**1. Motivate**

In a discussion an acquaintance states: “Since God made everything and moral evil exists, then God must have created moral evil.”

* The reasoning is:
* God is the creator of all things.
* Moral evil is something that exists.
* Therefore, God must have created moral evil.

What do you think is wrong with this reasoning?

* moral evil is not a “something”, a created substance
* moral evil is a lack of good
* it is the corruption of the “good” substances God created
* similar to darkness is not “something”, rather it is the absence of something … light

Consider Genesis 1:2a (NIV) *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep,*

**2. Transition**

God dispelled the darkness with His Good light.

* He filled the void with His Good creation
* Today we consider the source of and God’s response to moral evil

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 God Did Not Create Moral Evil

Listen for a big fall.

Isaiah 14:12-15 (NIV) How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." 15 But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

What are some words and phrases which describe pride and arrogance?

* I will ascend to heaven
* I will raise my throne above the stars of God
* I will sit enthroned on the moujnt of assembly
* on utmost heights of the sacred mountain
* above tops of clouds
* make myself like the Most High

Note the result:

* But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.
* Jesus said “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

What are some examples of how moral evil corrupts the good things God provides for us?

* overindulging in food
* wasting time in useless entertainment
* perversion of sex
* abusing the environment
* rejecting His love and forgiveness

How is the problem of moral evil the core of the Gospel message?

* God intended we have a personal relationship with Him
* sin (moral evil) has separated us from God
* we must respond to the convicting (convincing) of God’s Holy Spirit of this Truth
* we must confess, and repent of our sinful condition, attitudes, actions
* we must receive by faith God’s salvation provided by the death and resurrection of Jesus
* we are challenged to surrender to the Lordship of God in our lives

3.2 God Allows Moral Evil for His Good Purposes

People who choose to reject God may claim that there is some moral evil with no apparent good purpose:

* An all-good God must have a good purpose for everything.
* There is no good purpose for some moral evil, pain, and/or suffering.
* Therefore, there cannot be an all-good God.

Listen for good resulting from bad intentions.

Genesis 50:19-21 (NIV But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? [20] You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. [21] So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

What evil things had Joseph’s brothers done to him?

* made fun of him, angry with him when he shared his dreams
* threw him in a pit, initially thought to leave him to die
* then sold him into slavery
* lied to their father, claiming he was killed by an animal

What does Joseph claim God accomplished despite their evil actions?

* God intended it for good
* He accomplished the saving of many lives
* you and your families will be provided for

Consider Romans 8:28 (NIV) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

How is this passage an Old Testament parallel to Romans 8:28?

* Joseph declares that God is in control, even when bad things happen
* When Satan or evil men do God's people wrong, God has the power to turn the tables and make good things happen
* God accomplishes good things for those who trust Him and obey Him, despite the events of life
* God is not the author of evil; instead He works to bring good out of evil

Joseph saw God’s hand at work, despite his brothers’ evil treatment. How can we see God’s role in evil that is around us?

* God does not cause the adversity or evil
* God can use the situation to teach us dependence on Him
* God can use evil and tragic things that happen to us to accomplish good things

What are some way you have seen how something “evil” resulted in something good?

* injury in an accident and trip to hospital revealed a condition (more serious than your minor injuries) that need attention
* someone prevented you from getting the job you wanted, but God opened the door for a better one
* you were fired because you told the truth or refused to go along with wrongdoing and God provided for your needs
* you (or one of your children) had a mean teacher and you learned how to study better or become more disciplined in your attitudes and actions

3.3 God will Deal with Moral Evil

The persistence of evil is another problem the secular world uses to confront Christians about our belief in God. They might express their reasoning this way:

* If God is all-good, He would destroy moral evil.
* If God is all-powerful, He can destroy moral evil.
* But moral evil is not destroyed.
* Therefore, there is no such God.

Listen for the ultimate end of evil.

2 Peter 3:9-10 (NIV) The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Verse 9 reveals God's patience and desire for humanity How doesthis shape our understanding of why evil *still* exists?

* God is patient, gives further opportunity for people to receive the forgiveness He offers
* sin and death have been defeated
* Jesus’ death and resurrection have provided freedom from sin’s penalty and power
* consider those you know who are still rejecting God or maybe on the verge of making a spiritual decision for God
* you are hoping and praying for their salvation … so is God

Consider Romans 2:4 (NIV) *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

And Revelation 21:4 (NIV) *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*

How does God’s allowing the continued existence of evil connect with these two verses?

* some people have yet to realize the forgiveness and rescue from evil in their lives
* most of these are those in people groups yet to receive the Good News, the Gospel
* others show contempt for God’s offer of forgiveness
* God is still at work in their lives – the Spirit of God continues to convict/convince them of their need of and God’s provision of salvation
* evil continues, but there is definitely an end to it in God’s time table

How should the reality of God's future judgment impact our evangelism and our attitude toward those who are still in rebellion against Him?

* become involved in the spread of the Gospel message
* be involved in making disciples – training believers in God’s Truth
* raising the next generation to know and love God
* Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (NIV) *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Application

* Who do you know who thinks the existence of evil is a reason to reject God?
* List their names and be in prayer for them.
* Ask God for the guidance of the Holy Spirit about how and when to use this issue to start a spiritual discussion.

Crossword Puzzle





These clues and words are taken from Isaiah 14:12-15 (NIV). Work together to solve the puzzle.