

“A Loving God Wouldn’t Allow This Much Suffering...”

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INTRO: Why do people not believe in God?

- Evidence?
- Hurt & Suffering...

I never doubted God, until my grandma was diagnosed with vascular dementia and Alzheimer's when she was about 60. When she died, my mom said she would be singing with the angels, but I couldn't understand why a loving God would have taken her voice away in the first place. – Anonymous

Why would a loving God allow so much suffering? Why do bad things happen to good people?

So You Think You're Good?

Let's play the comparison game...

- The Fall

Gen 3:17-19 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the round because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

What is good? Do you consider yourself a good person? Do you feel like you deserve something from God...that he owes you?

*When we stand back to consider the premise—that God owes us a good life—it is clearly unwarranted. If there really is an infinitely glorious God, why should the universe revolve around us rather than around him? If we look at the biblical God's standards for our behavior—the Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, and the Sermon on the Mount—and then consider humanity's record against those norms, it may occur to us that the real riddle of evil is not what we thought. Perhaps the real puzzle is this: Why, in light of our behavior as a human race, does God allow so much happiness? **Timothy Keller** “Walking with God through Pain and Suffering” pg. 115*

- God didn't choose suffering, WE DID!

It's easy to point the finger at Adam, but how often EVERY SINGLE DAY do we have an Adam moment?

Sitting On Your High Horse

- Marine instructors vs. students
 - We can feel like this is God with us...

- What is Justice?
 - WE sin against God...Justice would be to NOT intervene!
 - We want justice for everyone else...until it comes to our view of God

- “But God...”

Eph 2:1-7 *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

- Whatever the opposite of the high horse is...

*The sovereign God himself has come down into this world and has experienced its darkness. He has personally drunk the cup of its suffering down to the dregs. And he did it not to justify himself but to justify us, that is, to bear the suffering, death, and curse for sin that we have earned. He takes the punishment upon himself so that someday he can return and end all evil without having to condemn and punish us. **Timothy Keller** “Walking with God through Pain and Suffering” pg. 120*

Far Greater Glory

- Who do you think you are?

Job 38:4-11; 40:2-5; 42:2-6 *“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’? 2 “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.” 3 Then Job answered the Lord and said: 4 “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.” 2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 3 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ 5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”*

- God goes on for 79 verses humbling Job...

I can't remember to take the trash out on Monday nights, but when something goes wrong in my life I'm so quick to point the finger at the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth...the one who knows the hairs on my head...

- What should I do?

Rom 8:18-25;28 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

*Often we can see how bad things "work together for good" (Rom 8:28). The problem is that we can only glimpse this sometimes, in a limited number of cases. But why could it not be that God allowed evil because it will bring us all to a far greater glory and joy than we would have had otherwise? Isn't it possible that the eventual glory and joy we will know will be infinitely greater than it would have been had there been no evil? What if that future world will somehow be greater for having once been broken and lost? If such is the case, that would truly mean the utter defeat of evil. Evil would not just be an obstacle to our beauty and bliss, but it will have only made it better. Evil would have accomplished the very opposite of what it intended. **Timothy Keller** "Walking with God through Pain and Suffering" pg. 117*

- What can I look forward to?

Rev 21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

God's sovereignty gives us the strength and assurance to persevere and trust Him during times of hardship, suffering, and pain. Knowing that He is in control—even when everything around us feels uncertain or broken—doesn't necessarily take away the pain or make our struggles disappear. But it does give us a deep sense of hope and peace in the midst of it all. We can endure because we trust that God is working through every circumstance, and that His purposes are ultimately good, even when we can't yet see the outcome.