

WHAT IS THE POINT OF LIFE?

“Working through the problem of evil is much like untangling a knot that’s both challenging and delicate. It’s not merely an intellectual exercise.” – Ronnie Campbell, *Worldviews and the Problem of Evil*¹

Truths

- 1) Living in a broken world: What is the point of life?

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. ¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. ¹² My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

- a. Happiness: Circumstantial & horizontal
- b. Holiness: The knowledge of God and a relationship with Him

“The primary reason we feel so much emotional pain when these things occur is because of our beliefs about what happened to us. Correct beliefs promote life, help, and peace. Incorrect (often called ‘irrational’) beliefs eventually cause great pain and suffering.”² – Gary Habermas

- c. What kind of world is this?
- d. What is evil? Perversion/Absence of the good. *Privatio boni* (Augustine).
- e. Where does evil come from?
 1. Our choices
 2. Others
 3. General fallenness (natural evil)

2) The logical problem of evil is not a problem.

- a. Where the battle rages: Emotions & Intellect
- b. The challenge

“God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or he is able and unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able, or he is both willing and able. If he is willing and is unable, he is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God if he is able and unwilling, he is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if he is neither willing nor able he is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if he is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? Or why does he not remove them?” – Epicurus, Greek Philosopher (341-270 B. C.)³

“Epicurus’ old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?” – David Hume (1711-1776 A. D.)⁴

“In its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false. But at the same time all three are essential parts of most theological positions: the theologian, it seems, at once must adhere and cannot consistently adhere to all three.” – J. L. Mackie (1917-1981 A. D.)⁵

Fallacy: Because I can’t see a reason for God allowing evil then there *is* no reason.

- c. What the atheist must accomplish to prove the logical problem of evil:
 1. Prove that God and evil are incompatible.
 2. Prove that God could not bring about a greater good.
 3. Prove your standard of good and evil apart from God.

3) Jesus: entered into this broken world and suffered and died in our place.

4) Loving God and others through our pain.

2 Corinthians 4:17

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

¹ Ronnie Campbell, *Worldviews and the Problem of Evil* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 1.

² Gary Habermas, *Why is God Ignoring Me?* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2010), 109.

³ William Dyrness, *Christian Apologetics in a World Community* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1983), 153.

⁴ Richard Popkin, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980), 63.

⁵ J. L. Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence,” in *The Problem of Evil: Oxford Readings in Philosophy*, ed. Marilyn McCord Adams and Robert Merrihew Adams (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 25.