

## Facing the Problem of Evil in a Pastoral Context

by Michael R. Jones

Even true believers in God have at times struggled with the question of how a good God could allow such evil and suffering as is witnessed in the world. Even the biblical saints, Job being the most well-known, sought an answer to this question and resolution to this dilemma. The problem is not an insignificant one yet the answers often range from the overly-simplistic (“life happens”) to the pragmatically ridiculous (“when life hands you lemons, make lemonade”). For the Christian believer, there are answers in the pages of Christian Scripture. For example, Job’s story “shows that the sufferer can question and doubt, face the hard questions of life with faith, maintain an unbroken relationship with a loving God, and still come to a satisfactory resolution for personal and collective injustice and undeserved suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

One must not only look to the Scriptures, however, one must be able to reason with those who do not accept the Scriptures as the supreme standard in the hopes that a reasoned defense of the faith will provide further opportunity to minister with a view to bringing that person to faith.

The purpose of this paper is to provide and examine possible responses to the various forms of the problem of evil (such a response is known in philosophical terms as a “theodicy”) and, in so doing, to provide clear parameters within which to work when guiding others through these questions in the course of ministry. In the course of this, the author hopes to simplify the problems without oversimplifying, and to provide a summary of arguments from which to draw in defending God and the Christian faith before unbelievers while, at the same time, grounding pastoral ministry upon a reasoned consideration of the faith so the minister may better answer the concerns of God’s children who struggle with these and similar issues.

The term “evil,” used in this context, refers not simply to moral evil, which is the evil choices made by free human agents,<sup>2</sup> but also to what is more properly termed “natural evil,” which would encompass such things as disease and natural disasters.

### Distinguishing the Intellectual from the Emotional in Discussing the Problem of Evil

When the problem of evil is suggested, one must be careful to distinguish between the intellectual problem of evil and the emotional or religious problem of evil.<sup>3</sup> The intellectual problem of evil is shorthand for the arguments and discussions that deal with “how to give a rational explanation of the reality and existence of God and evil at the same time.”<sup>4</sup> The intellectual problem of evil is multi-faceted. The arguments involved take many forms and most of them have as their purpose either to deny or to discredit a belief in the existence of God (that is, either to demonstrate that God does not exist or probably does not exist or to demonstrate that belief in the existence of God is unreasonable).<sup>5</sup> While this discussion is primarily for the philosopher or the theologian, one cannot relegate this problem to the world of ideas alone and thus separate it from the real world since the problem of evil confronts people every day. The result of the average person’s interaction with evil in the world along with one’s response to the

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<sup>1</sup> Larry J. Waters, “Reflections on Suffering in the Book of Job” in *Bib Sac* 154 (1997): 437.

<sup>2</sup> W. Gary Phillips, “The Problem of Evil: A Pastoral Approach, Part One: The Bad News,” *MTJ* 2:1 (1991): 7.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Professor Patrick Smith for making clear this distinction in his unpublished class notes to 412 Apologetics: Systems of Evidence. Patrick Smith, “The Problem of Evil,” unpublished class notes for 412, Apologetics: Systems of Evidence (Plymouth, MI: Michigan Theological Seminary, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Smith.

<sup>5</sup> Smith.

problem of evil, and their resulting struggle with it, is more properly termed the emotional problem of evil.

The emotional problem of evil is equally as important, but must rest upon a foundation of thoughtfulness and reasoned consideration. The emotional problem of evil is best dealt with from within a pastoral context with prayer and the ministry of the Word, both public and private, but the minister's comfort based upon the teaching of Scripture must be extended in accordance with and undergirded by his proper understanding of the intellectual problem of evil. The minister must have struggled with the problem intellectually, theologically, and exegetically in order to be effective in ministering to those under his care who are hurting and who ask questions concerning the relationship between God's nature and the evil they see and suffer and by which they are touched.

