

## Transcript for Episode #5, Desperate for Hope Podcast with guests Dave & Gloria Furman

### Vaneetha:

I am so excited today to have, my guest, Dave and Gloria Furman, I, met Gloria several years ago at Gospel Coalition and she wrote, probably my favorite, endorsement I've ever gotten, on my first book. So I remember reading it thinking, oh my word. Wow. Gloria said that? This has gotta be a good book.

So that was wonderful. And just have read your book, Dave, "Kiss the Wave". Which was really wonderful. And so I have been looking forward to this conversation a lot. You both have so much wisdom. Gloria's written a bunch of books. You've written books, and just watching you live, missionally has.

Been a real joy from me. I get, Dave's emails about their ministry and they are ministering in a hard place. And just recently a friend of yours, was diagnosed with cancer and I've been praying about that and I'm sure just. This is hard [00:01:00] serving God and realizing that suffering is intertwined with that.

So I've, I've been thinking a lot about that. As we get started, maybe just tell our, listeners just where you live, a little bit about what you do, and then I'd love for you to maybe jump into your story.

**Furmans:** Yeah. Thank you. Thanks for having us. We really appreciate it and it really benefited by your writings, and I know the Gloria meant everything she said or wrote in that endorsement. And so, yeah, it's just great to be with you today. So we've been married for over 20 years now, and really from the very beginning of marriage, had a, had an eye towards the nations. And didn't know where God would have us, but in God's sovereignty, through a number of trips and just through layovers, He directed us through the Arabian Peninsula. And so, we serve, in ministry here in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, where I serve as, one of the pastors at Redeemer Church of Dubai, which just hit its 13th anniversary.

But along the way, our path, this path, in God's sovereignty [00:02:00] and kindness, we've walked through paths of suffering. And that's included, times of depression, discouragement, but really got kicked off, maybe year three of marriage. Is that about right? Year three or year four of marriage when the nerves in my hands and arms stopped working first in my right hand, then in my left hand.

And that led us down a path of a number of surgeries, a number of procedures we had. I had double arm surgery four months before we moved to the Middle East and we thought that that was gonna, that was gonna bring healing. So we had lots of hope and we were, we were desperate for hope. We were, praying that that would do it.

We moved here at one month in, to moving to the Middle East. Our world just came crashing down. I dunno if you wanna pick it up from there, just what it was like, I guess. October. It was the holy month of Ramadan here, and yeah, my arms stopped working.

Yeah, Dave's, arms went downhill as. As difficult as it was to watch, he had been making so much progress [00:03:00] in physical therapy and in occupational therapy.

He was able to do some things that he hadn't done for a long time. and then it was, it's almost as though one night everything just fell apart. And from then on it was a, a spiral of Dave having lots more pain than before. Even way more pain than before surgery, and less abilities than before surgery and less encouragement, less hope, less optimism. And to complicate all of those things, we are in a new country. new culture, new work, lots of unknowns. and yeah, those were really dark times. Yeah.

**Vaneetha:** Dave, you beautifully talk about that in your book, Kiss The Wave, and I just wanna read a little excerpt that, just really hit me. and just love to, you know, just have you tell us more about the time. But, you say in the book, I remember those dark nights of the soul when we first moved to the Middle East .There in the village, our whole world was falling apart. I hated my life. [00:04:00] Lightning bolts of pain and nerve pain made it feel like the bones in my arms were on fire. At times, I would sit on the couch and just stare off into nothing. For hours on end. I wanted to give up. It felt like each day did further destruction to my soul and my faith was hanging on by a thread. But it was there.

Maybe just tell me about that day, that time, and you know, when did that feeling change?

**Furmans:** Wow. It's emotional. Even hearing those words, huh? I was taken aback just hearing those words and, I guess wrote 'em several years ago and experienced them almost 15 years ago. You know, we, we were living in a village at the time in a nearby country. And we, in a sense, had this thought that the Lord was gonna use us to change the world or change the area.

And I, I wanted to change the world, but I couldn't even change my clothes without, without help. And I do remember those days sitting on that couch. We were in somebody else's furniture. We were staying in there. they left and we, we, we rented out their home for several months. In this [00:05:00] village, we were the only Westerners there in that part of the, the city and just going through cultural acclimation among other, other issues.

But yeah, I was driving in a parking lot one day and that's kind of when the moment started when my arms just kind of went, went out. And I remember some of those nights just pacing, sometimes for hours during the night, ran out of medication. That had been somewhat helpful. And, yeah, I just remember thinking to myself maybe a hundred times in a, in a day or more, just, I wish I was dead.

I wish I was dead, or I wish I didn't have arms. the burning was so high and the stress was so high. like it was a, it was a dark, dark, dark time, I think.

