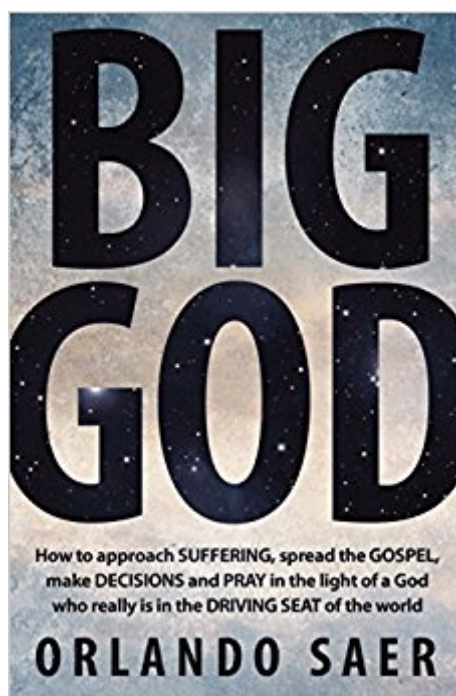




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# **Big God: How To Approach SUFFERING, Spread The GOSPEL, Make DECISIONS And PRAY In The Light Of A God Who Really Is In The DRIVING SEAT Of The World**



## Synopsis

Why then do bad things happen? Where does that leave 'free will'? Does God choose us or do we choose God? What's the point of praying if God already knows what he's going to do? Orlando Saer tackles these questions - and more - in a straightforward and engaging way. If you sometimes struggle to understand the way God works in the world, or to explain it to others, you will find light here. You'll also be left with a new appreciation of just how big the God of the Bible really is.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If God has seemed absent, He might start appearing for you in surprising places if you take on board Saer's words here. Accurate, biblical, clear, short, serious and practical... thinking meets life. (Mark Dever ~ Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church and President, 9Marks.org, Washington, DC) Read and discover how big God really is. (Graham Beynon ~ Pastor, Grace Church, Cambridge and Director of Independent Ministry Training, Oak Hill College, London.) This book is fresh, theologically acute and full of pastoral insight: I highly recommend it. (Phil Campbell ~ Senior Minister, Mitchelton Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, Australia) Theologically rigorous, Biblically compelling, immensely pastoral and hugely practical... challenging, comforting, compelling and liberating. Such an important topic and such a good book! (Paul Dale ~ Senior Pastor, Church by the Bridge, Sydney, Australia) Cosmic practicality... he peels off the cultural shrink-wrap from this massive doctrine and thus gives wings to Christian living - and mission. Here is medicine for the soul! (R. Kent Hughes ~ Senior Pastor Emeritus, College Church, Wheaton, Illinois) Fresh and engaging. (Paul Rees ~ Lead Pastor, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, Scotland) This is a very

digestible read that covers quite meaty (and often head-scratching) questions. Misconceptions about the God of the bible - with one or two passages shoehorned to fit - are blown out of the water left right and centre, and God is seen to be very big indeed. Although the 150 pages don't have all the answers (I came away with several new ones) the God of the bible is presented as utterly consistent with himself in the face of faith's big questions. Questions that interest the academy and the punter on the street. Particularly suffering and sovereignty, foreknowledge and control. It's the God of the whole bible we are presented with, rather than (what so often happens) the god of one isolated passage, which doesn't fit with the god of another isolated passage in the bible. Saer has done really well to cover such big topics in such short chapters and he is often very amusing in the process - especially if you come from a scientific background! For a broad sweep of issues with great depth we get a flavour of the profound reality that is God. (Rutherford House)

