



Touching
THE HEM



*a biblical response
to physical suffering*



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

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Dear Friend,

I hope this study encourages you like it did me! Time spent in God’s Word is never wasted. Meditating upon God’s character and works strengthens your faith and enables a more intimate relationship with Him. Learning His principles, and understanding how He wants you to live, helps 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 it will give you a firm foundation to stand upon, despite the raging storms of life. Know His Word, and you will reap blessing upon blessing!

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

Rejoicing in Him!
Elizabeth A. Johnson

INTRODUCTION

Read: Mark 5:25-34, Introduction

Observe the Facts: *Observation is crucial to understanding. We must know God's Word before we can apply it, obey it, or benefit from it. So take the time to read each section carefully, focusing especially on the context of key points or passages. Make notes in the margins, if you can!*

- How long did the woman in Mark 5 suffer before she was healed?

- What did she spend in search of healing? Be specific.

- In what ways do you think she suffered?

Apply to Your Life: *All the observation in the world won't do any good until you apply it! So how do these facts make a difference in your life? There are no right or wrong answers here—just be honest, and take whatever time you need to pray through each question.*

- How can you relate to this woman's story?

- 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, and increase your love for His Word. Praise Him for how He will teach you throughout this study.

Finish your time of worship by picking up a hymnbook, and finding a few songs that speak of commitment or consecration. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*

CHAPTER 1 | GOD'S IMMUTABILITY AND FAITHFULNESS

Read: Chapter 1

Observe the Facts:

- Define *immutability* and *faithfulness* in your own words.

- What does the Bible say about these aspects of God's character? Be specific.

- Why does A.W. Pink say God is unable to change for better or worse?

Apply to Your Life:

- How have you seen God's *immutability* portrayed throughout your lifetime?

- How have you seen God's *faithfulness* over the past few years? The past month? The past week?
- How can physical suffering tempt you to forget God's immutability and doubt His faithfulness?
- How can you safeguard yourself against doubting Him in the future? Be specific.
- Write one of your favorite verses from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of any times you've doubted His faithfulness. Ask Him to open your eyes to His constancy and steadfastness in your life and in the world around you. Praise Him for being always the same—yesterday, today, and forever!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak of God's unchanging faithfulness. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Great is Thy Faithfulness*

Apply to Your Life:

- Name some common attitudes (ie, ingratitude) and actions (ie, complaining) that don't portray absolute confidence in God's knowledge and wisdom.

- When is it easiest for you to forget His infinite knowledge? When is it easiest for you to doubt His constant wisdom? Why?

- How can His knowledge and wisdom comfort you in suffering? Be specific.

- Write one of your favorite verses from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of the times you've doubted God's knowledge or wisdom. Ask Him to open your eyes to His faithfulness and goodness in those areas. Praise Him for the varied qualities of His unchanging character!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak of God's knowledge or wisdom. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *All the Way My Savior Leads Me*

CHAPTER 3 | GOD'S GOODNESS

Read: Chapter 3

Observe the Facts:

- What are some synonyms for goodness which relate specifically to God?

- How does God's name reflect His goodness?

- God's goodness has been manifested throughout history, the atonement, and our daily provision. Name some specific ways each of those showcase His benevolence.

Apply to Your Life:

- How have you seen God's goodness manifested in your own life? Be specific.

- Read again the story of Abraham and Isaac from Genesis 22. How can you relate to their need for God's provision?

- Read again the three meanings of Jehovah-rapha. In which of those ways do you need His healing?

- Write a Bible verse that mentions your favorite name from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of any times you've doubted God's omniscience, provision, goodness, or sovereignty. Ask Him to make those things real to you. Praise Him by meditating on His various names!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak of God's overall character. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *I Sing the Mighty Power of God*

CHAPTER 7 | OVERVIEW OF GOD'S CHARACTER

Read: Chapter 7

Observe the Facts:

- List some of the ways God is unchanging.
- How do the names of God relate to His reputation?
- Why should we study these attributes and names?
- How do the various parts of the Bible (history, prophecy, poetry) show God's character differently?

- 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?

- Write out a favorite verse and highlight which attributes of God it praises.

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!

Find a few songs that praise God for who He is. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *O Great God of Highest Heaven*

CHAPTER 8 | MINISTRY ON EARTH

Read: Chapter 8

Observe the Facts:

- List some of the qualities which characterized Christ's healings.

- How did Christ heal in His own way rather than according to man's desires?

- How do these healings point toward Christ's authenticity as the Messiah?

Apply to Your Life:

- What are a few of your favorite Gospel accounts about someone being healed?

- How did faith play a role in each of these healings?

- How do these accounts show the attributes of God which we studied in Part 1?

- Look up one of the passages mentioned in this chapter, and write out a favorite verse from that account. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of any times you've doubted God's compassion or willingness to help you. Ask Him to show you His character as He works in your circumstances. Praise Him for His loving mercy toward His children!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak of Jesus Christ's ministry to mankind. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Our Great Savior*

Apply to Your Life:

- Meditate on the correlation between Ruth's redemption and Christ's atonement. What stands out to you? How can you relate to Ruth?

- Have you ever placed your faith in this miraculous atonement? If not, what is holding you back? If so, describe how or why you believed.

- Write a favorite Bible verse about Christ's atonement from this chapter. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of any sin that has hindered you from believing in Jesus Christ's power to save. Ask Him to show you the wonder of His substitutionary death. Praise Him for His redeeming power!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak about Christ's death on the cross. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *My Hope Is In the Lord*

Apply to Your Life:

- Paul says we “groan within ourselves” as we wait for this transformation. Is that an accurate description? How would you describe it?

- 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 songs that speak of our future in heaven. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Until Then*

- 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 songs that offer praise for God's unfailing character. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Day by Day*

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 specific 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?

- How about modern-day examples? Name some people who have suffered disabling afflictions, yet left great examples to follow.

- Write out a favorite Bible verse from one of these accounts, which can comfort you during your own suffering. Meditate on it this week.

Communicate with God: Repent of ever doubting that Christ experienced the same suffering you have. Ask Him to remind you of His empathy and understanding. Praise Him for providing examples of others, which can teach and comfort us in our own suffering!

Look through a hymnbook. Find a few songs that speak of God knowing your individual needs. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Moment by Moment*

- Write a favorite Bible verse from this section. 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 songs about faith trusting God. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *Trust and Obey*

JAMES 5 (pg.105-110)

Observe the Facts:

- Is James suggesting a foolproof solution for sickness? Why or why not?

Apply to Your Life:

- 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?

- Have you ever tempted God through your refusal to seek medical care or use available medicines? 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 songs 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:

- Describe some of the historical and spiritual roots of faith healing.
- 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?

- How were the healings narrated in the Gospels different from today's faith healings? Be specific.

- How are today's faith healers similar to the New Testament 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 mandate 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 songs that assure you of God’s sufficiency. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *In Christ Alone*

- Write out one of your favorite Bible verses from each section of this study. Meditate on them 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 songs that assure you of God's guidance and care. Sing or pray the words back to God.

Suggestion: *He Leadeth Me*

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power and the glory, and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou reignest over all. And in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.”

1 Chronicles 29:11-12