

# Chapter 1

## p The Question

Where does suffering originate? The conventional wisdom holds that all things are based upon cause and effect. If you are similar to me, or the millions of others in Western society, your thinking runs along the lines of logical argument. If there is suffering, there is a cause. Find the cause and you can find a cure. Most of Western thought is based upon this cause-and-effect relationship.

This way of thinking has led to many great discoveries. Years ago, most diseases and calamities were attributed to supernatural powers, either evil forces or an angry God. But scientists, following the vein of logical, methodical exploration, have uncovered a more rational understanding of many of the afflictions that previously beset us. As a result, much of the suffering, which was common even 50 years ago, has been eradicated.

And yet suffering remains.

Medical doctors, researchers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists have uncovered dynamics to the human condition and have brought light and hope to millions.

And yet suffering remains.

## **If God Is Good...**

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There are accidents that take innocent people. There are diseases with no known cure. There are madness and acts of sheer cruelty that boggle the imagination. Our practical knowledge—while ever pressing into new frontiers—is limited.

There arises from our inner being, at the moment of greatest tragedy, a cry that is both universal and fundamental: “Why, God, why?” In this poignant moment, we find the question and the answer. The question is “Why?” and the answer is “God.” And the final question remains: “Why?”

We make our appeal to a God Whom we consider good, One Who runs the universe and is aware of the very hairs on our head. We come—in that instant of naked supplication—to the Creator of the universe, that Author of all that we know or hope to find. And often the answer we receive is simply comfort, and sometimes understanding. But still the questions linger, and we may spend a lifetime wondering, “Why?” Why did a good God let this happen to me? Or to those I love? Or to those who did nothing to deserve it?

I want to explore this with you. Why is there so much suffering? Where did it originate? What do we do about it? Then I want to propose some answers to redirect your mind and heart to the only One Who can help.