Yeah, I, I remember feeling, thankful that Dave wasn't physically able to open the door and run away. I could see he was in that much agony and was desperate in, in so much pain. I remember feeling thankful that well, at least he can't open the front door [00:06:00] and leave. Yeah, that's sad hope, but which is a really, and, and, and when the thought happened, I, I realized like that's, that's a really dark thankfulness.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah.

**Furmans:** thankfully we had some dear friends who were here with us, who were very helpful in normalizing suffering as part of the Christian life and normalizing suffering as part of God's plan to reach the nations.

And, reminded us of scripture that, normalizes all of those things, Jesus' words to his disciples about suffering and how to expect it. And reminders like in James. Don't be surprised, when you meet with fiery trials and. encouragements from, from Paul that all of your suffering is, is not even worth comparing to the eternal weight of glory.

So they, they were really our lifeline, them and, for me personally, a little book called, Gospel Primer for Christians by Milton vincent. Which he says that God's, forcing our [00:07:00] suffering and pain to do good to us. So, that really helped open up, to me, a Spirit driven imagination that God could use this and he hasn't abandoned us and he hasn't left us here to destroy us.

And, that, that was really helpful when you said that about destroy us. That's what it felt at times. It felt like, did God just bring us here to destroy us? And we, we knew that wasn't the case intellectually, but it felt like that. And I think, you know, you said that I'd written faith, barely hanging on like a thread.

I'm so thankful that it's not the strength of our faith that saves us, but the object of our faith that saves us. I think even this last couple weeks in a sermon. Just it's, it's not how great we feel that day. It's not how strong we feel or even just how strong that our faith and our belief is, or how unwavering it is.

It's the object of our faith. It's Jesus dying, the cross, rising from the dead. He conquered sin. He conquered our pain. He conquered death. And it's that, that object, it's that it's that person. It's that God man who, who saves us. And so we just, we praise [00:08:00] God for, for carrying us through,

**Vaneetha:** Hmm. Yeah, I was just reading, I've just finished reading the Pentateuch and just remembering when the Israelites said to, to Moses and to God and like, you know, have you brought us into the wilderness to kill us? And that's sort of the feeling we have. Like, have you brought us here to kill us? And God, you know, later says, I, I did that to do you good in the end, but in the middle of it, it feels like God is trying to kill us.

So yeah, I just, yeah, appreciate, you know, your friends who could remind you of truth and. Dave, you said a few times a day you thought, I, I just wanna die. Like, talk to me about that, like depression and, and how, what do you do when you feel that way?

**Furmans:** Wow. Well, I think, yeah, thanks for asking that question. I think it's so important for us to, to just realize that Christians can get depressed. The Christians can struggle with depression. Christians who are walking with God can struggle with depression. Pastors, people in ministry, just Christians can, can struggle.

and it, it might mean that [00:09:00] you're being unfaithful in some area. But it's not the barometer for your spiritual health per se. So, that's one thing I'd like to say. If you're, you know, watching this, listening to this and you're struggling with depression, like there is hope.

And so I think that's one thought is just, it's, it's kind of been something that's since those initial days, I think in the, in the beginning it's, it's as if the clouds would just, would not part. since then, there's been a cloud every once in a while, but I've seen blue skies by God's grace. And what I'd say to someone

struggling or even looking back at my own experience was, that God would have to deliver me.

And so thankful for prayers, thankful for the Psalms that are so honest. You know, we have Psalms like Psalm 88. That just, just doesn't look like any hope except for the very fact that he's praying and crying out to God. Or Psalm 42. I love the Psalm there that I think Martin Lloyd Jones in *Spiritual Depression* talks about, you know, talking to yourself and not listening to yourself.

It's a little bit about the gospel primer as well, kind of picks up on that, that theme of, in that Psalm 42, the psalmist is arguing with himself, right? And he says, all these dark [00:10:00] things are happening, but I think it's verse 5, maybe verse 11 as well, but the repeated refrain, hope in God, hope in God.

And, and I think that's part of those, those days of just, you know, even if it felt like my faith was weak. It felt like he was frail. To hope in God, to realize that, hey, this is, even a Christian experience in a fallen world. I think they have friends and really Gloria, just incredibly patient.

And so just as a spouse to, to love me, to care for me, to not blame me, for this and to, to serve me as really a Christ-like figure in my life. So, lots of things in that time. But ultimately it was God who I think one day parted those clouds and delivered me from it.

**Vaneetha:** Wow. Well, Gloria, I'd love to hear, even as in depression, like how were you supportive of Dave? Like what would you say to people who have a spouse that's depressed and struggling, like what's the best way to minister to them? Or what's one way?

