



## **Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores**

*Diane Langberg*

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She's seen slave dungeons in Ghana. Genocide in Rwanda. Systemic sexual abuse in Brazil. Child abuse and domestic violence in the U.S. After forty years of counseling abuse survivors around the world, Dr. Diane Langberg, a world renowned trauma expert, remains certain that what trauma destroys, Christ can and does restore. This book will convince you, too, of the healing heart of God.

## Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores Details

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# **From Reader Review *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* for online ebook**

## **John A. says**

This book is a tough read but it gave me a whole new understanding of trauma and how it affects lives of so many people. The author has decades of experience with victims in places like Rwanda, Kosovo and Ground zero. She connects Jesus' suffering with ours and shows how we can trust God as the only One who can deliver us from the pain and give us hope and stability. The reason for a four star (not five) is that the book reads like it was given as a lecture. This does not take away from the importance of the work. I recommend this for everyone in the helping professions.

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## **Jeremy says**

I heard Dr. Langberg speak at a conference in San Antonio and was moved by her presence as much as her words. She has given her life to bearing with those who have suffered and continue to suffer trauma. This book is a rich resource for professionals and laypeople alike - in other words, the Church - in understanding how prevalent trauma is both inside and outside the church and how to come alongside them.

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## **Craig Hurst says**

"I think a look at suffering humanity would lead to the realization that trauma is perhaps the greatest mission field of the twenty-first century."

"As the people of God we have been called in any ways to serve as the rescue workers of this world. We are invited into the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. That means we are called into the place of darkness and death because that is where he went."

In .41 second Google will bring up over 201 million search results for the word suffering. At every moment of the day there are thousands and thousands of people suffering all around the world. While one person is experiencing a high moment in their life there are thousands of others experiencing deep and painful suffering at the same time.

We cannot avoid suffering in our own lives. Pretending, as some religions teach, that it does not exist is no help. In a world full of sin it is only a matter of time before a person experiences suffering. When we do experience it we need ways to deal with it from people who are capable of helping us.

Bringing understanding about and the healing only Christ can offer to victims of suffering and trauma Diane Langberg has written *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (New Growth Press, 2015). Langberg has counseled trauma victims the world over for over forty years and works with a team of experienced counselors across numerous fields to help hurting people.

There are three reasons why Langberg's book is a must read for all professional and church counselors. First, Langberg's forty years of trauma counseling gives her a unique perspective and vast amounts of knowledge,

wisdom and skill in working with trauma victims. Her experience with a variety of trauma situations has given her a picture of the evil that suffering brings into peoples lives. From dealing with domestic abuse in the US to helping the victims of the Rwanda genocide, she has an authority like very few others in her field.

As a result of her vast experiences, Langberg is able to present the reader with a picture of the suffering in trauma from a multitude of angles. Langberg covers everything from the psychology of suffering, the spiritual effects of suffering, living day to day with suffering, grief, the church and abuse, domestic violence, and even the role shame plays in trauma. This books is a chance to sit at the foot of a uniquely qualified counselor.

The second reason this book is so good is because of Langberg's ability to apply the gospel to victims of trauma. Central to the hope she offers in her counseling is the reality and power of the resurrection of Christ. The suffering that trauma can take people into the pits of despair. It can take them to the grave. Jesus went to the grave Himself because of and for our sin and the sin of others. He rose out of the grave to new life and that resurrection life is available to us; to those who are suffering and experiencing trauma. When all seems lost as a result of our suffering we can be found in Christ because of His suffering.

The final reason this book is a must read is because Langberg of the challenge it is to those who are counseling victims of trauma. The primary reason, she argues, that we avoid dealing with suffering is because of our own egocentrism. Not only do we want to avoid experiencing suffering in our own lives but we want to avoid it in the lives of others. We don't want to touch the suffering of others or be touched by it. We want to distance ourselves from the sin that causes the suffering in the lives of others but in doing so we forget that it effects us as well. Langberg writes

"We are not healthy doctors working with sickness. We are sick doctors who are trying to grasp the nature and impact of a life-threatening disease that has invaded our own souls, minds, and hearts. Whatever this disease has done to our so-called patients, it has done or can do to us." (30)

Christ was not egocentric when it came to the suffering of humanity. The Son of God emptied Himself of the position He had at the right hand of the Father and took on human sinful flesh in order to redeem us from its weaknesses that our sin brought on in order to bring us back to the Father with Him. This is how we are to follow Christ when it comes to helping others with their suffering. We walk and live among the dead because that is what Jesus did for us. We offer the hope of the resurrection to the dead because that is Jesus did for us. We realize that as ministers of this resurrection hope we are as much in need of it as those to whom we offer it to in the name of Christ.