Such a foundation in thought will not only enable to minister to extend God's comfort to church members or fellow believers who may be hurting, but also allow him to answer objections raised by extended family or friends or his parishioners with whom he may come into contact in various ministry settings. Such thoughtful preparation will allow the minister to answer intellectual objections while also being able to compassionately answer the questions of devout saints who have difficulty reconciling what they see with what they believe about God and the world from Scripture.

### **Summary of Hume's Statement of the Problem**

What has been termed the "Problem of Evil" may be stated straightforwardly enough though it often takes many forms resting upon one of several foundations. Hume stated regarding God and evil, "Is he 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?"<sup>6</sup>

Hume's argument may be summarized in this manner:

- (1) If God exists, then God is perfect.
- (2) If God is perfect, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent.
- (3) If God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent then there is no evil.
- (4) There is evil.
- (5) Therefore, God does not exist.<sup>7</sup>

This is the basic argument, though from here it often diverges to take one of many different forms, several of which will be discussed below. At this point, one must note that if an independent demonstration of God's existence is made, the question of whether or not God and evil can coexist becomes moot.<sup>8</sup> Since the focus of this paper is on the problem of evil in a pastoral context and most pastors will face Christians (or people who are at least theists), the question of reconciling evil and God's existence will receive only cursory examination.

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<sup>6</sup> David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, part X, in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. Edwin Burt (New York: Random House, 1939), 741. The following argument is an obvious summary of Hume's argument (736-744).

<sup>7</sup> This form of the argument follows James E. Taylor, *Introducing Apologetics: Cultivating Christian Commitment* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 145.

<sup>8</sup> R. Douglas Geivett, *Evil and the Evidence for God*, 102-103 cited in Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), 213.

## Unsatisfactory Replies to This Argument

The easiest way to deny this argument is simply to state that evil is a dilemma that will never be solved. While this has the advantage of simplicity, it is overly simplistic and, to a thoughtful mind, unsatisfactory. Not only that, it is (to be quite honest) not very reassuring. As noted above, even the heartiest and most mature of believers wonder at this problem from time-to-time. It is also true that “there will always remain some mysteries to suffering; therefore when believers suffer, they must maintain faith in the Lord.”<sup>9</sup> One’s faith, however, is not strengthened merely by encouragement to blind faith. In addition, this fideistic approach, though common among some religious groups, is a two-edged sword. Once one establishes a commitment to fideism, one must be willing to maintain the commitment in every area of faith; one cannot simply appeal to fideism in lieu of giving an answer.

Another approach is to deny premises (1) or (2) above. This has been used by some, most notably, Rabbi Harold Kushner in his best-selling book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*<sup>10</sup> where he denied the omnipotence of God from premise (3) above. This certainly solves the problem but at too great a price since most theists, unlike Rabbi Kushner, would accept that the first two premises of this argument must go together. For the Christian especially, to deny the first two premises is tantamount to accepting the conclusion in the first place and so the denial is inconsistent with a Christian confession.

Still another response is to deny the existence of evil, as do the Christian Scientists (and Benedict Spinoza). This denial, however, not only requires redefining evil in such a way that it is no longer recognizable, it also involves a denial of one’s own perception of the world and calls into question any knowledge derived from one’s senses. As Phillips points out, this “requires as cogent an explanation as real evil would”<sup>11</sup> and so is also unacceptable.

A similar response is to say that evil *as such* does not exist; it is simply the absence of good. The denial of evil is unreasonable to anyone who simply watches the evening news or scans the headlines of a newspaper. To posit that evil is simply the absence of good (which is not the same as suggesting that it is not real) presupposes a Platonist or Neo-Platonist view of the universe as being defined by God’s own being. In this paradigm, God could not create this world with complete or absolute goodness. To create a universe like this would be a logical impossibility since only God is absolutely good. The universe, then, is lacking in absolute goodness and this lack of absolute goodness manifests itself in many different ways, all of which are evil rather than good. “Conceivably, one might blame God for a creating a world in the first place (another problem), but he cannot blame God for creating a world with evil in it – a created order that possesses God’s own measure of being and goodness would be a logical absurdity.”<sup>12</sup> This view is similar to Augustine’s view.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Larry J. Waters, “Elihu’s Theology and His View of Suffering” *Bib Sac* 156 (1999) 144.