**Furmans:** Yeah. I think one thing that really helped us, [00:11:00] in particular in our marriage was, an open invitation for each other to get help. That's always been a welcome thing from Dave. Like, he says things like, "Hey, if you wanna talk to somebody, please, you know, share, like, be open and we'll go together". So when we were talking with our friends, it was with great transparency, between the two of us and with our friends about those things. So I, I was never really alone or feel like I had to carry any burden by myself because, they were there. My, my friends were there and, and Dave was there with me in that he recognized right away how much his pain and suffering affected me and our daughter at the same time.

And, he would urge me to talk to my friends. Pray and get prayer requests and share them. And, that was, I mean, that's kind of been how we functioned,

**Vaneetha:** Mm-hmm.[00:12:00]

**Furmans:** together. And then, and then with friends too. Just that kind of a transparency when we need help, there's an openness to go get it.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah. Oh, that's wonderful. cause I think with depression or those things, sometimes people, the whole family pulls inward and it's great when you're willing to just be transparent because the Holy Spirit lives in us. I don't think we need to be ashamed of those things, but I feel like sometimes in Christian circles, you have to feel like everything is great for you to be trusting God and that is, so not the case.

So yeah, I appreciate that. And, and what did you do for Dave? Or what did you say to Dave when he was struggling with depression?

**Furmans:** There's a, a fantastic one-liner quote from, well, he's got lots of great quotes. Our, professor from seminary, Dr. Jim Allman, who shares from the bottom of his heart. Testimonies of God's faithfulness and kindness about His faithfulness in the past is a model and a promise for His faithfulness to you in the future.

Truth like that, which was still fresh in your minds from having graduated seminary a few years before [00:13:00] that, and another one from Dr. Alman, that, that God has not brought you here, anywhere, to destroy you, but to do you good to make Himself famous. And those anchoring truths I would say to Dave and myself, talking to myself at the same time.

Yeah, because we needed the same thing. Yeah. And I think along with that, there's just, Gloria was very intentional with her words and also intentional with her, with her silence. Just being with me, not blaming me and just staying beside me. I think it's real important. We see Job's friends, Job's friends were amazing to job those first seven days.

You know, they were amazing to job until they opened their mouths, right. they sat with them for those seven days. When they opened their mouth, they started saying some unhelpful things. Gloria didn't say unhelpful things, but what she did also do is she sat with me. You know, we, whatever we'd be eating together, going places, and she'd just [00:14:00] be so patient and so, so slow to speak and just be there with me.

And I think me being able to watch her faithfulness, because when one person suffers, and you know this, when one person suffers, it, it affects every single

person around them. And of course, those who are closest. the most, whether it's spouse, kids, extended family, friends to church, people have to help me in different ways, and live with me and in different times, whether it was depression or other, just nerve pain.

And so I think Gloria's, intentional speaking up gospel words, but then also just her being my friend, and, and, and at times being quiet was really, really helpful too.

**Vaneetha:** Wow. That's great. Yeah. Encouragement. I think a lot of us, who struggle with pain, deal with depression, and it's really wonderful to hear, words of how somebody can walk with us. I, I do think, yeah, just silence, sitting there praying is such a gift. And I think, kind of to your words, sometimes we forget that saying nothing is often the most powerful [00:15:00] thing and we wanna fill it with words, which I do too much.

Well, Dave, your, disability causes a huge dependence as we talked about. You know, Gloria said you couldn't open the door and run away. Like, what has that been like for you and, how has, depending on others, maybe helped you depend on God more?

**Furmans:** Yeah, well, I still can't open the front door, even today, so there's no happy ending in terms of, and you know, I'm not, not strong now, I'm not healed.

A dozen procedures, five or six surgeries, so about 18 times, you know, trying to do something plus. Other treatments and, you know, in some ways I'm a little better, in many ways, most ways I'm just weaker now even. And so still need help getting dressed. Need help, putting on my seatbelt.

I can't drive, I can't open yeah, even the car door. So really been pretty, pretty consistently, both weak and struggling with pain. And so it's been a long, it's been long, 17 year journey. Both for, for Gloria having to support and, and care for me and the kids in ways that not every mom or wife has to. And then for me, [00:16:00] yeah, I think, being dependent.

So in some ways I'd like to say, oh, I've learned how to be dependent now on other people when it's easy to ask for help. And in some ways it's easier. In some ways it's still just hard, whether it's my pride or whether it's my self-sufficiency. So today, I'm trying to think. We had an elder meeting, we had at a staff development kind of training, and I had a couple other meetings with people. And even then, just to get a cup of water, you know, I was dependent

on, asking one of our elders to pour me water, or even the food we were eating. We were eating a Middle Eastern food, and I, I couldn't, you know, cut it on my own. So a fellow elder needed to cut that, or even go into the, to the restroom, I couldn't close and open the door.

