

# OpenTheo

## Do Evil and Suffering Disprove God's Existence?

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### **Knight & Rose Show** - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss whether evil and suffering disprove God's existence. We distinguish between objective and subjective standards of good and evil. We distinguish between moral and natural evil. We talk about "morally sufficient reasons" why God might allow suffering, in order to obtain a greater good. We talk about whether humans can know why God allows evil or suffering, and whether God should tell us. We discuss specific Christian doctrines that are related to suffering and evil.

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## **Transcript**

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is Theism and the Problem of Evil. I'm Wintery Knight, and I'm Desert Rose.

So, what is the "problem of evil"? I know it's some sort of argument against God's existence, but what's it all about? God, by definition, is all-knowing, all-powerful, and completely good. But if God is all-knowing, then he knows how to prevent evil. If God is all-powerful, then he has the power to prevent evil.

And if God is completely good, then he would want to prevent evil. And yet, evil still exists. Therefore, atheists will say, God cannot or God probably does not exist, depending on which version of the argument they're using.

Okay, so he either has to get rid of evil completely, or he has to get rid of any evil that has no greater compensating good. Yeah, exactly. That's what they would say.

Okay. So, what does the word "evil" mean in that argument? Well, for the purposes of this argument, evil is something that causes suffering to a sentient being, so a human or an animal, for no justifiably good purpose. And I think it's worth distinguishing between moral and natural evil here.

Moral evil is committed by a person, so for example, murder or theft, whereas natural evil results from environmental factors like earthquakes or tornadoes. Okay, yeah, I could see why those would challenge the goodness of God. So, before we get too deep into the argument, can you make a distinction between emotional problem of evil and the intellectual problem of evil? Yeah, definitely.

I think that's a really important distinction. The emotional problem that a lot of people have has to do with our feelings about our experiences of suffering. Nobody likes to suffer.

We don't want to suffer. But that's different than the intellectual problem, which has to do with whether or not God and evil can coexist. A lot of people blame God for their suffering and decide that he either cannot be good or that he cannot exist or probably doesn't exist based on their experience of suffering.

But it's really important to evaluate whether this is an emotional dislike or an intellectual problem. And what we are going to address today here is really the intellectual problem. That's not to dismiss the emotions of it, but to enable people to distinguish between the two and then to respond appropriately accordingly.

Right, yeah. I think you're going to give us some responses to the problem of evil and this argument that you laid out, those would not be appropriate for somebody who was like, "Oh, my grandmother died." But on this show, we're focusing on the argument you laid out. So why don't you give us your response to that argument from evil? Yeah, so there are three different ways I want to point out that we could respond.

We could demonstrate problems with the argument itself. We could try to explain reasons why God might permit evil or suffering. And we could offer additional arguments

for God's existence that outweigh any evidence against his existence.

Excellent. I love when we have a variety of responses. So let's start with the first one.

What are the problems with the argument itself? Well, first of all, in order to have evil, you must have good. And in order to have good, objective moral good, you must have some external standard of good or else what you think is good or evil is just your opinion or it's just the culture's fashions of the day, which are transient and which are always changing. So when atheists give examples of objective evil that exist, they're actually lending support to theism.

Yeah. So I've seen this play out in debates before. Basically, somebody says something is evil.

How could God allow it? And right away, if you're defending against us, you have to ask them, what do you mean by evil? Is this just your personal preference or is this just your cultural preference? Because if it's a personal preference and a cultural preference, we don't expect God to be bound by that. Okay. God has different opinions than you do.

So in order for God to be bound by these expectations about what's right and wrong, there would have to be some objective standard that is independent of human opinions in this time in this place. Because I can tell you opinions vary by time and place. What is acceptable for wearing and eating in one time and place is completely different in another time and place.

So you have to have an objective standard if you're going to press this standard and say, why didn't God stay on the right side of this standard? Atheists know this, by the way. So they try to stay away from making objective moral judgments. I was once listening to a debate with an atheist named Matt Dillahunty.

