

Why? A Series in Theodicy Part 6: 5 Wills

Discussion Guide – June 29, 2025

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Cor. 5:9-10

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. (otherwise known as “the flesh” which is the Greek word used here). For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am!
Romans 7:15-24

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 1 John 5:19

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

Quotes:

“A man is more easily turned from his course by inner inclination than by any outward force.” Thomas a Kempis

“There are evil people who do evil things. And if you don't believe that, with all due respect, wake up. There are evil people who do evil things. Often, those evil people fly planes into buildings in the middle of a city. Or, in response, send predator drones and kill innocent women and children on the other side of the world. Or lie about you at work. Or abuse you as a child. Or betray you. Or cheat on you. Or so on and so forth.” John Mark Comer

“All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” Julian of Norwich

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the five “wills” (God’s will, our will, others’ will, spiritual forces, chaos) do you find hardest to accept or understand? Why?
2. How does the idea that “God does not waste suffering” shape how you think about difficult seasons in your own life?

3. How do you respond to the tension in scripture—where sometimes God intervenes and sometimes doesn't? Does it challenge your faith, or invite trust in a deeper way?
4. When you think about something like social media—or another modern source of struggle—how might the five-will framework help you understand the suffering it causes or contributes to?
5. Julian of Norwich wrote, "All shall be well..." What does it mean to hold onto that hope while still naming that right now all is not well? How has that looked in your life, practically?