<sup>10</sup> Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Avon Books, 1991), referenced in Gary Phillips, “The Problem of Evil,” 15, where Phillips points the reader to the chapter entitled “God Can’t Do Everything, But He Can Do Some Important Things.”

<sup>11</sup> Gary Phillips, “The Problem of Evil,” 15.

<sup>12</sup> Ed. L. Miller, *God and Reason: A Historical Approach to Philosophical Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 144.

<sup>13</sup> Miller goes on to develop Augustine’s view in the following pages, 145-149.

## Some More Satisfying Responses to the Problem as Stated

This problem is not without a resolution, however. As early as 1710, in Leibniz's *Theodicy*,<sup>14</sup> solutions were proposed which, though perhaps not fully satisfactory, do at least demonstrate that the problem is not an insurmountable one. Even critics of theism have conceded that the logical problem of evil is solvable simply because it is possible to conceive of a universe in which the existence of God and the existence of evil are compatible.<sup>15</sup>

Going further, however, this statement of the problem is too broad; it does not take into account the difference between moral evil, stemming from human choice, and natural evil, which is often unavoidable from a human standpoint. This argument and its answers also fail to address the evidence present when discussing natural evil.

## Moral Evil and Human Freewill

One variation of this argument involves the question of moral evil. The Christian theist may confront questions such as, "Why did God let 9/11 happen?" referring to the hijacking of several commercial airplanes which were subsequently used as weapons and flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon in Washington D.C. A fourth hijacked plane was downed in a field in Pennsylvania, the result of an apparent attempt by the passengers to thwart yet another attack, presumably in Washington as well. This is a legitimate question, and one to which the previously mentioned theodicies yield little in the way of satisfactory answers.

One common response<sup>16</sup> has been argued in various forms is usually termed the "Freewill" defense.<sup>17</sup> The freewill defense is a response to the moral problem of evil. The freewill theodicy supposes that moral evil stems from the poor choices made by free moral agents. While one might reasonably ask in response, "Why then did God not simply make humans free but make them so that they choose the good rather than the bad?" The answer is that in order for one to make a valid free choice, they must be able to choose the bad as well as the good. If this is so, then one should not be surprised when someone does eventually choose the bad rather than the good.

One must note, however, that such freewill often produces good instead of bad. People who dedicate their lives to feeding the hungry, to helping the less fortunate, and to other good deeds, do so because they have chosen to live their lives in such a way. Some people demonstrate great sacrifice to help others whom they do not even know. To return to the example given above, during 9/11, many people risked their lives to help others whom they did not even know to escape and to receive medical attention. After 9/11, many people stopped their lives and went to New York, serving tirelessly in the rescue efforts. Still others gave money for food and supplies to help the rescue effort. This too was the result of their free choice. As stated above, one cannot be surprised that some would instead use their wills to choose to do evil instead of good. To lay the blame on God is to blame him for making humanity the way humans

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<sup>14</sup> This apparently originated with Leibniz in G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origin of Evil* (La Salle: Open Court, 1951).

<sup>15</sup> John, S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 159-160.

<sup>16</sup> Leibniz, *Theodicy*, 123-275 which comprise parts one and two of the essays.

<sup>17</sup> John S. Feinberg, who has written extensively on the problem of evil both from a philosophical and a religious context on the problem of evil, rejects this in favor of his own version of this in *The Many Faces of Evil*, 97-98, 124. His own view is found on pp. 124-143.

are. The alternative, however, is that he made us differently, and who is to say that humanity would be better if made differently.

