

## Series: I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist

### Lesson 3: "There is Good and There is Evil!"

\*Announcements, encouragement to invite people and opening prayer.



**Connect:** an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters.

**Icebreaker:**

- 1) Where does good come from? (*Who determines what is good? Would it not be subjective according to culture, times and even the person making the decision?*)
- 2) Where does evil come from? (*There has always been an inner sense of right and wrong that all civilizations set for their people. They usually don't kill family and if they do, it is not seen by society as acceptable, even if they are kings.*)
- 3) If God is good, why doesn't He simply stomp out all evil? (*To stomp out evil would mean removing our free will. We would be trained animals who did nothing out of love, but only out of fear or brain control. God longs for His creation to come to Him freely and lovingly.*)

**Transition:** It is critical that you and I have an understanding of good and evil, where it came from, and what the future holds if we are to be bold in our faith.

**Bottom Line:** Exploring and understanding the existence of evil is an important step in understanding and sharing the far-reaching love of God.

### LESSON PLAN

**Question:** In what way is evil's existence a stumbling block to accepting Christ?

*People have this preconceived idea that if God is truly good, He will not allow evil to exist. Therefore either God is not fully good, or He really doesn't care about us.*

**Question:** Here is an important question to ask yourself, or someone searching for truth, or someone just debating the reality of God. Where did evil come from?

**Read Romans 5:12-14**

1. Where did sin originate?
2. Who gave the gift of death to all mankind?

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Paul is presenting a contrast between the gift of Adam and the gift of Christ. He says that death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, meaning from the first sin and even through the giving of the Old Testament Law. It wasn't until the gift of Christ came that death was stripped of its reign upon mankind. In other words, man offers only death, while Christ offers life by defeating death.

**Question:** What are some of the ways mankind tries to offer us life?

So, if God is so all-powerful and has the answer, why doesn't God just come now and stop all the suffering and insanity?

**Read 2 Peter 3:1-13**

3. What do you think God would want you to say to those who scoff and ridicule the idea of a loving God who seems to be so slow in keeping this promise, so slow that it's hard to believe He exists?
4. God loves you enough to move slowly. How would you explain to someone why that is importance to you personally?

**Question:** Why do you think God allowed Hitler and Stalin to commit the atrocities they committed in their quest to rule the world?

*God still holds the ultimate power, not dictators or murderers. God will protect the innocent and offer hope and life. Those who choose otherwise will be dealt with by Christ as well. Until Jesus returns, we live in a fallen world and the war between good and evil will rage. Man proved in the garden that he does NOT care to choose good over evil. However, Paul spoke of the resurrection of Christ and says, "Death, where is your sting now? Grave, where is your victory now?" In Christ death is only the beginning of eternity with an imperishable and incorruptible body! Death and the grave have no power at all! Jesus can give us the ability to recreate our ability to make choices for good.)*

If you think about it, almost every valuable lesson you learned came as a result of hardship in your life. You can't develop courage unless there is danger. You can't develop perseverance unless you have obstacles in your way. You won't learn how to be a servant unless there's someone to serve. You never develop compassion if there were no one in pain or



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in need. It's been said that the earth may be an uncomfortable home, but it is a great gymnasium for the future life and home we can have.

**Life Example:** Share a lesson you learn and grew from as a direct result of the pressures of this fallen world.

(Note: The following dialogue is taken from Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004.)

**Have 2 people read the following exchange between a Christian and an Atheist:**

**Christian:** God may have permitted evil in order to defeat it. If evil is not allowed, then the higher virtues cannot be attained. People who are redeemed have stronger character than people who have not been tested. Soul-building requires some pain. The Job of chapter 42 is a deeper and more joyful man than the Job of chapter 1. So evil in this world actually serves a good purpose in the end. It creates an eternal world that's the best possible world.

**Atheist:** But why would God create people knowing that they would choose hell?

**Christian:** Do you have children?

**Atheist:** Yes, in fact I'm a former child myself!

**Christian:** Why did you have them, knowing that someday they would disobey you? Because love takes risks. I was willing to take the risk of loss in order to experience the joy of love.

**Atheist:** Okay, but evil still bothers me!

**Christian:** It bothers me too, and it should. We all know that this world just isn't right, and we all long for heaven. Perhaps our longing for heaven is another clue that it's really there.

**Atheist:** Perhaps, but I don't think your intellectual answers will sustain a person through evil.

**Christian:** You may be right. But you don't have to withstand evil with just answers. You can have access to the Divine Comforter—the Holy Spirit—to help you through this soul-building life of pain and suffering.

**Atheist:** I'd rather not suffer at all than to have a comforter.



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**Christian:** Maybe that's why God doesn't put pain and suffering in our control. If he did, who would choose to go through it?

**Atheist:** No one.

**Christian:** Actually, that's not true. One man did choose to go through it all willing to save us from evil and death. He went through suffering, dealt with evil willingly in order to work out a plan to fix this broken fallen world and end evil and suffering and pain forever. Think about it, God not only allowed evil, He willingly experienced it and fought and defeated it for all of us. His suffering created hope and the instrument that will end all suffering! How is that not a loving God?

So, what is the end of the matter? When will this world finally get set back in order?

#### **Read Revelation 20:7-10**

5. Look at verse 9. What happens before the Great War against God can begin?

#### **Read Revelation 20:11-15**

6. What follows the judgment of the devil, the beast and the false prophet?

#### **Read Revelation 21:1-8**

**Assignment:** List on the board the final recorded acts of the Almighty God.

**Final Question:** What is the one idea that stands out to you most from this lesson?