And so just even today, just thinking through the various things I needed help with, just to get through the day. And I think it is, I think there are, there are challenges with it. It's humbling. to ask for help. I think, you know, the joke about the, the, the person doesn't want to ask for directions when they're lost driving.

It's true. It's hard to ask for help. And I think you, you hit, you hit it. I do think it has helped me, and maybe both of [00:17:00] us, to depend on the Lord for all things. So we came here to change the world. We came here to plant this church to hopefully plant churches that plant churches. And what we found out instead is, God was gonna build this church upon Jesus and we were gonna be a very small part in that, and He would use us.

And it's really the story of the Bible. So it's weakness is the way, I think J. I. Packer's words, weakness is the way, so God gets all the glory. We came here to plant this church and plant churches and instead, we saw really what the Bible shows. Joseph, you know, thrown and discarded. We see Moses the stutterer used by God.

We see David against Goliath. We see Joshua in the Battle of Jericho. Blow some trumpets, walk around the city walls and I'm gonna give you the city. You're not even gonna fight. And then, and Paul, thorn in the flesh weak. And obviously we, we see his CV or his resume of suffering in his Corinthian letters.

And then Jesus himself, God became, became man. And so the story of the Bible's, one story of weakness so that God gets all the glory. And so I think God just humbled us and showed us that every good that happens and has happened is because of God and because of His [00:18:00] power and His strength through His spirit.

And so, yeah, we've, we've had to be dependent on God really for the big picture. And then even just daily just wake us up to get us through another day, another sermon. You know, those early days were so hard. Just getting through the week, was a challenge. But great, great question. I think all of it has helped, and yet it's still, it's still a battle.



I wish we've, I wish we'd get an A+ on dependency on God. Um, But I need even just, even right now, tonight, after today, so.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for sharing that cause it is. Sometimes we hear from people where suffering is sort of past and they say, wow, God delivered me. But you know, to talk about suffering in the present is a very difficult and different thing. And I struggle with not nearly to the degree you do, but with my arms are super weak and eventually I may be a quadriplegic.

So I can't do things that people can't tell that I can't do. And so when I'm in a news situation, I'm totally like, Hey, can you pour me the water? Like, I, I just, you know, I shouldn't be necessarily ashamed about it, but it brings a degree of shame. Like, hey, I can't cut my food. So if [00:19:00] I go somewhere and my husband's not there, I'm kind of like stumped on what to do at first.

And it's, you know, you'd think I'd be used to it also. But every single time it's like, ugh, do I wanna ask? What should I say? Do I need to explain? And so it is one of those daily sort of dependence.

**Furmans:** Exactly. And when you're not, when it, when they can't see it becomes, you know, that awkward ask. And the first thing that you have to sort of talk about with somebody. And so then you get into the health and, and then that you feel like that's your identity and it's a challenge. And so I have all kinds of crazy stories of me trying to use my feet to try to open up, bottles of water or trying to do whatever I can.

I think that looks even sillier than just asking for help. But yeah, I, I still, okay. I, I wanna be able to do it on my own and, and I think, I think it's a constant battle.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. I mean, I think we all, you know, sort of the American way is independence, you know. We wanna do it ourselves and yet God keeps calling us back to dependence. But you know, the, like, the story of [00:20:00] the widow of Zarephath, I think that's a wonderful story, but I hated it. My friends prayed it for me, like God would provide for you every day.

And I'm like, I don't want to go back to that jar and not know how much there is. I, I wanna go to Sam's Club and have everything in my pantry. And you know, just the day to day it is hard, but certainly helps us see God so.

Well, Gloria, I would love to know from you, because of Dave's dependence on you, I'm sure there's joy in that, being able to serve him and be there for him and

do this ministry together, and then at times there's like, "wow, this is a lot for me." How, how have you made it through that and what would you say to someone who is kind of caring for someone and feeling that it's a lot for them?

**Furmans:** Wow. yeah, I, I've had ups and downs, struggling through that over the years. It's kind of like a [00:21:00] cycle of, of thoughts about what could we do if Dave could function by himself. What could I do if Dave could function by himself? What could I do if Dave could help me, with certain things.

And, those thoughts never really turn out or land in in the best place. Instead starting with, permanent circumstances like God is sovereign and God has created Dave. God brought Dave and I together. God gave us these children. God is the one who brought us to this place. God is the one who has put this ministry in front of us.

God is the one who has drawn the boundaries of our strengths and our weaknesses, and He's the one who provides opportunities. He's the one who provides the strength to do it, or even the wisdom to say no. Starting instead with permanent things, like God's [00:22:00] character and, His intentions to, to glorify Himself has turned out better, very much thought life, instead of using my imagination to think, wow, what else could I be doing if this was not the case? And that's, that's been really helpful. So I, I would say to a person struggling with, with questions like that, if you're struggling with questions like that, to just, flip it around, in your mind and, and think, what kind of questions should I be asking?

