

Q & A



When the Journey Hurts

Finding Meaning in Suffering for the Heart, Mind, and Soul

April 14, 2026 | \$21.99, 224 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0849-2

Finding Meaning in Suffering

What motivated you to write *When the Journey Hurts*?

Kelly Kopic: I have been working with Liz and Jason for many years now as part of research funded by the John Templeton Foundation. We have studied suffering, meaning-making, and the flourishing life for many years now. We have published many academic articles (mostly in psychology journals) and we wanted to draw from that research and writing to provide something more accessible to the broad public.

Briefly summarize the central thesis of *When the Journey Hurts*. What is distinctive about your approach to suffering?

Kopic: Drawing on psychology and theology, we argue that Christians have developed certain practices (e.g., lament, surrender, gratitude) that have helped them navigate the challenges of seasons of suffering. In this way, Christians can avoid problematic “road maps” and instead choose a better way that can foster healthier ways to navigate suffering. This is not a way to belittle or devalue the significance of pain and suffering, but it is to learn from the past and from present-day experiences of believers who, learning from Scripture and tradition, have found some ways forward which can help the faithful along in this often difficult pilgrimage of life.

What are the five main things you want readers to take away from the book?

Kopic:

1. Suffering is really hard.
2. Suffering, despite its difficulty, can actually be a season for growth in intimacy with God.
3. Avoiding false narratives is really important if Christians are going to suffer “well.”
4. Engaging in certain Christian practices (e.g., memento mori, lament, identifying with Christ’s suffering) can be genuinely helpful
5. We should not undervalue how significant “meaning” is to our lives, and suffering can both undermine our sense of meaning and/or provide an opportunity for us to engage in the meaning-making process in a way that is godly, orthodox, and psychologically healthy.

Is there anything else you want to let us know about the book?

Kopic: This book was written as a blending of psychology, theology, and practical wisdom. We aim to take academic insights from the fields of both psychology and theology and to show how they can help us navigate our suffering in a more faithful manner.

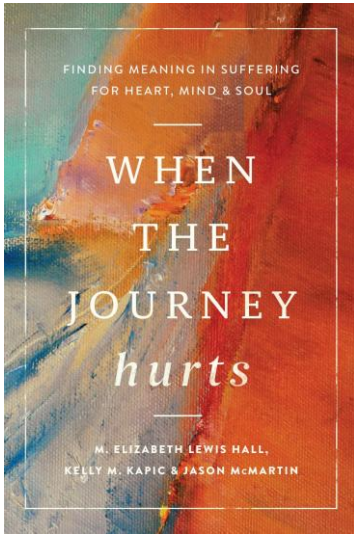


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Professor of psychology Liz Hall and professor of theological studies Kelly Kopic shared a similar experience of seeing a focus on the why of suffering over the how of suffering well. This resulted in six years of research on Christian meaning-making in suffering, and although that research has been put to good use, they'd now like to go beyond academic publications and equip the church as a whole with their findings.

Experts in Theology and Psychology

M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall (PhD, Rosemead School of Psychology) is professor of psychology at Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University, where she teaches courses on the integration of psychology and theology. She has published over 100 articles and book chapters and serves as associate editor for *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. She coauthored *Relational Spirituality* with her husband Todd.

Kelly M. Kopic (PhD, King's College, University of London) is professor of theological studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He has also worked on research teams funded by the John Templeton Foundation. He is an author or editor of more than fifteen books, including the award-winning titles *You're Only Human* and *Embodied Hope*, as well as *A Little Book for New Theologians* and *Mapping Modern Theology*. He is also an active speaker.

Jason McMartin specializes in the areas of systematic theology, religious epistemology, philosophical theology, and theological integration. Recent investigations have included the epistemic effects of sin, eudaimonistic ethics, and the doctrines of sin and humanity. He teaches systematic theology and theological integration for Rosemead School of Psychology and for Talbot School of Theology and serves on the pastoral team of a local church, overseeing equipping ministries.



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