A difficulty with the freewill theodicy, however, is that it assumes that human beings are indeed free moral agents, something upon which not all philosophers agree<sup>18</sup> (although most people, especially in the USA would have little difficulty accepting). Another problem with this is that even if it does address moral evil, it still does not address what is called “unattached natural evil.”<sup>19</sup>

### **The “Best Possible Worlds” defense**

Another defense is known as the “Best Possible Worlds” defense,<sup>20</sup> which is, in some ways, foundational to the freewill defense. This defense asserts that though we cannot know all possible worlds because we are finite, God can and does know all possible worlds and, while this world is not perfect, it is the best of all possible worlds because a world in which humanity has free choice is the best way to achieve the best of all possible worlds.<sup>21</sup>

A difficulty with this defense is that it presupposes a belief in God and so, while it may be helpful in explaining the existence of evil to one who believes in God, it is unhelpful in an apologetic endeavor with an atheist or agnostic.

### **Natural Evil and the Impact of Humanity on the Universe**

These responses, however, do not address the problem of natural evil, which is perhaps a more troubling problem to the average person since one can readily believe in the depravity of humanity but still have difficulty reconciling natural evil with the existence of a good God. Feinberg lists four categories of natural evil: items attributable to human agency, disorders of genetic malfunction, natural disasters not caused by human beings, and diseases.<sup>22</sup> These categories are radically different from each other, but are alike in their distinction from moral evil, in which deliberate human choices are often the moving force.

The question of natural evil is two-fold, being both one of presence and one of degree. This is to say, one must consider not only why there is evil, but there is so much evil. A corollary is to ask why much evil yields suffering that seems gratuitous.

With regard to the presence of evil, a variation of the freewill defense may be appropriate though it may at first seem out of place as a response. It is appropriate, however, as it is connected to the problem of natural evil through natural law. “The same natural laws that account for the occurrence of natural disasters are needed to make genuine freedom of the will possible. For our wills to be free, we need to be able to predict with a sufficiently high degree of confidence what the outcome of our exercise of them will be.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, a person is not free unless they can understand and reasonably predict the consequences of their actions.

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<sup>18</sup> C. Stephen Evans, *Philosophy of Religion: Thinking about Faith in the Contours of Christian Philosophy* series C. Stephen Evans, ed. (Downer’s Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1982), 136.

<sup>19</sup> This is natural evil that is not caused by or connected to the deliberate decisions of free moral agents. John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil*, 144-155. His definition of unattached natural evil is found on page 154.

<sup>20</sup> This, too, apparently originated with Leibniz, *Theodicy*.

<sup>21</sup> W. Gary Phillips, “The Problem of Evil: A Pastoral Approach, Part Two: The Good News,” *MTJ* 2:2 (1991), 108.

<sup>22</sup> John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil*, 145-147. Much of the terminology from this explanation is his.

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, 151.

Natural law guides the consequences of a person's actions and also governs the forces of nature, both with respect to one's body and to "nature" in the general sense.

One must also address why there is so much evil. The answer lies in the nature of the world in which humans live. Christians express it in terms of a "fallen" world, referring to the fall of humanity mentioned in Genesis 3. The Christian explanation of this is that humanity's sin has touched and tainted not only human nature, but all of nature. This is what the apostle was referring to in Romans 8:22 when he spoke of the creation groaning in birth pangs. All of creation has been touched by humanity's sin such that it is not in the harmony which God intended for it.

While this sounds silly to those who are unbelievers, a form of this argument may be made with unbelievers. Everyone who lives, dies. This proposition is easily verified. One can believe that death is simply natural, in which case, one has little reason to be upset at the mere fact of death. Since so many are, even when it does not involve a person to whom one has an emotional attachment, implies that there is something wrong with the natural process.

