



## Part 3: Is God Good?

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**Our Burning Questions** Why do innocent children suffer abuse?  
Why are there natural disasters?  
What about birth defects?

**The Core Question** Is God really good? If God is loving, all-powerful, and in meticulous control of everything, why do so many terrible things happen in the world that He presides over?

**theodicy:** from Greek *theos* (God) and *dikeo* (righteous, just or loving)

### The Answers

God is God, and we are not.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. – Isaiah 55:8-9*

Man has been granted the ability to make genuine choices.

*"But, if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..." – Joshua 24:15*

*There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death. – Proverbs 14:12*

Sin is destructive.

*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. – Romans 8:20-22*

Satan is bent on destroying all that is good.

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" – John 10:10*

*Your enemy prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. – 1 Peter 5:8*

Perspective is challenging.

*He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability... – Deuteronomy 8:15-18a*

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Reasons are hard to find in the **immediate**.

*...weeping remains for a night but rejoicing comes in the morning. – Psalm 30:5*

God's **activity** is not always immediately apparent.

*"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." – Genesis 50:20*

Not all of our questions will be answered **here**.

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil about you because of me. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven."*

*– Matthew 5:11-12*

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. – 2 Corinthians 4:17*

### **The Answers Lived Out in Real Life**

*Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. – Luke 22:39-44*

### **God's question for you:**

Will the question of theodicy be a barrier or a bridge to a God who truly loves you?

### **Next Steps**

- **Foundations Class.** If you're new in your faith or have more questions than answers, the Foundations Class is a great place to get some answers. (Register today at the Connection Point, details today's program).
- **Justice Community.** Slavery and human trafficking is real, even right here in Whatcom County. Visit the Hope For Justice table today in the Commons to learn how you can help end the suffering. Details in today's program.

### **Small Group Questions**



- 1) Do you watch or read the news? Why or why not?
- 2) How would you answer the submitted "burning questions" listed at the top of the outline?
- 3) Read the answers listed in the outline and the scriptures as well. Where do you get hung up? What questions are you asking based on the answers? Remember, it's OK to ask!
- 4) Jesus lived out the question of theodicy. How does knowing that He lived it change the way you view suffering?
- 5) Is the question of God's goodness a barrier or a bridge for you?
- 6) How can we pray for you today?