

BIG QUESTIONS

Part 2: Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?

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A lot of people wonder: If God is all powerful, all knowing, and all loving, why do bad things happen to people? If God is all-powerful, and yet allows suffering, does that mean he doesn't love us or doesn't care?

Or maybe: If God is all-knowing, and cares about what's going on, He can't possibly be all-powerful, or He would do something about it!

THE DILEMMA

If...

- God exists...
- God is all-good...
- God is all-powerful...
- Evil exists...

Then...

- Why does God allow evil to exist?
- Why does God allow Christians to suffer?

Possible Explanations

- There is no God (Atheism).
- God is not all-good (Pantheism).
- God is not all-powerful (ancient polytheism process theology).
- There is no evil (Christian Science, Hinduism, New Age thinking).
- God is not present to combat evil (Deism, "clockmaker" concept of God).
- All propositions are true; God exists, is all-good, is all-powerful, and evil exists (orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam).

DEFINITIONS

- Evil (natural and moral) is something that is harmful or wicked. Natural evil includes earthquakes, tornados, floods, disease, hurricanes, lightning. Moral evil includes bad choices made by created beings, war, murder, robbery, immorality, Satanic and demonic influences, etc.
- Suffering is to feel pain or distress, to sustain loss, injury, harm, or punishment.

WHERE DOES EVIL COME FROM?

- It does not come from God
- It can come from man
- It can come from Satan and his demons

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why didn't God create a world without evil and suffering? (Hint: See Gen. 1:31).
2. Why is God so slow in doing away with evil and suffering? (2 Pet. 3:7-9).
3. If moral evil is due to man's choices, then does natural evil come from God?

HOW TO ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING

- Encourage them to _____ it.
- Encourage them to _____ from God's Word.
- Encourage them to receive _____.
- Remind them that evil and suffering are only _____ (Rev. 21:1-4)

FIVE REASONS WHY GOD ALLOWS EVIL AND SUFFERING

1. It can _____ (John 9:1-3).
2. It can _____ (1 Peter 1:6-7; job 13:15).
3. It can _____ (1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Gal. 6:2).
4. It can make you _____ (2 Cor. 12:7-9; Psa. 119:71).
5. It can make you _____ (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:23:24; Rev. 21:4).