His opponent said to him, "Matt, can you condemn these extermination camps that existed during World War II Germany as morally evil?" And Matt said, "No, I won't do that." And the reason why Matt, the atheist, said, "I won't do that" is because he knew that if he brought in an objective moral standard, then he would have to implicate an objective moral standard giver. And the only person who's going to be able to bring in that standard is going to be God, somebody who is standing above history, standing above time and space, and saying, "This standard is objective on everybody." So he won't do that, and so he won't make that judgment. Mm-hmm, exactly.

Got any other problems? So one of the premises of this argument was that if God is all-powerful, then he would prevent all evil because he would have the power to do so. But it's just not true that if God is all-powerful, then he would prevent all evil. If God allows his creatures free will, for example, then they're almost certainly going to choose evil at some point in time.

It's logically impossible to make someone freely do something, to force them to freely do something. That's a logical contradiction. God cannot bring about the logically impossible by forcing free creatures to not choose evil.

And this is not a matter of God's power. It's simply an inconsistent combination of words that have been thrown together, forcing freed creatures to do some certain behavior. Yeah, I think engineers know this.

Engineers know that when you're designing something good like a laptop or an automobile, we're always trading off one thing for another. We would love to have the maximum amount of computation power, but then we know that that's going to increase the cost a great deal or perhaps increase the size of the device. So this is not a - anybody who understands this knows that you're going to be trading off one good thing before another.

You can't have everything of everything. Let me ask another question. Is it always a good thing for God to prevent evil? Well, we can't say that it is.

I mean, we all know that some suffering is permissible for a greater good at various times. So, for example, when we have a cavity and we choose to go to the dentist and endure some suffering in order to have the cavity drilled out and the tooth filled so that we're healthy from that point forward, or when we go have surgery to remove a tumor so that it doesn't kill us or cause us tremendous ongoing pain, or when parents discipline their children, causing them discomfort, hurt, suffering, pain in the short term in order to get great benefits from them long term. It's better to get it like a little grounding when you're young and then prepare yourself for the need to show up on time in the workplace.

Exactly. Yeah. So it should be obvious.

Like people have experience with saying, "Look, I have to kind of thwart your autonomy and your happiness a little bit now so that we get a much better thing later." Right, exactly. I think we can also - we'll talk more about this later, but we're kind of in that baby stage of living life now in light of eternity. Yeah, I can't wait to get to that.

That's the - it'll be interesting to see what kind of morally sufficient reasons we can come up with for why God might want to allow evil and suffering. But before we do that, do you have any more problems with the argument? Well, yeah, another big problem is that we're actually in no position to know whether any specific instance of evil is gratuitous or not with respect to God's purposes. I mean, we are limited by time and space and knowledge, and we don't know what ripple effects any specific action may have.

God not being bound by time and space is not bound by those constraints. And so we are

just not in a position to know for sure about any specific incident. Do you have any other problems with the argument? Yeah, well, another big problem is that we're just in no position to know whether any specific instance of evil is gratuitous or not with respect to God's purposes.

We are limited by space and time and knowledge, and we just do not know what kind of ripple effects any specific act of evil is going to have long term. Yeah, that reminds me of a paper written by a Christian philosopher named William Alston. He used to teach at Syracuse, and he had like an entire list of limitations on humans' ability to know whether a specific instance of evil was going to have a morally sufficient reason.

He said, "We just aren't in a position to know that." And the other point I wanted to make about this is that as part of the argument, it is required that the person making the argument from evil that you made, that they know for certain that this instance of the argument hinges on this. The atheist who's making this argument has to know for certain that this example of evil is gratuitous. So they have to fly through the universe and through all times and places and say, "You see, I've done the investigation in every place and in every time allowing this evil had no good compensating balancing thing that made it okay to allow it." But how on earth are they going to be able to do that? Right, exactly.

And they would have to do that, again, beyond this life and into eternity going forward. Right. You'd have to be God in order to prove that evil is gratuitous.

And you know, sometimes God does graciously give us glimpses into his purposes for our suffering in this life. I know I have certainly seen the result of the greatest year of difficulty and suffering of my life actually resulted in by far the greatest amount of spiritual, personal growth and maturity. I'll give another example of a friend named Maya who experienced awful physical abuse and sexual abuse for four years in a relationship with her husband.

