

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

David Hume in his famous discourses concerning natural religion writes:

Epicurus' old questions are yet unanswered. Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?[13](#)

How would you answer?

One of the participants on the video said,

“When the question is asked, ‘Why does God allow suffering?’ — my first thought is — why not? ... Suffering is life, that is a given, so there is no reason to question why it’s there or even to extricate it from your life.”

Do people you know feel this way? Do you think this is a satisfactory answer to the problem of suffering? Discuss.

Over the years, people who try to defend the existence of God have come up with theodicies — good reasons why God allows evil. Read aloud the two most common theodicies below:

A: *The Punishment Theodicy.* “Because humankind rebelled, the suffering of the world is the deserved punishment for sin.”

B: *The Free Will Theodicy.* “If God wanted people to freely choose the good, they would have to have been free to choose evil. The greater good of having true children (rather than robots) entails the risk of abuse of free will.”

Split into two groups and assign a theodicy to each group. What is helpful and what is problematic about the theodicy? Regroup after five minutes and share your answers.

Does the concept that God suffered help you deal with suffering? Give examples from your life or the lives of those you know.

How does the Christian belief in the resurrection provide a resource for dealing with and understanding suffering?