If God has seemed absent, He might start appearing for you in surprising places if you take on board Saer's words here. Accurate, biblical, clear, short, serious and practical... thinking meets life. ~ Mark Dever (Senior Pastor, Capitol Hill Baptist Church and President, 9Marks.org, Washington, DC) Read and discover how big God really is. ~ Graham Beynon (Pastor, Grace Church, Cambridge and Director of Independent Ministry Training, Oak Hill College, London.) This book is fresh, theologically acute and full of pastoral insight: I highly recommend it. ~ Phil Campbell (Senior Minister, Mitchelton Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, Australia) Theologically rigorous, Biblically compelling, immensely pastoral and hugely practical... challenging, comforting, compelling and liberating. Such an important topic and such a good book! ~ Paul Dale (Senior Pastor, Church by the Bridge, Sydney, Australia) Cosmic practicality... he peels off the cultural shrink-wrap from this massive doctrine and thus gives wings to Christian living - and mission. Here is medicine for the soul! ~ R. Kent Hughes (Senior Pastor Emeritus, College Church, Wheaton, Illinois) Fresh and engaging. ~ Paul Rees (Lead Pastor, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, Scotland)

The title of Orlando Saer's book really summarizes his goal in writing: "Big God: How to approach SUFFERING, spread the GOSPEL, make DECISIONS and PRAY in the light of a God who really is in the DRIVING SEAT of the world." Pastor Saer wants the reader to finish the book excited to believe that, "God is in control of absolutely everything." But while this sentence can bring some people great comfort and hope, for others it can also bring great confusion. Many can't stomach the idea of God being completely in control of the universe because of all the sin, pain, and sadness that goes on. When I was growing up, I loved hearing

about God's sovereignty but I never felt comfortable talking about it. I found that nothing brought more conflict and misunderstanding than trying to draw lines around God's sovereignty to show where his sovereignty ended and my responsibility began. The more I drew lines around God to protect his holiness and guard my freedom, I found that in reality I was slashing away at his glory. My attempts to make God fit neatly into the categories I had in my mind robbed him of glory and shrank him down to the size of my understanding. The book *Big God* pushes back against our human tendency to shrink God. It's currently the most accessible book on understanding God's sovereignty in our lives that I have read. Over the six chapters, the author unshrinks our view of God in categories of suffering, evangelism, decision-making, and prayer.

**God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility:** The author begins his book by explaining how we have been shrinking God bit by bit for many years. This has happened because we feel a need to let God off the hook for every problem in the world. Since God's ideal world was pain-free we try to explain how he's not in control over pain in people's lives. But in order to do that we have to say that God has no control over human decisions and we eventually have to say that God has no control over the future. What we don't realize is that in our efforts to protect God, we end up making him small and ourselves big. In chapter 2, Saer begins to tackle the age old argument of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Thankfully, he centers the discussion at the cross. He uses Acts 2:36; 3:13-15; and 4:27-28 to explain how everything that happened on the cross and everything that happens in our lives isn't either-or (God's doing or my doing) but it is both-and (God working along with all my efforts). The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a display of both man's evil actions and God's wisdom and love in action to rescue us from the grip of sin. Throughout the chapter the author continues to explain this idea using passages such as Saul's death 1Chron 10:4,14. Saer explains, "Every event has (at least) two explanations: The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps" (Prov 16:9). Over the next several chapters, Saer describes how God doesn't want to be let off the hook for all the things we try to protect him from. Chapter 3 deals with "Unshrinking the God of Suffering," such as: Birth defects (Exod 4:11), financial woes (1Sam 2:7), droughts (Amos 4:7), medical conditions (2Cor 12:7-8), infertility (1Sam 1:5), extreme weather (Job 37:11-12). Chapter 4 focus on "Unshrinking the God of Evangelism," where the author uses the sovereignty of God in salvation to move us to share the gospel. Chapter 5 takes the fear out of decision-making because of the big God who rules over and works through our best and worst decisions. And the final chapter stirs a passion for prayer in the reader by helping us see that the One sitting in the

driver seat of the universe wants to listen us and uses our requests for his glory.Highly Recommended:Overall this book is easy to read. Heavy theological topics are addressed with accessible vocabulary, plenty of Scripture, clear illustrations, and practical applications to everyday life.These days the conversations I have about God's sovereignty are now some of the most encouraging and hope giving moments I have. I've read through this book several times for discipleship and it is robust enough to guide challenging conversations with a friend and clear enough to answer surprising questions from a child. Once you allow the truth about God in Scripture to explode your categories so that he increases, once you stop slashing at the beauty and bigness of God as he has explained himself in Scripture, then you can rest in your big God and his loving sovereignty that paints every corner of your life.

