

RELEVANT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE FOR TODAY'S ISSUES

SESSION 4

WHY IS THERE EVIL IF GOD IS GOOD?

I. Introduction

- _____ refers to the justification of God's goodness in light of evil and suffering.

II. Biblical Theology of Suffering

- Sometimes suffering occurs:
 - when God _____ sin (Gen 6-9; Num 14; Acts 5; 1 Cor 11:27-32; Heb 12:4-12).
 - For no stated reason, although a desired _____ is sometimes mentioned (Eccl 9:11-12; Luke 13:1-9; John 9:1-3; 16:33).
 - when God _____ his children (Gen 22:1; Job 1-2; Matt 4:1-13; James 1:12-13).
 - at the hands of sinful people, although God can redeem and _____ those events for good purposes (Gen 50:20; Acts 2:23).
 - when people do _____ or because of their witness for Christ (Matt 5:10; 1 Pet 4:20-23).
- Words of _____ and guidance for ministry to those who are suffering.

III. Distinguishing between Evil and Suffering

- Suffering is the experience of _____.
- Evil is the _____ of the good things God has made.

IV. Types of Evil

- _____ evil refers to events that include intentions and actions of the human will that violate a moral standard, such as harming or killing innocent people, and normally result in suffering.
- _____ evil refers to events not directly caused by humans, which can result in human and animal suffering, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, and cancer.

V. The Origin of Evil

VI. The Defeat of Evil

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Discussion Questions

1. If you are comfortable, describe a time when you experienced deep suffering. How did you respond to God in prayer during that time? What did you learn about God, about yourself, or about others?
2. Have you ever been tempted to judge why another person was experiencing suffering? Without giving names or being specific, describe the situation.
3. Have you ever spent extended time with a person who was suffering? Describe the situation (in general terms). Did you spend more time crying with and praying for them, talking to them about their pain, or something else? Would you react and respond in the same way today? Why or why not?

Challenge for the Week:

- When you see an instance of personal suffering in the news or on social media, reflect on tonight's content. What biblical texts inform your understanding of that person's (or community's) circumstance? Breathe a prayer for the people affected, and ask God to minister by His Spirit in specific ways.