It is easy at this point simply to look to evolutionary processes and to state that eventually nature will correct its own problem. This seems unlikely, however, given that, in general, nature and natural processes tend toward more disorganization rather than better organization and toward decay rather than coherence.<sup>24</sup> One could also do as the Eastern mystical religions do and accept this as the "circle of life," but this, too, is unsatisfactory. Both of these responses are tantamount to the fideism mentioned above which is not only unsatisfying, but also not very reassuring.<sup>25</sup>

Another conclusion one might reach is that something is wrong with the world as it now is. This is reasonable simply by considering the definition of "evil." That there is a concept of evil implies that there is a "good" by which one can measure in order to determine both what is evil and how evil the evil is.<sup>26</sup> If this is indeed the case, then the presence of evil, the amount of evil, and any gratuitous evil should come as no surprise. While at this point a "best possible worlds" defense might be appropriate, one might also be able to direct an honest and serious inquirer toward divine revelation. It is also important to note at this point what C. S. Lewis pointed out with regard to this issue: considering the sinfulness of humanity and the deserved judgment for sin, one should be surprised, not that there is bad in the world, but that there is any good.

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<sup>24</sup> I am not making any appeal to the Second Law of Thermodynamics with this statement; I am simply stating what any reasonable observer of the world might conclude.

<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to this writer that so many people who deny there is a God or who deny that he is the Creator cite evil as one of the reasons they do not believe in God's existence. This forces one to ask, "If God is not the creator, how can he then be responsible for evil in the world?" Denial on the basis of this reason in this context is circular reasoning in one respect and outright poor reasoning in any respect. What one is really saying is, "I choose not to believe that God is responsible for the world, just the bad things in the world." So when it comes to things they don't like or they disagree with, they are more than happy to portray God as the one holding the bag. Along similar lines, and with regard to moral evil, how can one reject divine foreordination of any sort and yet be angry that God does not stop people from doing evil deeds?

<sup>26</sup> This is hinted at in the introduction to C. S. Lewis' *The Problem of Pain* (C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 14). Art Lindsley explicitly makes this connection in his work on Lewis' apologetic, Art Lindsley, *C. S. Lewis's The Case for Christ: Insights, from Reason, Imagination, and Faith* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 52-53.

## The Importance of Understanding “Divine Hiddenness”

This last point is important for the Christian outlook, which means it is important for anyone who is a believer or who will become a believer. Many who consider the problem of evil are not too troubled by evil itself, but by evil that seems either unnecessary or gratuitous. That is, one is unable, with these arguments alone, to resolve the problem of evil with regard to all evil.<sup>27</sup> To this argument, one must consider the character of God.<sup>28</sup> If indeed there is a God (a discussion which, though important, is outside the purview of this paper) then he must be perfect (again, outside the purview of this paper).<sup>29</sup> If God exists and he is perfect, then he must know more of the purpose of the world and its events than we do. If we as limited and finite beings can discern reasons for which God would allow evil, then it is reasonable to conclude that a perfect God would know of reasons which we do not. Just as parents who are raising a child might do things that would not be understandable by that child given the differences in knowledge and understanding between the parents, who hopefully know more than the child, and the child, who is still learning life lessons, so God might permit or do things that we do not understand given that God is omniscient and human knowledge is limited. This argument is especially potent when dealing with one who professes faith in Christ, but as long as one is a theist, it is cogent and helpful.<sup>30</sup>

## The Question of God’s Culpability with Regard to Evil

In a pastoral setting, the pastor, as indicated above, will spend most of his time dealing with believers or people inquiring after the Christian faith. In such circumstances, theism is usually a given and the emphasis will be on how a sovereign God and evil can coexist without God’s assuming responsibility for evil. For the Calvinist, as this author is, the answer is usually understood in terms of primary and secondary causes.<sup>31</sup> God is the primary cause of things that occur in response to his decree. Other things are ordered through providence. Providence superintends all things not directly stemming from a decree of God and such things are ordered through secondary causes, which are causes not directly resulting from a decree but from other things like natural law, circumstance, human whim, etc. So while God superintends events, even evil ones, through secondary causes, he is said not to be the author of sin or to be directly responsible for evil. It is important to point someone, especially a believer, who inquires about this to the goodness of God’s character. One must be careful to maintain that evil itself is not good nor has God ordained it, but to realize that evil has been allowed in order to accomplish the good purposes of God, even though we may not, and often do not, understand those purposes in this world.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Taylor, 156.