Suffering and the Heart of God is an amazing book that will give readers much to chew on with regard to suffering, its victims, and the hope of the gospel. Part of the power of her approach is that she is not writing from a merely academic perspective. This is not a clinical textbook with pat and stock observations and answers. This is a book borne out of lived experience with suffering in her own life and the life of others.

This is a book that proclaims the superior healing power of the gospel over the power suffering can have in our lives.

I received this book for free from New Growth Press for this review. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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## **Shaynor Newsome says**

### **Highly recommend**

What a great book. Full of practical wisdom, sobering gut punches, and hope for healing. This is a must read.

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## **Scott Carter says**

Fantastic information, not very well written, so it takes adjusting to her style. Dr. Langberg should be the go to person on trauma as a Christian.

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## **Amy Morgan says**

Good. Grief. This book is thick. I could barely read a chapter per week because each one had so much to ponder. If I hadn't already been studying trauma for a while, I might never have finished it.

That being said, this book is excellent (hence the stars). the beginning and end are especially powerful. In part one, Langberg lays out a conception of sin (as excrement) and suffering that is Scripturally rich. Part four is about care for the caregiver, and Langberg just shares priceless wisdom for the burnt out and secondarily traumatized.

Don't skip the last chapter—weird title (Garbage City) but powerful metaphor for the transformational work God does in our lives and the lives of our clients.

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## **Elizabeth says**

What to say? Is a phenomenal Christian counseling book. Quite eye opening. A bit repetitive but absolutely necessary for someone thinking of going into counseling. Loved the first and last chapter with illustration about mister Jesus

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## **Bobby Ratliff says**

A weighty book, helps us see God's heart for suffering and how he calls us to join in that.

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## **Joelle says**

This book is a bit clinical at times, and there is, in my opinion, some redundant information. However, the main points and the big messages are so good and right! While written for fellow counselors, it is so helpful for anyone who interacts with trauma. This is an

incredibly hopeful book—despite the incredibly difficult topic.

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### **Bethany says**

Wise, thoughtful, compassionate, nuanced, well-researched, and Christ-centered: everyone working in areas of trauma should read this book!!

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### **Nate Walker says**

Best book on counseling and trauma I have read. This woman is seriously fully of wisdom and compassion.

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### **Jason Harris says**

This is the best book I know on counselling. I wish every pastor would read this book. And every Christian who does counselling at any level.

This book oozes grace and gospel. And that's so important to me. But this book also teaches pastors and counsellors how not to harm those who have suffered. If you are a pastor who wants to help—not hurt—women who come to you for help with domestic violence or victims of childhood sexual abuse, you need to read this book. Hint: Trauma is not just bad thinking. Trauma is a medical reality and if you don't understand what it is and how it works, you will almost certainly harm those who suffer from it as you try to help them. And you won't even know it. As a person who suffered greatly at the hands of Christian counsellors who did not understand what trauma is and how it works, I long to see Christ's church do better with this. At the risk of overstating my case, if you are in a helping ministry and you chose not to learn how to not be dangerous, you will face a rightfully angry God for it. Saying this won't help me. But it might help some of those who come along the path behind me. So I pray that Christian leaders will come to see our duty to understand these things more carefully.

But there is so much more to this book than just that. It is a solid, Reformed theology of suffering. It is a sound summary of how to handle helping the victims of various forms of abuse. It is advice from a veteran on how to handle church abuse scandals. It is wisdom from a therapist on how to live out the gospel in the counselling room.

Again, I risk overstating my case in saying this, but this is one of the most important books I've read. Top ten without a doubt.

I thank God for Dr. Langberg's ministry in this book. And I pray that many will take the time to absorb these truths for God's glory in his church.

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