suffering with [them]. The question really is, where are you?”

—WILL REAVES; copyright 2005 by the author and Christianity Today International.

### Reflect

1. Why is it good and bad that we can’t explain God’s actions sometimes?
2. How does the Bible teach us to respond to suffering and the victims of tragedy?
3. What are some situations in our church in which we can be in the midst of the suffering our people face?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Will That Person Be in Heaven?

*God isn't only going to forgive those we like. He might forgive some we hate.*

Luke 15:28–31

When my theologian-friend visits his elderly mother, he often ends up as a resident theologian for a small Cuban-immigrant community of her friends. “Is it possible,” one woman asked him, “for Castro to convert on his deathbed and end up in heaven?” “It is possible,” Professor Eire assured her. “This is what Christian faith is all about. Nobody is beyond the pale of redemption.” “Well, if that were to happen,” said the woman, “then I would not want to be in heaven.”

Most of us have our own “Castros” with whom we would rather not share the space of the world to come. Heaven with them, we imagine, would feel more like a forecourt of hell. But according to God’s plan for redemption, the not-loved ones will be transformed into the loved ones, and those who do not love will begin to do so. Enemies will become friends.

### A Hard Teaching

Heaven is more than just a fresh start. It is more than just the creation of a new future. It is also redemption of yesterday, today, and tomorrow—redemption of our whole lived life. Heaven is having had your messy pages made clean and right again. Since the majority of our sins are committed socially—against one another—it makes sense that in heaven our relationships will be restored. This is a necessary part of the transition from the world in which we live into the world that is to come.

### More Than Words

The divine judgment will reach its goal when, by the power of the Spirit, each person sets aside attempts at self-justification, acknowledges personal sin in its full magnitude, experiences liberation from the guilt and the power of sin, and recognizes that all others have done precisely that—given up on self-justification, acknowledged their sin, and experienced liberation.

Having recognized that others have changed—that they have been given their true identity by being freed from sin—one will no longer condemn others but offer them the grace of forgiveness. Beyond the simple utterance of “I forgive you,” this forgiveness is the kind of reconciliation in which former enemies move toward each other and embrace each other as belonging to the same communion of love.

### Scandalous but Good

Once, after a lecture on the Last Judgment and the Final Reconciliation, an African-American student approached me. “Do you know what you are saying?” she asked: Many masters of her enslaved ancestors were “good” Christians, and she may see them one day in heaven. “I know,” I responded, “and it is scandalous, isn’t it?” She—and I along with her—was troubled by the thought of the Final Reconciliation.” But if it were otherwise,” she said after a while, “heaven would not be heaven.”

—MIROSLAV VOLF; adapted from our sister publication CHRISTIANITY TODAY, © 2000 by Christianity Today International. For more articles like this, visit [ChristianityToday.com](http://ChristianityToday.com).

### Reflect

1. How can church leaders model God’s forgiveness to the congregation?
2. Who are the groups or people that seem especially beyond redemption in our society?
3. What are some points our church should emphasize when we teach about forgiveness?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



## Suffering Can Be Good

*When we let the cross shape our theology.*

Philippians 2:5–8

It is remarkable that there were so few attempts to solve the “problem of evil” prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Certainly there was no shortage of suffering and disaster. Life was nasty, brutish, and short. In Martin Luther’s day the Black Death had decimated the population of Europe and still threatened. Villages and towns lived in constant dread of fires and natural disasters.

Is it not curious that only when life seems to be easier do thinkers set out to “justify God”? Perhaps it is as Hannah Arendt remarks, “When man could no longer *praise*, they turned their greatest conceptual efforts to *justifying* God.” But the problem of suffering should not just be rolled up with the problem of evil. Only false speaking lures us into doing that.

### Good Suffering

Evil does cause suffering—but not always. Love can cause suffering. Beauty can be the occasion for suffering. Children with their demands and impetuous cries can cause suffering. Just the toil and trouble and stress of daily life can cause suffering. Yet surely these are not to be termed evil. Humans have an unfortunate tendency to try to prove that God has nothing to do with suffering and evil. Meanwhile, suffering goes on.

Martin Luther suffered spiritually and physically. But he saw God’s hand in the suffering and wrote: “He kills our will that his may be established in us. He subdues the flesh and its lusts that the spirit and its desires may come to life.” Beyond his own experience—based, in fact, on the cross—he asserted that whoever does not know God hidden in suffering does not know God at all. If God has nothing to do with suffering, what is he involved with?

### Salvation Through Suffering

Suffering, the Bible proves, can be redemptive. This must be the case because it is only through suffering and the cross that sinners can see and come to know God. The cross is suffering. But it is suffering from God and it is good. That is the deepest reason why we call the Friday of the crucifixion good.

Rather than knowing God in a way that would be convenient for us, the only way to know God is through suffering, the suffering of the one who saves us. Luther called this a theology of the cross—a theology that calls a spade a spade, and suffering, when it is redemptive, good.

—GERHARD O. FORDE, Adapted from *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*, © 1997 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI. Used with permission; all rights reserved. To order this book on demand title, contact the publisher at 800.253.7521 or visit [www.eerdmans.com](http://www.eerdmans.com).

### Reflect

1. What are some attitudes and actions leaders can take to live out the truth that suffering is not always evil?
2. What are the important points in the teaching above that we would like to pass on to our congregation?  
What are some occasions we could use to teach this?
3. How must we change our teaching about suffering to make room for God’s redemption in its midst?

## ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS



### Further Exploration

*Books and resources to equip your ministry in the face of tough questions.*

**BuildingChurchLeaders.com.** Leadership training resources from Christianity Today International.

- “Giving Help to the Hurting” Assessment Pack
- “Counseling Church Members” Practical Ministry Skills
- “Preaching in Times of Crisis” Survival Guide
- “Responding to a Crisis” Survival Guide

**LeadershipJournal.net.** This website offers practical advice and articles for church leaders.

**Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil** by *John G. Stackhouse*. A study of how great minds from the past grappled with the problem of evil and an affirmation that God’s goodness and the evil of this world can coexist. (Oxford, 1998; ISBN 0195137914)

**Disappointment with God** by *Philip Yancey*. Answers to the problems that arise when the realities of life clash with our concept of God. (Zondervan, 1997; ISBN 031021436X)

**Hard Questions, Real Answers** by *William Lane Craig*. A Christian apologist confronts questions that provoke doubt. (Crossway, 2003; ISBN 1581344872)

**How to Help a Hurting Friend** by *Rod J.K. Wilson*. A practical guide for Christians trying to help their friends and loved ones through difficult circumstances. (Baker, 2006; ISBN 0801066093)

**Unspeakable: Facing up to the Challenge of Evil** by *Os Guinness*. An exploration of human evil and the place of God in suffering. (Harper San Francisco, 2006; ISBN 0060833009)

**Where Is God When It Hurts?** by *Philip Yancey*. A book to help people understand their suffering in light of God, and to help others minister to them. (Zondervan, 2002; ISBN 0310245729)

**Who Made God? And Answers to 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith** by *Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler*. Some of the foremost evangelical apologists take on issues of faith, science, and Scripture. (Zondervan, 2003; ISBN 0310247101)