And what resulted from that though was that she ultimately sought out what there is beyond this life and she came to know God. And she says to this day that apart from experiencing that abuse for that amount of time, she would not know God. That is fully what it took for her to seek God to give up on her own self, her own knowledge and independence from God and to seek him.

And she says again that she would not change a thing to this day. Wow, so it really does work like that. Sometimes God does allow someone to suffer and they turn to him and grow a knowledge of him and they look back on the suffering and go, that's just the way that was fully justified in order for God to get me to this point.

And they don't have a bitterness about it that I find very common among people who press this argument. They often seem to be very angry at the idea that God might have

some reason for kind of thwarting their pursuit of happiness. But anyway, let's go on.

Atheists say that if there's a reason for human suffering, I've seen this in a debate, that God should step in and tell us what it is. Does God have to step in and tell us why he's allowing evil to happen? I've heard Bill Craig respond to this before by saying that that would kind of make our experience of life on this earth that of a haunted house. I mean, can you imagine God popping out every time there was anything happening going, let me just tell you really quickly why that happened.

Okay, let me tell you now. Okay, here I am again. I mean, it sounds pretty ridiculous on the face of it, but yeah, I think it would make some people mad at God.

Like some of these atheists who are in any case kind of unhappy that there is a God would really not like being reminded about it. So they're saying, Oh, well, I wish he would give me the reason. But then if he's like popping up every five seconds saying, here's the reason, here's the reason, they'd probably even more, be more likely to turn against him.

So what are they asking for? You know, they ask for it, but then if they get it, would they really say this is really what I wanted? Yeah, and that's interesting. I'm thinking of how, you know, I read the scriptures often, and when I'm going through some sort of suffering, it is actually very common for the Holy Spirit to recall to my mind times when God has brought clear good out of temporary suffering. And so in, you know, in a way, through reminding me of what he's done in the past, he kind of is doing that to people who are willing to seek him out.

A point I want to make is that, you know, the burden of proof is on the atheist to show that some instance of evil is gratuitous to show that any given, you know, instance is gratuitous, that there's no greater purpose. This can give some possible reasons why God might permit evil or suffering, but we don't have to explain every single instance. We can give morally sufficient reasons for God to allow evil, or we can explain Christian doctrines that help to explain what God might be doing.

Oh, excellent. Okay, so let's look at some of these morally sufficient reasons why God might allow evil, and then we'll move on to the Christian doctrines. Yeah, okay, so for moral evil, God might allow such evil because a world in which people have free will is a greater good than a world in which people have no free will.

And so by allowing free will, he allows the possibility for people to do moral evil. But it's, you know, it's possible, and I'd say very likely, that he considers that to be a greater good. And then even in natural evil, you know, like, like what deaths from droughts and famines and disease and a lot of things I've seen as I've traveled to dozens of nations that are mostly undeveloped and extremely poor, a lot of times, these deaths and this type, these types of suffering, result from corrupt leaders from greedy leaders who have

taken money for themselves who prevent people from from owning property from keeping the goods that they grow from, you know, from all sorts of policies that intentionally harm people.

And I've also seen that the majority of deaths from earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, things like this result from bad and poor building practices, which again, are often a result of poverty, which come from poor policies from greedy, selfish, evil leaders. Yeah, that makes sense. I think an earthquake in America is certainly, you know, gonna cause a lot less damage than an earthquake in a country where charity is not widespread and the laws, you know, the leaders are corrupt and they put in bad economic policies that just don't allow people to flourish and be able to build strong buildings and, and so on.

So I wanted to talk about, so you mentioned moral evil and natural evil. There's another theodicy that I heard about that is supposed to deal specifically with natural evil. It has to do with the fact that a lot of these things that you're talking about, like famines and droughts and earthquakes, these are just, you know, the, they, they happen because there is a system of natural laws in place where there are certain natural phenomena that happen that cause tragedy and suffering.

