

**SUFFERING AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE  
AND MINISTRY: A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY**

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This book was born from years of intense personal suffering related to the lengthy terminal illness of my husband and the chronic impairment of my son. An abrupt ending of twenty-five years of missionary ministry on foreign soil and relocation to a supportive role in missions stateside occasioned a deep sense of grief over the loss of familiar ministry and self-identity. The grief was compounded by the perception of the silence—even the absence—of God. The silence and seeming avoidance of fellow ministers revealed a sense of their inadequacy to address the topic of protracted suffering. Speaking at ministers' wives retreats led me to the discovery that many struggle with the issue of suffering as it relates not only to their lives as Christians but also to their role as Christian leaders. Many struggle to reconcile the emphasis in Pentecostalism on healing, victorious living, and the joy that flows from the immediacy of the presence of God with the suffering, sadness, and sense of isolation that, in fact, often exist in the lives of Pentecostal leaders. Recognition of this frequently unacknowledged and unaddressed disparity led me to a careful examination of what the Bible has to say on a broad scope about suffering, resulting in a book developed in five parts: (1) Overarching Biblical Truths Relative to Suffering, including Sources of Suffering, Unanswered Prayer, The Dark Night of the Soul, Purposes of God and of Satan during Suffering, and The Shared Suffering of God and Humans; (2) The Role of Suffering in Christian Life and Ministry; (3) Suffering as Integral to Christian Ministry; (4) Pentecostal Perspectives on Suffering, including problematic tendencies as well as positive distinctives; and (5) Applying Biblical Teaching about Suffering (practical steps for dealing with personal suffering, guidelines for ministering to a suffering person, and a look at the responsibility of the Church for sufferers in its midst and in the world).