

HELP!

GOD'S HOPE FOR THE HURTING

Let's Face
It... We All
Need Help!

INTRODUCTION

1 Peter 5:5-8

Every one of us needs help. We are not God. We have needs. We have weaknesses. We have confusion. We have limitations of all kinds. We need help.

But every one of us has something else: We have sins. And therefore at the bottom of our hearts, we know that we do not deserve the help we need. And so we feel trapped.

I need help to live my life, and to handle death, and to cope with eternity — help with my family, my spouse, my children, my loneliness, my job, my health, my finances. I need help. But I don't deserve the help I need.

So what can I do? I can try to deny it all and be a superman or a superwoman, who doesn't need any help. Or I can try to drown it all and throw my life into a pool of sensual pleasures. Or I can simply give way to the paralysis of despair.

But God declares over this hopeless situation: Jesus Christ became a High Priest to shatter that despair with hope, and to humble that superman or superwoman, and to rescue that drowning wretch.

Yes, we all need help. Yes, none of us deserves the help we need. But *no* to despair and pride and lechery. Look at what God says. Because we have a Great High Priest, the throne of God is a throne of *grace*. And the help we get at that throne of grace is mercy and grace to help in time of need. Grace to help! Not deserved help — gracious help. That's why the High Priest, Jesus Christ, shed his own blood.

You are not trapped. Say *no* to that lie. We need help. We don't deserve it. But we can have it. You can have it right now and forever. If you will receive and trust in your High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, and draw near to God through him.¹

OPEN IT

1. What are some areas or functions that you are best at helping with? How often are you able to help others in these ways?

READ IT

1 Peter 5:5-11

EXPLORE IT

2. **What happens when we humble ourselves?**

3. **What are we to do with our cares and concerns?**

4. **Who seeks to devour us?**

5. **According to verse 9, how are we to resist the devil?**

6. **What will happen after our suffering is complete?**

APPLY IT

Trouble comes in all forms - family problems, financial problems, emotional stress or personal illness, just to name a few. Sometimes it seems like an onslaught of bad situations and other times it is little things that happen every now and then. Troubles are what we call them, but God calls them trials and testings.²

7. **As you look at those around you, where do you see people looking for help? Are these issues or struggles true for believers and non-believers alike?**

²Devotional by Cathy Irvin entitled "When Trouble Knocks" <https://www1.cbn.com/when-trouble-knocks>

- 8. In what ways do you see people seeking to alleviate these struggles? Why are these places of help chosen over God and His word?**

Can you remember facing a disruptive moment as a child? Perhaps you fell from your bicycle and skinned your knee. What was your first impulse? To call for help, of course. And perhaps when you did that, your mother or father called out, “Stay right where you are—I’m coming to help you!”³

- 9. As adults, we are quick to keep our struggles and burdens to ourselves. Why is this so? What things cause you to be hesitant to share areas you could use some help with?**

George Burns, the American actor, and humorist said, “If you ask, ‘What is the single most important key to longevity?’ I would have to say it is avoiding worry, stress, and tension. And if you didn’t ask me, I’d still have to say it.” Burns, who lived to be 100, enjoyed making people laugh and apparently followed his own advice. But how can we keep from worrying when our lives are so uncertain, so filled with problems and needs? The apostle Peter offered this encouragement to the followers of Jesus who had been forcibly scattered across Asia during the first century: “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Peter’s instructions were not given to help us avoid suffering (v.9), but so we can find peace and power to stand victorious against the attacks of Satan (vv.8-10). Instead of being consumed by our struggles, we are set free to enjoy God’s love for us and express it to each other. Our goal should not be to see how many years we can live but instead to live fully in loving service to the Lord for all the years we are given.⁴

- 10. In what ways does humility change our outlook when troubles come our way? How can humility serve us better than pride when facing troubles?**

³ Jeremiah, Dr. David. A Bend in the Road (p. 15). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Commentary Notes found @ https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_peter_56-7

11. Why must we humble ourselves in order for God to minister to us in our time of need?

Peter's inference is that we are not to fight the sovereign hand of God, even (or especially) when His hand brings us into times of testing. We need to remember that because He is sovereign (in total control), whatever we experience must first be "filtered" through His "strong (omnipotent) hand of everlasting love".⁵

12. Why is it important to trust God's sovereignty when we find ourselves struggling? How does knowing you are in the hands of a powerful God help you in times of trouble?

*We're prone to doubt two things in a time of intense trial: **God's sovereign control over circumstances**: "Where is God in all this?" And, we doubt His concern for us: "If God is in control and cares, then why is this happening to me?" Peter says that we must bow and acknowledge God's mighty hand—His sovereignty and power. He wasn't asleep at the helm when this trial hit me. And, **we must bow and affirm His loving care**—He cares for me personally, in spite of how it may seem in the middle of my crisis. No doubt Peter was recalling Jesus' teaching that if God cares for the birds and for the lilies of the field, then obviously, He cares for each of us (Matt. 6:25-30).⁶*

13. What two things about God give you hope in verses 6-7 when times of suffering and trial come? How have you seen these two attributes play out in your own life?

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Sermon excerpt by Steve Cole found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-23-growing-solid-through-suffering-1-peter-56-14>

*We are not at all times equally strong. There are days with all of us when we throw off temptation with almost no effort. But none of us are so every day. There are hours with the strongest of us—when we are weak. These are the times of peril for us, and our adversary is watching for them.*⁷

14. In what ways is the devil our enemy? How does he attack the believer? In what ways has the devil been prowling around you lately?

15. How are we to be self-controlled and alert, practically, when it comes to the schemes of the devil?

16. Is it encouraging or discouraging to know that Christians all around the world find themselves suffering? Why?

⁷ Commentary Notes found @ https://www.preceptaustin.org/1_peter_56-7

This verse struck me in both its relatability and its hope. Just as Jesus told us, we will indeed have trouble in this world. People will get sick. Jobs will be lost. Rejection will pierce hearts. Wars will demolish. None of this surprises God. He knows that this is the sad state of our fallen world. I am thankful that the hard seasons in my life did not sneak up on my Maker like they did me. He is aware of our suffering and our hope is that he will himself restore us. He who first knit us together will put us back together. He will make us right again. He fills in the gaps in our faith. He gives us a stable place to stand. He makes us resolute, established, firm, and strong. Our foundations can get rocked in trials so that we end up teetering on the edge easily pushed down. In this restoration process, God rebuilds the foundation beneath us, widening it, establishing it, anchoring it to the Rock. He is the restorer of foundations, so that we can once again stand firm.⁸

17. Why does God allow us to suffer a little while before He restores us?

18. How does this promise of God's restoration help with our times of suffering and personal battles?

⁸ Devotional found at <https://shepenstruth.com/blogs/our-identity-in-jesus/restored-digging-into-1-peter-5-10>
This study was compiled and questions were written by Tim Badal (Sugar Grove Campus)—www.villagebible.church/smallgroup