

Obstacles to Faith

Suffering & Hypocrisy
(Apologetics, Week 10)

Two Questions The World Asks

- “Why does a good God allow suffering?”
- “Why are Christians such hypocrites?”

One challenges God’s goodness.

One challenges our credibility.

The Reality of Suffering

- Scripture does not deny suffering - it confronts it
 - Psalm 34:19
 - Job 1-2
 - John 16:33
 - 2 Timothy 3:12
 - 1 Peter 4:12-13
- We live in a fallen world (Genesis 3)
- Christianity prepares us for suffering

The Intellectual Problem of Evil

- Premise 1: If God is all-powerful, He could stop evil
- Premise 2: If God is all-good, He would want to stop evil
- Premise 3: Evil exists

Conclusion: Therefore, God cannot exist

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

- Free will allows love - and evil
- We chose autonomy over trust (Genesis 2-3)
- We think we know better than God

Love requires freedom

Suffering Produces Growth

- Romans 5:3-5
 - Suffering → Endurance
 - Endurance → Character
 - Character → Hope
- James 1:2-4
- The refiner's fire

God is not wasting your pain

God's Greater Purpose

- Genesis 50:20 “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”
- Isaiah 55:8-9 “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.”



God's Answer is a Person

- Christianity's answer is not ultimately an explanation - it is a Person.
 - Isaiah 53
 - Hebrews 4:15
- We do not worship a distant deity
- We worship a crucified Savior
- God is near - Psalm 34:18
- Final justice is promised - Revelation 21:4
- Present suffering isn't the end - Romans 8:18

The cross proves God can bring good from suffering.

The Problem of Hypocrisy

- The problem of suffering asks “can I trust God’s heart?”
- The problem of hypocrisy asks “can I trust God’s people?”

What is hypocrisy?

- Saying one thing and doing another
- Pretending to be what you’re not
- Matthew 23
- Struggling sinner ≠ Hypocrite

Struggling Sinner	Hypocrite
Admits weakness	Hides sin
Repents	Pretends righteousness
Seeks growth	Protects image

Why Hypocrisy Hurts

- Damages credibility
- Pushes people away
- Distorts the gospel

Romans 2:21-24

The existence of hypocrites does not disprove
Christianity - it proves we need it.

Luke 5:31

Jesus' Response

- Luke 18: Pharisee & Tax Collector
 - God opposes the proud
 - God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)
 - Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3)
- Jesus confronts pride - and welcomes repentance.

Our Responsibility

- Examine ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5)
- Confess quickly (1 John 1:9)
- Fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Personal Integrity Test

- Where are you tempted to perform spiritually?
- Do you pray differently in public than in private?
- Is your online persona different from your real life?

The Anchor - Romans 8

- Creation groans - Christianity does not deny the reality of evil
- Believers groan - Faith does not eliminate hardship
- The Spirit intercedes - God is not distant
- Nothing can separate us from God's love - evil, suffering, persecution, and even death do not have the final word

Closing Challenge

- People reject Christianity because:
 - They don't like what God allows
 - They don't like how Christians behave
- What if both are invitations?
 - Suffering → Deeper trust
 - Hypocrisy → Deeper repentance
- Both drive us back to the cross.

Assignment:

- Read Revelation 21-22 (hope in suffering)
- Matthew 23 (warning against hypocrisy)
- Romans 8 (assurance and encouragement)

Discussion

- How does knowing Jesus suffered help you respond to the problem of pain?
- Why does hypocrisy damage people's view of Christianity?
- How can we respond when someone says, "Christians are hypocrites"?
- What practical step can you take this week to strengthen your witness?