

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Bible teaches two basic things about God:

- (1) God is great. (2) God is good.

The question is: **How can God be both?**

If God is powerful enough to stop evil, and He won't, then He isn't good.
If He is good, but doesn't stop evil, then He must not be powerful enough.

There are three dimensions in which you could ask this question:

- (1) **Theoretical** - explaining suffering
- (2) **Visible** - witnessing suffering
- (3) **Personal** - enduring suffering

Our questions about evil change depending on which dimension we are in.

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

"God is love." (1 John 4:8)

It's not just that God is loving. God equals love.

If this is true—that God is love—then there are three huge implications:

- (1) **God must be relational.**

He can't just be a concept or a machine.

- (2) **God must allow choice.**

He can't coerce love or erase other options.

- (3) **God must respect choice.**

He can't just destroy any rebels.

Love requires freedom. Freedom requires risk.

That's why evil is a possibility. The tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden is a necessary choice for love to exist.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

The Bible teaches two basic things about God:

- (1) God is great. (2) God is good.

The question is: **How can God be both?**

If God is powerful enough to stop evil, and He won't, then He isn't good.
If He is good, but doesn't stop evil, then He must not be powerful enough.

There are three dimensions in which you could ask this question:

- (1) **Theoretical** - explaining suffering
- (2) **Visible** - witnessing suffering
- (3) **Personal** - enduring suffering

Our questions about evil change depending on which dimension we are in.

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

"God is love." (1 John 4:8)

It's not just that God is loving. God equals love.

If this is true—that God is love—then there are three huge implications:

- (1) **God must be relational.**

He can't just be a concept or a machine.

- (2) **God must allow choice.**

He can't coerce love or erase other options.

- (3) **God must respect choice.**

He can't just destroy any rebels.

Love requires freedom. Freedom requires risk.

That's why evil is a possibility. The tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden is a necessary choice for love to exist.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

There is **an enemy** who is opposed to God's governing principle of love.
Because Adam and Eve listen to this voice (Genesis 3), two things happen:

(1) We get weaker.

Sin is like a **parasite**, distorting our inner nature (Romans 7:18-19).
The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

(2) The enemy gets stronger.

Sin is like a **predator** (Genesis 4:7), seeking to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8).
Jesus sees Satan's fingerprints all over human suffering (Luke 13:16).

There is an **outer** cosmic battle in the universe
and an **inner** battle in our hearts.

God wants to rescue us from both the parasite and the predator:
To renovate the human heart and to defeat the enemy.

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

Why did God let [insert bad thing here] happen?

More people have lost their faith over this question than any other.

Pain and heartache is **not** part of God's plan. God does not orchestrate bad, but He can transform it. (Romans 8:28)

Here are three helpful reminders from Scripture:

1. "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

God grieves with us in our present pain, even though He knows there will be future joy.

2. "God is love." (Romans 5:8)

God entered into our suffering to bring about a world without it.

3. "It is finished." (John 19:30)

The war to end all wars has already been decided. Because of the cross, our enemy is a defeated foe.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. (Revelation 21:4)

[NCSDA.ORG/ABETTERSTORY](https://ncsda.org/abetterstory)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

There is **an enemy** who is opposed to God's governing principle of love.
Because Adam and Eve listen to this voice (Genesis 3), two things happen:

(1) We get weaker.

Sin is like a **parasite**, distorting our inner nature (Romans 7:18-19).
The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

(2) The enemy gets stronger.

Sin is like a **predator** (Genesis 4:7), seeking to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8).
Jesus sees Satan's fingerprints all over human suffering (Luke 13:16).

There is an **outer** cosmic battle in the universe
and an **inner** battle in our hearts.

God wants to rescue us from both the parasite and the predator:
To renovate the human heart and to defeat the enemy.

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

Why did God let [insert bad thing here] happen?

More people have lost their faith over this question than any other.

Pain and heartache is **not** part of God's plan. God does not orchestrate bad, but He can transform it. (Romans 8:28)

Here are three helpful reminders from Scripture:

1. "Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

God grieves with us in our present pain, even though He knows there will be future joy.

2. "God is love." (Romans 5:8)

God entered into our suffering to bring about a world without it.

3. "It is finished." (John 19:30)

The war to end all wars has already been decided. Because of the cross, our enemy is a defeated foe.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. (Revelation 21:4)

[NCSDA.ORG/ABETTERSTORY](https://ncsda.org/abetterstory)