Should they be God-centered instead of me centered? Even the me-centered questions that sound holy, like what kind of ministry could I be doing, if I didn't have this or that limitation? It's still centered on me. So if Jesus has given me something to do, help and serve Dave, then don't I wanna do what Jesus wants?

So starting with, with God first instead of me. And I think we see that, right? We, even with Paul sometimes, I once thought if Paul didn't have that thorn in the flesh and [00:23:00] Paul hadn't gone through the suffering, what could his ministry have been like? But it's really the wrong question. It's not that. Paul, was able to do what he did in spite of the thorn in his flesh and his suffering, but it's what God used him to do through his flesh and through his suffering, and so I think, I think that's the right perspective.

**Vaneetha:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. That our suffering, whether it's caring for someone or the actual pain of it is, is ordained by God for us and for our good and for like

that is the best ministry, that God has given us. So what about, times for yourself, or do you even, do you think that way, Gloria? Like, Hey, I, I want some ME time, which I think, you know, in our world, everybody's asking for that.

Like I'd love to hear what your thoughts are on that.

**Furmans:** It's so hard, because you've got, you've got that, that urge from all fronts, right? Little voice inside that says, I can't do this anymore. why can't I just be by myself, [00:24:00] me, nobody ask anything of me. Everyone leave me alone. And then even well-meaning people like, you know what you need? You need to get alone and go away for a week.

That's what you need, is some me time. and maybe in some doses and in some circumstances, that is super helpful advice and that people, caregivers need to take advantage of those opportunities when they can do them. I think that that could be so life giving to someone as they're pouring their life out to care for someone to take that me time and, and let the Lord minister to you through a variety of means. Whether that's somebody who is taking some of the responsibilities from you or someone who's serving alongside you in those responsibilities.

There's various ways that you can be refreshed by by that kind of time. I have found it difficult over the years to [00:25:00] let some responsibilities go, to others because of just technical things and, even personal preferences. But what I found most helpful instead of meditating on how I can't have something or I can't do something, is to see how God has met me in the middle of things. That His grace is sufficient for me even if I don't get to sleep in.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah.

**Furmans:** Or, you know, fill in the blank with, even if I don't get this thing that I think will be my refuge and my refreshment. Yeah. Even if I don't get those things, or even if an opportunity for someone to help me falls through or turns out to be not so helpful.

Even if that doesn't work, how has God's grace been Sufficient for me has been, a much healthier thing for me to meditate on.

**Vaneetha:** Hmm. That's great. Thank you. Yeah, cause I mean there are people that can take time for me time and there's situations where you can't, and it doesn't mean that you can't rest in the Lord [00:26:00] even when you can't

physically sleep in or have a day off or whatever that looks like. So, it just makes us more intentional really to, to press into the Lord rather than the things of the world, for relaxation.

**Furmans:** So given all that we've talked about of what you've been through when you first started ministry, and even now, do you ever say, we are giving our lives up for the gospel, like we have given up everything, we're doing this ministry. Like, God, why did you bring suffering into our lives? Like, weren't we doing enough? What do you think? I think I might have asked that when we first got here and started experiencing great adversity. I, I think the Lord just needed to winnow all of the prosperity gospel out of me.

**Vaneetha:** Mm-hmm.

**Furmans:** if I'm doing these things for the Lord, then they will go well and things will go well for me. I think, I think I just needed to have that [00:27:00] totally shattered in my head. That if I'm in the Lord's will that things will be great. I think I had a question like that.

**Vaneetha:** Hmm.

**Furmans:** Yeah. I think we've seen maybe the In the beginning maybe I similarly, had the, had the same kind of questions, but over time I think we've seen how God's used, our suffering in the lives of others.

Both obviously, kind of, I think it's 2 Corinthians 1, we, we can minister to others out of the comfort that we've received from the Lord. And I think in the variety of cultures that we minister here in the Middle East of Prosperity Gospel certainly is, is everywhere where wherever there is any signs of, of Christianity.

And so seeing the, the senior pastor of a church and someone from the west and someone who. is up there preaching and leading someone who went to seminary, someone who, loves Jesus and is disabled and has pain and God's not healing. I think that's had, I haven't suffered perfectly and I've struggled with sin and [00:28:00] I've struggled with just my own flesh and I've struggled, you know, in very areas.

But I think seeing a pastor suffer, I think, cause there's this belief. Certainly prosperity gospel, but also just, oh, the pastors close to God, even closer to God. God should certainly hear my prayers. And of course we know that's not, that's not true, that's not right. We all as Christians are, are priesthood of all believers.

