

MIDWEEK EVENT

This week's main point is: Because God is good, He wants to give us good things and bring good to our lives.

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 34:8; Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 18:19; Romans 8:28; James 1:17; 1 John 1:5

THEOLOGY CONNECTION | THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Many atheists have argued that if God is all-powerful, all-loving, and all-knowing, then evil would not exist in the world. But because evil exists in the world, God must not exist (or if He does exist, then He is not good or all-powerful). Despite its powerful and impressive language, appealing to evil as an argument against God fails: first, because outrage over bad things in this world suggests a “good” moral standard that does not exist apart from God, and second, because God could have a good reason (though unknown to us) for allowing evil and suffering to continue for a time. Given what we know about God’s character and purposes, Christians can rest assured that even amid evil, God is working all things for our good (Rom. 8:28).

CHRIST CONNECTION

People spend their lives trying to become rich, powerful, and famous, but none of it lasts. Only a life spent trusting in Jesus as Savior and following Him will matter in the end. Jesus lived, died, and rose again so we could find purpose in Him and be with God forever.

1 PSALM 34:8; LUKE 18:19; 1 JOHN 1:5

NO GOOD EXISTS WITHOUT GOD.

We don’t have to look far or search long for the world’s questions about God. Our world is full of God’s beauty and grace, but until He restores it completely, it will also be full of suffering and evil. God has allowed Satan a certain measure of power over the world for now (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). We see evidence of that in the tragedies that splash across news sites and social media; we see evidence in the poverty and violence in our communities; we see evidence in our own families and friend groups, through broken relationships and even the way we treat one another when we become frustrated; and we see evidence of it even in the way we act and view ourselves. But the fact that we are not always good and everything in our lives is not always good does not change the fact that God is always good. In fact, rather than being an argument that God doesn’t exist, the reality of evil and our recognition that good and evil both exist point to a moral standard and a Giver of that moral standard. So, whether people recognize it or not, their questions themselves point to the reality of God’s existence and even His goodness. And the existence of evil also helps us see our need for good—and for a God who is good and loving and concerned about the people He has made.

- › **WHAT THINGS OR EVENTS IN YOUR LIFE WOULD YOU SAY ARE GOOD?**
- › **WHEN IS IT EASIEST FOR YOU TO RECOGNIZE GOOD THINGS? WHEN IS IT MOST DIFFICULT?**
- › **WHAT THINGS OR EVENTS IN YOUR LIFE WOULD YOU SAY ARE BAD, WRONG, OR EVIL?**
- › **WHY DO YOU THINK IT’S SOMETIMES EASIER TO SEE THE NEGATIVE THINGS IN OUR LIVES?**
- › **HOW CAN YOU NOTICE GOD’S GOODNESS EVEN WHEN LIFE IS TOUGH?**

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2 MATTHEW 7:7-12; ROMANS 8:28; JAMES 1:17

GOD WORKS ALL THINGS FOR OUR GOOD.

Because God is unchanging and good—both are part of His character and can't be separated from Him—we can trust that He is always good even when we don't understand what He's doing. And Scripture promises that because God is good, He wants good things for us. We might, incorrectly, interpret these Scriptures to say that because God loves us, nothing bad will ever happen to us. But that's not what these Scriptures are saying. Instead, they help us see that although evil exists in the world and we will experience tough things (John 16:33), God is still good and still wants good things for us. They remind us He is there with us and for us, even then. While sometimes we see the "good" through Scripture or a personal experience with God, we often see His goodness through the way His people love us in tough times. Here are some ways you might see His goodness even then: a friend showing up to sit with you when you're feeling down or alone; someone sending a meal or groceries when your family is grieving or struggling financially; a person in the church offering to drive you to school without knowing your car just broke down; a song playing on shuffle or on a radio channel that reminds you He's with you personally; a Bible verse that hits at just the right time to comfort you or give you the wisdom you need to handle a difficult conversation; a loving confrontation from a parent or guardian that helps you avoid something that could've harmed you. God's goodness doesn't always show up in the ways and places we expect, but it is always, always there.

- › **WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORDS "GOD IS GOOD"?**
- › **HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT ONCE YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN, NOTHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU? WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE ACTUALLY SAY?**
- › **WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S SO TOUGH FOR US TO KNOW BAD THINGS WILL STILL HAPPEN?**
- › **WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR US TO SEE THAT GOD IS STILL GOOD EVEN WHEN BAD THINGS COME OUR WAY?**
- › **HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD'S GOODNESS WHEN YOU WERE STRUGGLING OR YOUR FAMILY WAS GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT SEASON?**

WRAP UP

On a whiteboard or poster at the front of the room, write out "God is good even when . . ." Give each student a sticky note and writing utensil. Explain that students should not include their names or any identifying details because the items on the notes will be shared by a leader when the activity is over. Tell students to write on the sticky note a situation they're facing that's really tough. For example, "My best friend told a lie about me," "My mom left us," "My dad lost his job," or "I failed a major test." Turn the lights down low or one set off if possible. Play worship music softly, and invite students to pray over what they're writing and add their sticky notes to the board. Remind them to be respectful of others' privacy. When all students have had a chance to add their notes to the board, read them aloud saying, "God is good even when" before reading the situation. Hearing their own situations with a reminder that God is good can be encouraging to students. Consider staying after and offering to talk or pray with students who may be feeling some heaviness after this activity. As students prepare to leave, pray over them, asking God to remind them that He is with them no matter where they are or what's happening in their lives.