But there's actually a benefit to having a system of natural laws in place. It is what a friend of mine, we'll talk about later, calls the moral arena. If human beings are living in a world where there are natural, predictable laws, then it's possible for them to engage in moral actions because they understand the consequences of their actions.

So they say, if I do this, this is going to result in good. If I do this, this is going to result in evil. But if you take away those natural laws, like this system of predictable, natural laws, they are no longer able to predict the consequences of their actions.

And because of that, they no longer are able to achieve good ends or achieve evil ends. And it kind of takes away their ability to operate in that dimension. Yeah, that makes sense.

I mean, it was, it was Christians who believed that the world operated according to consistent, predictable laws that led them to pursue modern science and to decide that it was worth it worthwhile, that it was a good thing and that it was even possible. Yeah. And we heard or read about earthquakes given as an example of natural evil, but at the same time, plate tectonics are necessary for a habitable planet.

If we didn't have any earthquakes, then, you know, the nutrients would not be redistributed from the seabed or the bottom of rivers. Yeah, excellent point. So basically, God is setting up a system that can cause some natural disasters, but it's necessary for us to have a good place to live.

Right, exactly. Yeah. And suffering also shapes our character and prepares us to enjoy

heaven and the new earth to the maximum degree.

So I'll give you kind of an analogy. When children are disciplined by their parents, they dislike it temporarily, right? It doesn't feel good. They might say they're suffering.

Right. But eventually, when they grow up, when they're adults and they have their productive members of society and they're disciplined and they make good decisions, they value the discipline that their parents provided when they were younger. Yeah.

And so, you know, in a similar way, the suffering that we experience is shaping our character. It's preparing us to enjoy God forever. Yeah, I did not like it when my dad said that I could not study English literature.

I was crazily in love with Shakespeare and Charles Dickens and Jane Austen. And at the time when I was a student and dad said, "Listen, I think that the way the world is going, computer science is going to be a much better field for you to be in. It seems like the stocks are going crazy and there will always be jobs for you.

And you can always come back to English and study that once you get established." And at the time, that just seemed like the worst constraint on my autonomy that I could imagine. But in retrospect, it turned out to be good for him to steer me in that direction. And like you said, if you have an eternal perspective, then the things that seem to be difficult right now actually can turn out to be understandable.

He will actually be thankful for it in time. And you could actually list several reasons why you're thankful now, even without the understanding of the good in eternity. You're able to see how you were able to get citizenship and have a great career and partner with Christians for great ministry and all sorts of things as a direct result of following your dad's advice.

Yeah. I think it's really important for people to have an example of benevolent authority when they're young. You know, a lot of people who grow up without that tend to have real trouble understanding, "Why would God allow this to happen to me?" Yeah.

And you know, ironically, where suffering is much greater than in the West, those are the places where Christianity is actually spreading much faster than in the West. So places like Africa, Asia, South America. Yeah.

I experienced that. I sometimes pick up Christian students and kind of give them some career advice or something. One of the students I mentored was a girl named Tracy, and she was an immigrant from Nigeria.

And oh my gosh, her career is incredible right now for eclipsing mine. But yeah, it's funny when the student surpasses the master, but - It's a good thing. Yeah.



Yeah. Yeah. She's great.

She's doing a lot of sponsoring of other Christians in the way that I modeled for her, except she's much better at it than I am. But at one time, I remember telling her about this problem of evil and suffering. And she said, "You American Christians are so wimpy.

You know, you think so much about being happy and God being looking after all your needs, and you get upset when He doesn't do that. But African Christians aren't like that. We never worry about this.

We take suffering as a given, and we don't complain about God when He doesn't make us happy." So just an interesting cultural difference between Christians in America and Christians in Africa. Yeah, certainly. And as we've eliminated a lot of suffering in the Western world, this argument from the problem of evil seems to have grown more and more common.

Yeah. Isn't it interesting how that happens? One more quick point. So even in the Bible, I just wanted to point this out.

