

Why All the Pain and Suffering?

Lesson 3

Class Goals:

- To gain a biblical perspective on suffering in the world
- To better understand the character of God
- To respond practically to suffering around us in a Christ-like manner

Philosophical Problem of Evil:

(G) There exists a God who is all-good, all-powerful, and all-knowing.

(E) Evil Exists

(MP) An all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing God would have no good reason for allowing evil

1. Do you think (MP) is a true statement? Why or why not? Read Isaiah 55:8-9. What do these verses add to the conversation about (MP)?

Theodicy: an attempt to provide God's actual reason for allowing evil

Defense: an attempt to provide a possible reason for God to allow evil

Two Major Defenses:

1. _____-_____ defense
2. _____-_____ defense
2. Read Genesis 3:1-5. Thinking back to our definitions of good and evil, what does it mean that eating the fruit caused their "eyes to be opened, knowing good and evil"? Think about what life would have been like if there had been no tree that was forbidden in the garden.
3. If God immediately intervened to stop evil choices from being made, how would that affect moral growth on earth? How would it affect our ability to understand God's goodness, grace, and mercy? Read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Why do angels struggle to understand the gospel?
4. Read Genesis 50:20. How does this broaden our view of God's role with "good" and "evil" actions? What other attributes of God are on display here?

5. According to the following verses, what does suffering produce? What has it produced in your life? Have your greatest times of growth in your faith come during easy or hard times?

Romans 5:3-5

James 1:2-4

2 Peter 3:8-10

6. What was the effect of suffering on Jesus Himself, according to Hebrews 2:9-10 and 5:8-9? What should be our response, from 1 Peter 2:21-25?