



THE GOD QUESTIONS

How Can God Allow Suffering?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Why is there pain and suffering in the world?

ACTIVITY: More Than we can see

Why does a good God allow suffering? Character.

- Take a large piece of white paper, and write across it in LEMON JUICE the word Jesus – i.e. in invisible ink.
- State that many people ask questions like, ‘Why does a good God allow suffering?’ Give a few examples of suffering.
- Say that there is no simple answer to this, but that you are going to show one reason why God may allow problems and hardships to come into our lives. God is interested in what we do, but He is more interested in what we are, i.e., our character. God can use our problems to develop our character.
- Use your own words but you go along the lines suggested below:

God has a wonderful plan to change you into someone far better. If none of us ever had any troubles, not many of us would give God a second thought, and we would never change. God sometimes allows suffering in our lives and uses it – as He helps us to overcome our problems – to change us. The Bible says Suffering helps us to endure. And endurance builds character (Romans 5: 3-4).

- [Hold up blank paper]

I am going to have an imaginary conversation with this paper:

Me: “Nice to see you, paper, but I am now going to put you over a flame.” [Light a candle explain the flame represents troubles/hardships]

Paper: “I don’t like the sound of that. I might get too hot. I might even get burnt.”

Me: “I do like you paper, but I have a wonderful plan to change you into something better, and I have to place you over the flame to make this happen.” [Begin to move the paper over the flame following the word Jesus which you should just be able to see. It will begin to turn brown.] [Continue your dialogue while still moving the paper:]

Me: “How are you feeling now paper?”

Paper: “Stop it. I am getting far too hot.”

Me: “I haven’t finished my plan for you yet. I must complete the job. I know this is tough for you, but I won’t let you burn.” (Complete the heating of the paper so it shows the word Jesus). This is what God’s plan is for you. To build your character, and make you to be like Jesus. Often He uses our problems and difficulties to bring this about.



The Logic of the Question of Suffering:

- Syllogism:
- Problem #1 with the Question of Suffering:

Reasons for the Existence of Suffering and Evil:

- Suffering and evil exist because of _____ (Romans 8:20-22)
- Suffering and evil exist because of _____ (2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 6:12, Luke 13:16)
- Suffering and evil exist _____ (Rom. 5:3-5, James 1:2-4)

Problem #2 with the Question of Suffering:

Problem #3 with the Question of Suffering:

- Suffering and evil exist because _____ (Rom. 3:23, Jer. 17:9, Psalm 14:3, 2 Pet. 3:7-9)
- Suffering and evil exist _____ (John 9:1-3, John 11:40, Gen. 50:20)
- Suffering and evil exist _____ (Isaiah 55:8, Job 42:3)

Problem #4 with the Question of Suffering:

The good news of the gospel is that all this suffering and evil _____

Next Steps:

- I will _____.
- I will _____.
- I will _____.



THE GOD

Digging Deeper:

We know that God is good and God is able! But sometimes those two character qualities of God are seemingly at odds. It's like this: Your dad gets sick. Is God able? (Does he have the power to heal your dad)? Is God good? (Is he willing to heal your dad?) Of course we believe absolutely the answer to both of those questions is a resounding yes. But if dad dies, then what happens to our faith?

In the movie Superman vs. Batman, Superman has a confrontation with Lex Luthor. Lex, tells a passionate story from his childhood which has led to his disdain for the man of steel. You see when he was a boy, and his father was beating him, there was no God to the rescue. Lex declares that he learned, a long time ago, that if God was all powerful, then He must not be good, and if He's good, then He must not be all powerful.

As a family, look at the 6 reasons Tung gave for why suffering and evil exist:

- Because of a fallen creation
- Because of Satan
- Because God wants to make us more holy and draw us closer to Him
- Because people exist (and people are evil)
- To glorify Himself
- For reasons we can't understand

Have each person put them in the order they think they should be...from #1 as the biggest reason why suffering exists to #6, the smallest reason. Have everyone give a reason for the order they chose.

One of the "Next Steps" today was to respond to suffering with the gospel. Brainstorm some people and families that you know who are experiencing pain and suffering. Consider some ideas and discuss how you can respond to that suffering, individually and as a family.

Resources:

Apologetics Picture Book— Responding to the Problem of Evil: Fox and the Hard Day by J.D. Camorlinga

How Can God Allow Suffering?

The Question

The Question of Suffering

— Possibility 1:

— Possibility 2:

— Possibility 3:

— Possibility 4:

The Biblical Facts about God:

— God is _____
(Luke 1:37, Isa 44:24, Jer. 32:17)

— God is _____
(Psalm 147:5, Heb. 4:13, Isa. 40:28)

— God is _____
(Psalm 136:1, 1 John 4:8, John 3:16)