I think this is in Hebrews, I think, chapter 5 or maybe chapter 8. I remember there's a passage there where it says that Jesus learned obedience through His suffering. He learned how to obey God, and He learned what it was like to obey God and through His experience of suffering. And so, I mean, if we're Christians, our attitude toward suffering should be like, "This is the natural outworking of, 'It's okay.'" It's the normal Christian life.

It's the normal Christian life, right. So that was really good. We saw some philosophical reasons why God might allow instances of evil and suffering.

And you mentioned that you had Christian doctrines as well. Yeah, that help explain suffering. Yeah, definitely.

So first of all, in Christianity, the chief purpose of life is not our temporary immediate happiness. The chief purpose in life is knowing God. And so when we think about that, that really helps to explain a lot of suffering.

For example, we know more of God's holiness and His beauty in a world in which He has allowed us to rebel and experience the ugliness of sin. It is because I've experienced the ugliness of sin that I have turned to God more and can't wait for eternity with Him. We know more of God's love in a world in which He has left glory to take on flesh and experience every temptation and weakness as a man and take on the wrath of the Father in our place, the punishment that we deserve.

That really demonstrates His love in a way that I don't think we could know it otherwise. Oh, yeah. I see what you're saying.

Like you're basically saying the Christian story shows that Jesus experiences suffering. And because of that, we are able to see how much God loves us. Yes, right.

Exactly. Yeah. A couple more examples.

We also know more of God's power in a world in which Jesus has died and was resurrected from the dead. I think we're going to be celebrating that for all eternity, His resurrection and the power of that. And we know more of God's grace and His mercy in a world in which we see glimpses of the depth of our depravity apart from Him.

So, yeah, the chief purpose of life is not our happiness, but knowing God and a world with suffering accomplishes that far better. Do you think that might be a bit of a surprise to a lot of modern Christians to say that God's main purpose is not giving us blessings and making our life easy? Yeah, it would be a shock to each and every Christian who doesn't read their Bible. Yes, because that's not usually what's preached in church these days.

Wow. Not all churches, not all churches. Not all churches.

That's true. That is absolutely true. All right.

Yes. So, another Christian doctrine that helps us understand suffering is that mankind is in a state of rebellion against God and His purposes. We see this in Genesis 3 with the fall in Romans 1. You know, how dare we ask God, why aren't you blessing me as I willfully rebel against you in all of your purposes? It just doesn't make sense.

"Ment by rebellion, work out. I don't want any pain and suffering in this rebellion. This rebellion has to be pain-free." Right.

That's exactly it. That's what I say when I go to the dentist. But anyway, carry on, carry on.

That's funny. So, another Christian doctrine to keep in mind is that God's purposes are not restricted to this life. They have to be viewed in light of eternity.

And I mean, you know, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as he was about to die, said something along the lines of, "So, this is the end, huh?" But for me, it's only the beginning. And we have to keep in mind, you know, in a lot of ways, we're not really even at the beginning of glory yet. And again, we just, we need to keep in mind that there is very likely some incredible eternal good that's coming from our temporary hurts.

And then there's also the knowledge of God is incommensurable as a good that justifies any amount of suffering in this short and temporary life. 2 Corinthians 4, 17 talks about these as our light and momentary sufferings that are creating for us an eternal weight of glory. We've alluded to this before, but, you know, I think that one day all of us who are

praising God and living in glory and tremendous fun and joy and excellence and beauty and fellowship on the new earth will say, "Yeah, it was worth absolutely any amount of temporary suffering in that past short life in order to be here now knowing God, celebrating Him forever." I think it's just gonna be so incredibly awesome.

Okay, let me give a few practical thoughts on this because I sort of understand my Christian faith and my Christian walk in like, how am I gonna apply what I've been learning to my decision making? So one thing I've noticed is just in general, when people experience suffering like when something terrible happens, it does tend to make them a little bit more sensitive to what's going on around them. And they start to think that maybe other people's, you know, troubles are important and focus on them and look after other people around them. The question is, does God have any morally sufficient reason for allowing people to experience evil and to suffer from it? And I think that's one of them is that they become sensitive to looking after other people.