But I think that visual picture, I think to our church has, really impacted them probably more than some strong prideful pastor, would have. Um, And so I think we see God's kindness in that. I think now we do pray though, for God to, to heal me. We think how amazing would His glory go forth with, with healing?

I think God has glorified Himself through pain and through suffering. we also think God could do that through healing, and He's healed some. And so the question is why hasn't He healed me? I don't, we, we obviously have no answer to that, but we pray every night before we go to sleep and we, we pray at, one of the things we pray for is we pray, we we pray for healing. And I think. it'd be amazing to see that. And why He hasn't yet, and maybe, you know, He won't in [00:29:00] this earthly life. We press on knowing that in eternity, which is far longer than this short life, the pain of my arms won't be, won't be an issue.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah, I love that you continually pray for healing, cause I think. You know, some Christians fall into one of two camps. It's either, you know, God is gonna heal you if you have the faith. And then the other is God's not gonna heal us physically. You know, we just need to press on and just sort of the both- and we can pray for healing and we can find contentment in where we are.

And I think that's a great model for anyone who is struggling with any kind of illness or situation. Just praying that God would deliver. And yet the same time, sort of accepting where God puts us. So I would love to know what do you know about God through this pain and this situation that you didn't know before?

**Furmans:** I think it has driven [00:30:00] both of us to a radical dependence in faith that He would carry us through the day. So clearly, I think big picture wise, I think deep down we knew that God was gonna be the one who was gonna have to plant churches. But I think living out sometimes in the flesh day to day now, looking at my calendar the night before, waking up, just getting through the day, Needed to depend upon, the Lord. Meeting by meeting, hour by hour, day by day, trip by trip, sermon by sermon.

I think He's, I guess humbled. I feel like He's humbled us in such a way that we've had to learn that no, God is actually sovereign over everything. And anything good, that comes about would be through him. So I think humility, I think dependence, we've talked a little bit about those already, but I think maybe more so just for every, every aspect of our lives.

So, you know, we're praying for, our kids' spiritual lives. We're praying for our extended family and health [00:31:00] issues. We're praying for, various issues in the church and struggles in the church. And just, I think with everything, we've learned that on our own we might think we have answers, but we just have to go to the Lord.

So I think dependence in prayer, I think as well. I would love to. I think there's, there's, you never pray enough and you always want to be closer to the Lord, but I think it's drawn me closer to the Lord in prayer.

**Vaneetha:** It's been wonderful talking to both of you. What role has suffering sort of, played in your marriage? Like where has it strengthened it and where, what have been the struggles for you both?

**Furmans:** Yeah, so Dave's pain started really affecting him, I think about three years after we were married. I like to, to reminisce on some of the dates we went on, which were mostly centered around sports. We did do quite a bit of sports together. He tried to teach me how to play tennis and, failed.

Didn't quite work. Sports that involved the moving object weren't, weren't your best. I'm so great at sports ball. But [00:32:00] Dave had a long... enjoyed a long childhood career of, of all kinds of sports and excellence, in sports. And, we had so much fun. Remember one time we got, I dunno if it was a dinghy, do you call that or was some kind of a little rubber boat?

A rubber boat that we paddled into the middle of the lake with with Chick-fil-A? Was it was that July 4th? It was Chick-fil-A. I don't, I think we went, went out with Chick-fil-A and in a, in a rubber boat that we bought and, yeah. Oh yeah. So I, we used to really enjoy having a lot of fun, like that, I think, yeah.

And, and Dave had such a high capacity, and energy. Tons of energy. He could wake up super early and go a thousand miles an hour and stay awake late, and get all of those things done in a day and still have energy for the next day. And then with his pain and suffering, slowly those things about Dave's personality would change. And about his activity would change. And so we discovered in our marriage [00:33:00] that our marriage isn't based on our personality types or the things that we enjoy doing together. Our marriage is based on a covenant we made before God. Promises that we made to be with each other, support one another, love one another as Christ loves the Church.

And, those promises are the ones that have kept our marriage. We've had to find other things to do. Now we eat, we like eating, like talking. Yeah. We, no, no tennis together, but we, we

You can watch tennis.

Yeah. Yeah, that's true. And, and I take the kids sometimes. Yeah. But to, to, for them to play or for them to watch.

But yeah, I think we've, I think it's drawn us closer to dependence on Him in prayer. But then I think closer as far as well,

And it binds us together because Dave literally can't leave without me.

So I can't leave the house. I can't usually get ready for bed. I can't get dressed in the morning. So, so there is this unique thing. We can't really be, mad at each other, angry at each other. We, we need to resolve conflict fast. I mean, we,[00:34:00] together during those key moments in the day, and, and, so I think that's God's, God's grace and God's kindness perhaps protecting us from something. By, by kind of bonding us.

