



*The contrary of a truth can never be demonstrated - Thomas Aquinas*

# Confident Christians

## If God, Why Evil?

How can an all-powerful and good God exist if evil exists?

### Intellectual Questions

To confront this dilemma, you must first answer a series of intellectual questions.

First, what is evil? The philosopher Plotinus was the first to define evil as a privation or corruption that exists in something that was originally good and perfect. A privation simply means something is missing that should be there. And a corruption is something that erodes or damages something that is initially good, but it can't exist independently.

Once you understand what evil is, you know immediately that God did not create evil, since evil is not a 'thing', but a privation or corruption in a thing. God lacks nothing and is perfect and therefore cannot cause anything to be evil as you cannot give what you do not have (basic law of causation).

Where did evil come from? Every drop came through the misuse of free will. Freedom is a good thing, but freedom means that a being can choose wrong as well as right. And freedom is the only way you can have true love, which is the highest of all things.

What kinds of evil are there? There are three:

1. Metaphysical – an example would be blindness
2. Natural evil – natural disasters and such
3. Moral evil – man's inhumanity to man

### Existential Questions

What sources of evil and suffering are there for the Christian? There are five:

- Satan – a fallen angel who seeks to harm everything he can (1 Pet. 5:8)
- The fallen world (Rom. 8:19-22)
- Punishment from God (Heb. 12:5-6)
- Suffering from following Christ (2 Tim. 3:12)
- Maturing process used by God (James 1:2-4)

As to the last point, the Scriptures speak to the fact that pain and sufferings are used by God to shape and mold His servants. To this point, A .W. Tozer wrote: *"If God has singled you out to be a special object of His grace you may expect Him to honor you with stricter discipline and greater suffering than less favored ones are called upon to endure."*

A few Biblical examples of this are:

- Joseph
- Moses
- Elijah
- David
- Daniel
- The apostles
- Jesus Himself

Outside the Bible, people like Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and others all had some form of suffering in their lives that helped mold them.

### Final Conclusions

Without God, a person cannot even speak of good and evil. Before you can call something evil, you have to know what 'good' is. But before you can call something good, you need a moral framework to determine good and evil. But before you can have a moral framework, you need absolute moral laws, but before you can have absolute moral laws, you have to have an absolute moral law giver. But that's whom the atheist is trying to disprove. C. S. Lewis put it this way: "A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line."

Free will introduced sin into the world and evil. If God were to remove free will, this itself would be a great evil. As Alvin Plantinga says, removing free will is like cutting off your leg because your foot aches.

Suffering and pain are used by God to redeem good from evil. Even Jesus suffered and was made perfect in the flesh. Dorothy Sayers understood this point well when she wrote: *"For whatever reason God chose to make man as he is – limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death – He had the honesty and courage to take His own medicine."*

God is all-powerful and all-good, so one day, He will put an end to evil. Rev 21:4-5 says: "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away..."

This is not the best possible world, but the best possible way to get to the best possible world.