Yeah, and as we experience compassion and comfort from God, we become better equipped to demonstrate sensitivity and compassion to others. Absolutely, yes. Yeah, that's a good point too.

You know, it's basically like an evangelistic thing. On the one hand, I see a lot of non-Christians today being celebratory and permissive of everything bad someone wants to do. But I'm not sure that they want to jump in and help out when things don't go well.

And when Christians, yeah, like when Christians experience God coming in and being comforting, you know, at times where we're experiencing suffering, that does give us an ability that maybe team non-Christian doesn't have. So that's important. The other thing I like is that it's not always a good idea I found to be completely comfortable in life.

Sometimes it's a good idea to, and you can do this right now, like you can have a nice house, a nice job, a nice car and everything, and just stick your neck out a little bit for the boss in terms of his priorities and see how mad people get at it. When you do that, there's a reason why it's okay for God to let you suffer this, you know, shamelessness and unhappiness. So you say, "I'm going to stand up for the unborn or I'm going to stand up for natural marriage." And all your friends don't like you.

And you say, "This is terrible. I'm suffering." Yes, you're suffering, but you're suffering in the same way that Jesus suffered when he obeyed the Father and people did not like him. So there's a reason why God lets you suffer for being good.

Like it's because you want to be like your leader, you know, you want to follow your leader. And there's other ways to follow the leader too. Think about when someone else causes you suffering.

So suppose somebody else, you know, does something terrible like scratch your car, you

know, and you say, "Oh, this is terrible. I love that car." What happens is the person, you go and you fix it and you try to make it better. And that person has an opportunity to forgive you, but that's just right out of the Lord's Prayer, right? You forgive the sins of others so that you can get forgiveness from God.

So how can you forgive anything if nobody does anything that makes you suffer, right? So God allows that to happen to give you the opportunity to do what you're supposed to do as a Christian, which is forgive others, I think, if they're repentant and if they, you know, make restitution the best they can, then by all means, you should give them that forgiveness. So one other thing, you know, in the way we've been alluding to this, but a lot of people in the West just don't have any kind of, they don't have any felt need for exploring whether God is real and what he's like. So a lot of people maybe think of like some rich celebrity or some rich tech billionaire, you know, they may be thinking, "Oh yeah, the universe is eternal and there's no fine tuning and, you know, whatever." And they have all these false views and they have no need to investigate whether these things are really true because they're doing so well for themselves.

Their life plan is, you know, working out great for them. So C.S. Lewis says this, "That pain is God's megaphone to a deaf world." So it may be that God allows people to experience suffering so that they double back and say, "Is it really true that all these things that I believe that kind of kept God at a distance are really true?" Like I just decided when I was 14 that the universe had always existed. I didn't really think about it anymore until, you know, my son died.

Now I'm going back and looking at it and I'm finding out that the only reason I thought that was to keep God out of the creating business. So this is what I'm saying. Like sometimes God allows people to suffer so that they will go back and question whether these things that they conveniently believed to keep God at a safe distance really were true.

They ask questions when they experience worldview-shattering suffering. Right, right. Yep, definitely.

And that's permissible because God's not here to make you happy. His job is to make you enter into a relationship with Him. And so allowing you to experience a bit of suffering is okay if He gets this thing.

And you know what? That's way better for you than the third car or the fourth mansion. You know what I mean? That vertical relationship with Him, that's better. You're going to want that more and you're going to look at the suffering and go, "Who cares? In retrospect, I'm okay with the suffering.

Give me the God. You know, give me the relationship with God." Yeah, that's what I was about to say that ultimately that is the path to our greatest happiness. Yeah, yeah.

It's just, it's not comfortable to get there. Right. So one more thing.

When you gave that argument, the conclusion of that argument was therefore there is no such all-powerful, all-good God who exists because of this type of evil. So is there a way to argue against that conclusion by just saying, "Yes, there is," and give the evidence for God's existence? Yeah. So you know, the best, I think the best that atheists can do now with this argument is to say that God probably doesn't exist.