I found this book after a lunch conversation with a friend. She asked me if I believe that God is in control of every.single.moment. While I adamantly said yes...I found myself wrestling later. Wrestling not with believing that we serve a Sovereign God but wrestling with how to communicate my thoughts effectively. So I decided to dig around online and stumbled on this book.I loved this book for many reasons.1) It's easy to read. More than that...it's written as if I'm sitting in my pastor's office and we're talking through these ideas together. While I love good theological terminology - there is something much more tangible when things are written in real-speak.2) Filled with Scripture.3) Challenging.4) Practical. Pastor Saer is not only bold in moving into controversial topics - he gives very practical insight in how to handle some of the more complicated issues revolving around faith & free will & how it all weaves together.I bought this book originally thinking I'd pass it on to my girlfriend when I was done. Ha! I'm buying her own and keeping mine on my bookshelf. Because I have no doubt it'll be needed again.

I'd buy this book again just for the fourth chaoter. This book is mercifully short and easy to read, but packed with a theologically sound ideas about God's sovereignty.

This is not a heavy scholarly tome, but a clear easy read expressing the Reformed idea that God (and only God) is in control of our universe. Buy it as an easy accessible introduction for a friend.

It is good to be reminded that we serve a big God. This very practical book showed me clearly where I had shrunk God. I hadn't realized that.

if you are looking for answers to some basic questions regarding God, this is for you. Very thought-provoking!!

In my experience, one of the areas Christians struggle with the most is knowing that God is sovereign in and over not only creation but all of our lives. Sure, we know that we're supposed to trust the Lord with all of our heart (Proverbs 3:5) but what happens when life hits our theology? One of the reasons I enjoy the Puritans so much is they think rightly about issues related to daily Christian living. One example of this is their diagnosis that discipleship problems are doctrinal problems. Enter *Big God: How to approach Suffering, spread the Gospel, Make Decision and Pray in the light of a God who really is in the Driving Seat of the world*, a handbook by Orland Saer that will help readers understand the point of prayer, difficulty and struggles in an easy to understand way. *Big God* has seven chapters. The goal of these chapters is to help unshrink our view of God that affects our understanding of suffering, evangelism, and decision-making. Over the past few years since I found out my dad has dementia, I've been particularly challenged in the area of having a big (right) view of God. Knowing that my dad is a Christian is a comforting thought, as is the fact that God is near to the brokenhearted. It is also comforting to know that I can express my feelings (in a healthy way) to Him and cry when needed. My dad's dementia has deepened my trust in the sovereign power of God. While I know my dad is a born again Christian, I also know that one day he will die. Knowing that he is going to heaven is a great comfort even as I know that one day he will die from this awful disease. Difficult situations reveal where our faith in God is. Perhaps like you, I've gone through stretches in my Christian life where I wrestled with God over various issues, and lost like Jacob did. Whether you're struggling with doubt or some major or small issues, we need to have a big (right) view of God. Understanding who God is and what He is like comes from His Word. *Big God* by Orlando Saer is a helpful discipleship tool that will help you understand how to make godly decisions, and face suffering head on by the grace of God. I highly recommend *Big God* by Orlando Saer. As you read this book it may unsettle you. Reading this book will help you to address functional gods in your life that often replace the place of God in our lives. Reading this book also will give you biblical insight into God's revealed character that will help renew and refresh your walk with God. Whether you're a new Christian or a long time Christian, I encourage you to read this book and discover how great the God of the Bible truly is.

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