

Mary sat across from me, her arms crossed tightly in front of her. “I’m discouraged, angry, and envious,” she said. She described how her life had come unraveled as she lost her husband, home, and children through divorce.

Mary came from a good church and knew the Bible. But her situation made no sense to her. “I have no reason to get up in the morning!” She was jealous toward people who seemed to do “whatever they please,” yet all went well with their lives.

Most of all she struggled with anger toward God. “How can he say that he loves me?” she cried. “Is this the abundant life he promised? I really thought that he would meet all my needs, but here I am—with nothing! I can’t read my Bible, I can’t pray, I can’t make it through a church service without tears or anger. I look at my life and at the promises of Scripture, and it just doesn’t add up! I’m worse off than the average non-Christian.”

There is no question that Mary is suffering.

guys prospering and good guys suffering. People who do not know and love God, who in many ways live selfish, arrogant lives, seem to be enjoying lives free of burdens. Meanwhile, believers suffer.

Who of us has not wondered, “What is wrong with this picture?” Is God good to his people? Are his promises reliable? Then how do I understand what is going on around me?

Psalm 73 goes right to the heart of this painful question. It gives us four practical ways to respond to our own difficult circumstances and to encourage others who are struggling to understand theirs.

Step 1: Examine Your Focus (Ps. 73:1–12)

Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost
slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the
wicked.

They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.

