

Why? A Series in Theodicy Part 1: Honest to God

Discussion Guide – May 25, 2025

“Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.” Job 5:7

“Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.”

⁹ Satan replied to the Lord, “Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. ¹⁰ You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! ¹¹ But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!”

¹² “All right, you may test him,” the Lord said to Satan. Job 1:8-12

“I am angry with you and your two friends because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.” Job 42:7

“Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know...
My ears had heard of you,
but now my eyes have seen you.” Job 42:3, 5

Quotes:

"God is not looking for people who can spout doctrines verbatim. He's looking for people who can be real, who can be honest, who can wrestle." Rachel Held Evans

3 Postures to concede: 1. We are limited. By language. By comprehension. By our finitude. The questions we're asking are bigger than us; 2. The best and most accurate theodicy we can come up with will still, at the end of the day, be woefully inadequate to alleviate grief, suffering and pain; 3. The best solution to suffering will always be presence over position.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a moment when your understanding of God didn't line up with the suffering you witnessed or endured? How did you respond—emotionally, spiritually, or relationally?
2. Why do you think we're often more comfortable offering explanations for suffering rather than simply sitting with someone in it? What do Job's friends teach us—both good and bad—about how to walk with others through pain?
3. What do you make of the fact that Job, who said some theologically incorrect things about God, was commended—while his friends, who defended God, were rebuked? What might that say about what God values in our relationship with him?
4. Have you ever been given a “bad theodicy”—an unhelpful answer for your suffering? How did it affect your faith or view of God?
5. What does it mean for you, personally, to “live with the question” instead of having a resolution? How might that shape the way you pray, worship, or support others in hard seasons?