**The Problem of Evil**

 **Why do bad things happen to good people?**

 **If God is all good, why does He allow evil?**

 **If God is all powerful, why doesn’t He destroy evil?**

We often talk about…
 a) Evil acts (murder, rape, etc.)
 b) Evil people (Hitler, Charles Manson…)
 c) Evil events (tornadoes, etc.)
 d) Evil sickness (cancer, blindness, etc.)

 **How would you respond to this line of reasoning?**

1. God is the creator of everything
2. Evil is a thing
3. Therefore, God created evil

 #1 is true but #2 is not true

Definition: evil is not a created thing. Evil is a corruption of “good”. It is a lack of “good”. It is a hole in something that should be solid. It’s like rust on a car. Rust cannot exist in & of itself. Evil cannot exist by itself
but only as a part of something else. Satan is a corruption of a good being,
the angel Lucifer.

 God made us with free will, the ability to choose, so that we could love Him
freely. Without free will, we would be nothing more than robots. Free will gives
us the ability to choose to do good but also to do evil. So the origin of evil is our
own free will. This was the risk God knowingly took when He created us with
free will. God is not responsible for evil. He made evil possible, but we made
it actual.

**Lesson 1**

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Soooo, to answer the question “What makes us (Joshua 24:15) or Satan sin? (Ezekiel 28:11-17
and Isaiah 14:12-15)…we can say “Our own free will.”

The creation around us has also become subjected to our evil (Genesis 3:17-18 &
Romans 8:19-23). As a result, animals, insects and all of nature are ‘fallen’ to. Hence,
earthquakes, tornadoes, lightening, storms, vicious animals, etc. Nature will not be
renewed until Christ returns (Revelastion 21:1,4 & 22:3)

 **Can evil be stopped?**

How would you respond to this argument?
1. If God was all good, He **would** destroy evil.
2. If God is all powerful, He **could** destroy evil.
3. But evil is not destroyed.
4. Therefore, there is no such God.

 **Consider the following:**

1. Love is the greatest good for all free creatures…but love is impossible
without free will. If you destroy evil, you automatically destroy free
will (and hence, love). But if free will is destroyed, that would be evil
itself.

**Lesson 1**

1. So we need to talk about **overcoming** evil, not **destroying** it.
2. Don’t fall into the trap of #3 above…the arrogant assumption of
believing that just because evil isn’t overcome yet, that it won’t
**eventually** be overcome.
3. So if God is all powerful, why doesn’t He destroy evil? Because He
would have to destroy free will with it and that He won’t do. Much
like we could destroy our drug problem by shooting all the people
who do drugs, but we won’t.

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 **What, then, is the purpose of evil?**

1. We can’t assume that there is no good purpose for evil just because we don’t know what it is. We’re not omniscient! We’re finite. This doesn’t disprove God’s benevolence, it just reveals our ignorance.
2. We know sometimes God uses evil or pain to warn us of a greater evil or pain.
C.S.Lewis says that pain is God’s megaphone to warn a morally deaf world.
3. A baby touching a hot stove for the 1st time…they won’t do it again.
4. Lepers lose fingers because their nerves are deadened to pain and they
can’t feel when they’re being hurt.
5. Some evil brings about a greater good. Romans 8:28 doesn’t say all things are good but that God can bring about good from all things.
6. The Old Testament story of Joseph in Genesis 50:20
7. Permitting some evil actually helps defeat evil.
8. The first step in some substance abuse programs is to give a
person all he can stand of the substance until he gets sick of it.
9. The cross is the ultimate example of this.
10. Sometimes evil is a by-product of something good. God created

Water for a good purpose but drowning is a by-product.

 **Consider these points:**

**Lesson 1**

1. Some suffering is brought on by our own free choice. The choice to
abuse my body can result in sickness. The choice to choose a certain
job can result in working long hours or not making much financially.
2. Some evil done to others can result from free choice, like child abuse.
3. Others suffer indirectly because of our free choice. Alcoholism
can lead to poverty of one’s own children.

 **Middle Knowledge View:**

1. We can all think of worlds where more people accept Christ or are just
better worlds (less violence, we’re richer, etc.)
2. Assume God can create thousands of ‘worlds’ with varying results of
good & evil in them…but the one common thread is that they must all

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have free will. Of all these ‘worlds’, we would want Him to create
the one the one ‘world’ in which the most people choose Jesus freely.

1. Deduction…our present world is that world. Our present world is the
best possible world given the condition of mankind ex world given the
condition of mankind exercising their “free will”.

 **The Problem of Evil**

 **How would you respond to this argument?**

1. God knows everything
2. God knew evil would occur when He created this world
3. God had other non-evil possibilities. He could have…
4. Not created anything
5. Created a world without free creatures
6. Created free creatures that would not sin
7. Created free creatures that would sin but would all

Accept Jesus in the end.

Hence, God could have created a world where evil did not exist.
Let’s consider the following:

 #1 & #2 above are correct.

**Lesson 1**

 #3a….this wrongly assumes that nothing is better than something.
 But this involves a moral judgement and ‘nothing’ doesn’t
 have a morality attached to it. How can it, it’s nothing.

 #3b….there cannot be a morally good world if people don’t have
 free will.

 #3c….it’s hard to call a choice free when there is no alternative.
 Yes, this is a conceivable world (we can think about it)
 but it’s not an achievable world (it won’t happen in
 reality).

 #3d….this assumes that God can manipulate us to choose good.
 Forced love is rape and God is not a divine rapist. Yes, it is
 a conceivable world but it’s not an achievable world. See figure 1
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 **Then why did God create this particular world?**

This is not the best conceivable world, but it is the best way to the best
achievable world. See figure 2.
If God is to preserve free will and overcome evil, then this is how He does it….
 *Evil is overcome in that, once those who reject God are separated from those
who accept Him, the decisions of all are made permanent. Those who choose
God will be confirmed in it and sin will cease Those who desire the good but are
hindered by evil will no longer have their good intentions frustrated. Those
who desire the evil but are hindered by good will no longer be nagged by good
influences. Each, whether in heaven or hell, will have it according to their own
free choice.***The ultimate goal of a perfect world with free creatures will have been achieved, but the way to get there requires that those who abuse their freedom be separated from those who don’t.**

This means that some people will choose to go to hell. C.S. Lewis has said
that hell is a room that is locked from the inside. There are people who will
say to God, **Your will be done**… then God will say to the other people, **Your
will be done.**
John 3:18,36 5:39-40 8:24 12:48 and Luke 10:16

**Lesson 1**

Again, a world in which some people go to hell is not the best conceivable
world, but it is the best achievable world if free will is to be maintained.

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**Resources:**

**Books;**

**When Skeptics Ask, pages 59-74….GREAT book**

**Who Made God, pages 33-48**

**The Case for Faith, pages 25-56 & 169-194**

**Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics, pages 219-224**

**Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible, pages 221-225**

**Websites;**

[**http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/evil.htm**](http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/evil.htm)

[**http://www.xenos.org/essays/evilpo.htm**](http://www.xenos.org/essays/evilpo.htm)

[**http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/evil.htm**](http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/evil.htm)

[**http://carm.org/if-god-all-powerful-and-loving-why-there-suffering-world**](http://carm.org/if-god-all-powerful-and-loving-why-there-suffering-world)

[**http://carm.org/god-and-evil-a-philosophical-contradiction**](http://carm.org/god-and-evil-a-philosophical-contradiction)

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