With the free will defense that we mentioned earlier, we've really put to rest the argument that says God cannot coexist with evil. And so we can respond to the evidential argument from evil by presenting evidence for God's existence that may outweigh the questions that we have due to the existence of what appears to be gratuitous evil. So we could mention the evidence for the beginning of the universe.

Okay. So like evidence like the redshift and the cosmic microwave background radiation. Yeah, exactly.

And if the universe had a beginning, then that indicates that the universe would have had a beginner, some cause. And so that's an argument for theism. We can also talk about the evidence for cosmic fine tuning of the universe that makes it... Yeah, those constants and quantities that have to be fine tuned at the beginning of the universe, like the strong force in order for life of any kind, complex embodied life of any kind to exist.

Right, exactly. And we could talk about the unique habitability of our universe, our solar system, our planet, etc. Things like if our planet is too close to the sun, all the liquid water evaporates, so you don't have any kind of liquid water at the surface.

And if you're too far from the sun, all the liquid water freezes and you can't have life like that. Mm-hmm, right. Yeah.

We could... I mean, there are several other arguments and bits of evidence we could bring up, but there's the moral argument, you know, of course. So I'm sure we'll talk about that more in the future. But yeah, those are some arguments, some evidence that we can present that seem to outweigh this unknown of the problem of evil.

Yeah, that's good. I feel good about this. I think we've covered a lot of the main points that people should know if they want to defend against this argument.

So I think we have time for something a little different. I was telling my friend Neil, who runs a Christian apologetic blog, about the fact that we were doing this podcast, and he wrote me an email. He just recently went through cancer for the third time.

And so this is a person who has suffered a lot. And I just wanted to see how he understood that suffering in light of his ability in apologetics. And so he wrote something to me that I wanted to read out to the rest of you.

So this is what he wrote. He said, "Apologetics was a big part of how God drew me to him. And apologetics has helped make my faith rock solid by his grace.

I have slept well despite all the pain and treatments and risk of death. It's because my faith was not grounded in wishful thinking, but in the truth of Jesus's life, death and resurrection. One pastor with whom I do prison ministry told me that it was okay to be mad at God, but I thought that that was absurd.

As you often say, and he means me, he is the boss. God is the boss. And he says, "He has been more gracious to me than I could have ever dared to ask.

So I have nothing but gratitude." Nicole point other people to him. It's awesome. Yeah.

The Christian worldview has very nice answers and resources to deal with the problem of evil and suffering that I think puts it, you know, head and shoulders above other worldviews, in particular, the worldview of naturalism or atheism, which I think just goes, "Oops." You know, doesn't really have any, have any answer to this. It doesn't have any deep comfort or anything like that. We're getting near the end.

So do you have any resources that you would recommend to our listeners that might be something, you know, not too difficult, but that would help them to understand the in and outs of debating this problem so that they would be able to do it themselves? Nicole Yeah. So one of my favorite debates is between William Lane Craig and Walter Sinat Armstrong. And that's available on YouTube and they debate about the problem of evil.

It's not hard to understand or follow them. It's an excellent debate and I think it'll give Christians a lot of confidence as they prepare to respond to this argument from others. And I think it'll provide doubters and seekers with some really helpful answers.

Alex Excellent. That's a good recommendation. When we were making the plans for this episode, I got a lot of benefit out of this website.

It's run by a friend of mine named Blake Gianta. I might not be pronouncing his name right, but it's called Belief Map. And he has two sections on this website.

It's [beliefmap.org](http://beliefmap.org), I believe. I'll put it in the show notes. He's got two sections on this website where he talks about the problem of evil and another one on the hiddenness of God.

And the one on evil just is loaded with about a dozen possible morally sufficient reasons for why God would allow evil and suffering. We talked about a couple of them in this podcast, but I really recommend everybody check out Belief Map and particularly that page on the problem of evil. Nicole Excellent.

Alex Okay, so that seems like a good place for us to end. If you enjoy the show, please

like, comment, share, and subscribe. You can find the references for this episode on [winternight.com](http://winternight.com). That's W-I-N-T-E-R-Y-K-N-I-G-H-T.com. We appreciate you taking the time to listen, and we'll see you again in the next one.

[Music]