Weaving together multiple times throughout our day, practically where we interact with each other and talk and communicate all the time.

we don't, I mean by God's grace and kindness, we haven't struggled with the, the ships in the night kind of phenomenon.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah, so I'm guessing that's hard. I mean, I'm, I'm speaking from experience, like if I'm mad at my husband, Joel, a little bit like he said something and then all of a sudden I need a glass of water. It's like,

oh wow, I gotta, I gotta work this out. Cause I don't want him to feel used. Like, Hey, get me the water.

So it really does make you keep short accounts cause you can't just walk away.

**Furmans:** That's a great way to put it.

It it's true. It's true. It it, yeah. And, You know, I come home, I come home from an elder meeting or come home from some meeting late or ministry late. I need, I need help changing. I mean, Gloria maybe has, has gone to sleep, but I need, I

need to wake her up. And so even then it just, we, we end the day [00:35:00] together in some way.

**Vaneetha:** And, yeah. So short accounts, that is a good way of, of putting it. Yeah, you cannot let the sun go down on your anger in that situation because you need help and, and yeah, that is a grace. You know, I love what you said, Gloria, that some people sort of pass like ships in the night, but with dependence, you cannot do that. You know, you can't give somebody the cold shoulder when you're asking them for help.

And so ,there is something...

**Furmans:** you have to talk about everything. Yeah.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah. Yeah. And that really is a gift. Although people wouldn't see it that way, but, but it really is drawing you close. And, so I'd love to know what is, what, what do you guys do for fun now? What, you know, you mentioned food. I'm a foodie, so, but yeah, I think humor and laughter is important and I see that in your marriage and just would love to hear more about that.

**Furmans:** Yeah, I think certainly laughing about life. And even laughing about, not that we laugh about suffering, but just sometimes, you know, it is kind of funny. You're buttoning my shirt and [00:36:00] we're, it's just, it's not normal. But, but we can kind of, kind of just laugh at that. I think, taking walks together, so, you know, I'd like to do more.

We took a nice walk yesterday. Uh, thankfully I'm able to walk. I have some pain in my legs, but, in general walking is, is, is a helpful thing. So take some walks around the neighborhood. we like to sit so behind that you see a blue chair, right, right behind us, the video, you know, we, there's another chair on the other side there and we like to sit and talk together. So walking, talking. We do like eating. and so not fancy food, but, but cheeseburgers, yes. we love cheeseburgers, so that's a confession, I guess. And we live in the Middle East, so lots of good food out here, but I think cheeseburgers are near the top for both of us. So, we like, we like eating together, talking, walking, being with our kids, just being together as a family.

Our kids started. This has been really fun, during the pandemic, everything else shut down in Dubai. But the Dubai little league stayed open and we had never played, they had never played baseball or softball before. But our kids, we sign 'em up without their consent and they were [00:37:00] not thrilled and they loved it, and all of them loved it.



So we had four kids, all of them play. And so this last year I became kind of a head coach. And I started, I can't physically do it, so I need help. I can't physically hit the baseballs and things, but I coached the kids, all, all of them actually, which was a delight. So for fun for us was on the baseball field in the Middle East, which we never would've expected.

And this, so this, that's about two and a half years into just kind of taking us to a third place, a place where we could meet non-believers, build relationships, but a place where we could be with the kids outside. And while I can't, I, I dream about the day that I could throw the baseball with the kids. I can at least coach them.

And so one thing that over the years I struggled with was, I was depressed. And so I just kind of, pulled away from, from almost everything rather than doing what I'm able to do. And so I would, because I couldn't play baseball and play catch with my kids and, and laugh and have a good time playing sports, I would just not do anything.

But what I found out is, well, I I might not be able to play, but we can, I can coach and we can have some, some, some good fun times of the family doing that. So [00:38:00] yeah, lots of laughter along the way and God's been really, really sweet to allow us to, to have those moments.

**Vaneetha:** Oh, that's great. So do you live with just one or two more questions. Do you live with constant pain? Like as we're talking right now, is your body sort of hurting?

**Furmans:** Yeah, a hundred percent of the time. And it's a, it's a burning pain that, that's kind of starts, from the, right above my elbow down to the, my little fingers in both of my, both of my hands. The worst pain is around my elbows and my forearms. And it's, it's, it's a burning pain, so it's tough to explain nerve pain sometimes, but it's the ulnar nerve.

Mine has been moved a couple times, but it's the, basically your funny bone. And so I think the best way to explain it is if you hit your funny bone, against something and you feel that, that terrible pain for a few seconds, it, it's not. Yeah, I would say my constant pain is maybe five seconds into that, that pain.

So obviously no one could probably live with that first second of that funny bone [00:39:00] pain. But a few seconds in, you feel that burning pain. And so mine would be constant in both of my arms. And it hasn't improved. So it's the

disability plus the pain. I think that combo every, every once in a while, pray, Lord, just take one of those away.

But they're both there and it is constant. It does fluctuate some. And so if I bump my elbows or if I do too much and overexert myself, it can get worse. But in general, it's, it's relatively steady. And it's, you know, I don't know what you put on the pain scale, but it feels like an eight probably normally, like it's just, it's there.

And some good days might be a seven bad days, or a nine or a 10, but, but yeah, we live with it constantly.

**Vaneetha:** Yeah, I mean, I feel like I deal with, a combination of pain and disability too, and disability is really hard, but you can live with that a little more than... Pain interrupts everything in your life and what you think. And you know, it's a little harder to come to terms with sometimes because it just is so present in front of you.

So I [00:40:00] can, only imagine how hard it is to press through that, especially on days when it's a nine or a 10 and you still are a pastor and you still have people you know, depending on you. So, well that's something we can all be praying for you about is, you know, the listeners hear about this. So my last question is, this podcast is called Desperate For Hope, and so I'd love to ask guests where have you found hope?

One practical way when you were desperate for it, and I'd just love to hear from both of you.

**Furmans:** Yes. Um, 2 Corinthians,

**Vaneetha:** Hmm.

**Furmans:** He is, Paul is talking about grace extending to more and more people, through challenging circumstances. And he says in verse 16, so, we do not lose heart, though our outer self is wasting away. Our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this [00:41:00] light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. That, the description of light and momentary, really helps me when I am desperate for hope. To compare it, yeah, to what's coming.

Yeah. Yeah, I'll say two things really, the first thing is just almost the same, so that I'll, I'll add one, but it's just that eternal perspective, thinking through the end of Revelation.

No more tears, no more pain. The death of death and the death of Christ. I mean, we, there's no, no more, no more dying. And so I think when we keep that eternal perspective in front of us, that, that definitely helps. And so one way we do that, and that's, that's really I guess, my addition. To what you've just said is, and this would be my encouragement to anybody listen to you who struggles with pain, depression, discouragement, is to stay in community where you're [00:42:00] gonna hear that.

And I think oftentimes when we struggle with disability, depression, pain, we sometimes pull out of community or pull out of the church. Or maybe we're not as attentive to even just corporate worship. Or we're, we're not, you know, because we're hurting lots of times. Like just the pain is so much. And I just would want to encourage, those listening to, to press into community.

And, and to not stay out. I know for me, I need the Church as much as anybody else. And I'm, I'm a pastor. I need to hear, I need to sit under the preached word. I need to have friends remind me of the truth. I need friends to point me to Jesus. I need friends to remind me of eternity. Remind me of heaven. I need friends to, to pray for me, to pray with me.

And so I think, I think the eternal perspective. Remembering what God says in his word and His promises. The promises made in the Old Testament, are promises kept in the New Testament. I need to be reminded of that in His word and from, the communion of saints, at the church. And, and, and that's, that's really by God's grace, how He sustained us these years.

**Vaneetha:** Oh, that's wonderful. Well, thank you so [00:43:00] much. Just lastly, is there anything that you would like to say that I didn't ask you?

**Furmans:** No, I don't think so. I think, I think just again, there is hope. And I love that the, you know, the, the podcast Desperate for Hope. And I think we do feel desperate at times in our pain or struggle or conflict. I mean, everybody, everybody struggles with pain in suffering in some way or a trial, or if you haven't, you know, I think D.A. Carson said, "if you haven't suffered, you know, you will suffer one day."

Like it is, it's coming in some way, some form, some fashion. And I think, to, to just be ready for it and to, and to know that, yeah, our hope only comes in Jesus. His resurrection changes everything. His resurrection changes our lives.

His resurrection gives us hope. And so when we're desperate for hope, we can look to Jesus because He isn't in the grave. He didn't stay dead. But on the third day, He rose triumphantly over death proving that His death was sufficient to cover our sins, and His death was sufficient to defeat death and Satan .And His death and resurrection was sufficient, to one day carry us into eternal life.

And so maybe that's just a final word more than, an [00:44:00] answer But the the, as we're desperate for hope, our hope is only found in Jesus, the risen one, who died, and conquered death for us.

**Vaneetha:** Amen. What a, what a great way to end this. So thank you so much both of you for being on this podcast. I have just learned so much from you and just appreciate your candidness. So yeah, thank you.

**Furmans:** Yeah, no, thank you for having us. Really appreciated it.