<sup>28</sup> Incidentally, this is a common theme in Scripture. The question “Why” is rarely answered. Instead, the reader of Scripture is called to consider the character of God and to ask, “Is there unrighteousness with God?” This is the point of both Elihu’s and God’s arguments in the book of Job. See D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord?: Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990). On this point, see especially chapter 9, “Job: Mystery and Faith.” Many of the Psalmists use the same line of reasoning.

<sup>29</sup> The first point is addressed in many places. For this last point consult Taylor’s chapter 8, “The Lord Our God Is One: Monotheism” in *Introducing Apologetics*, 99-112 for an explanation of why God must be perfect.

<sup>30</sup> See Taylor, 155-167 (Chapter 12) for a more in-depth discussion of this and also Evans, 130-140.

<sup>31</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith* Ch. 5, cf. *London Baptist Confession of 1689* Ch. 5. See also Boa & Bowman, 331-334 for a brief overview of this approach.

<sup>32</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Invisible Hand: Do All Things Really Work for Good* (Dallas: Word, 1996), 167-168. This is one of the better introductions to this problem from a Reformed standpoint. It is fair in its critique of philosophers, faithful to the Scriptures, and written so that one need not be a philosopher to understand it.

## **Integrating Reason and Scripture in a Reasoned and Reasonable Explanation**

In dealing with the question of the problem of evil, one must be careful not to neglect either the intellectual or the emotional/religious side of the problem. The intellectual side of the problem must be seriously weighed and considered and cogent answers developed in one's own thought and life before approaching the problem from an emotional aspect. If not, one is left with denial, fideism, or platitudes. As has been pointed out above, the emotional problem of evil is not dealt with through blind faith or platitude and the pastor/counselor who seeks to handle them in such a fashion does a disservice both to the one who is hurting<sup>33</sup> and to the Christian faith as revealed in Scripture.<sup>34</sup>

With regard to those who attack the faith or inquire after the faith, due humility must be shown so that confidence is not interpreted as arrogance. One must remember that even with unbelievers, one's resistance to the faith may stem from deep hurt or another emotional difficulty. One must also remember that the purpose of apologetics of any type, not just with regard to this issue, is to smooth the way for a presentation of the gospel. The emotional problem of evil must rest on the foundation of thought and careful exegesis of Scripture. The philosophical problems must be weighed against the teaching of Scripture and placed under the authority of God's Word, but they cannot be neglected.

## **Communicating These Arguments with Compassion to Those Who Are Hurting**

The pastor/counselor is often called upon to confront this issue when people are in the midst of suffering. During such times, not only are platitudes unhelpful, dry reasoning is also unhelpful. The one who is hurting is looking for comfort when often there is none to be given at that moment. The one who is hurting must be comforted in other ways, appropriate physical contact such as a hug from one friend to another (when appropriate), or simply being there, sitting with one who is suffering,<sup>35</sup> can go a long way. Scripture and prayer, brief and appropriate, help to keep one's mind focused on God and his promises. Neither the hospital nor the funeral home is the appropriate place to discuss the problem of evil. Only later, when the immediate crisis has passed, may the one who is suffering be in a better position to hear words of reason and to think coherently about the issues facing them. Even then, one must be careful to address the issues with compassion and graciousness.

What if the apologist or evangelist is the one suffering? Such times of suffering often allow unique opportunities for witness that would not come otherwise. A cogent argument, intellectually coherent and scripturally faithful, stated with humility by one who is enduring suffering and still committed to faith in Christ is a powerful witness and may be used mightily by the Spirit to accomplish his ends. But one must, even then, have already thought through such issues. The pastor must also be careful to advise his people, and those to whom he is called to

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<sup>33</sup> Read Dustin Shramek's account of the struggles he and his wife experienced after the death of their son and how such counsel was "hollow and unhelpful" in Dustin Shramek, "Waiting for the Morning during the Long Night of Weeping" in *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*, John Piper & Justin Taylor, eds. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 177. Shramek also mentions the Southern theologian R. L. Dabney's struggle after he lost two sons in one month, 179.

<sup>34</sup> John S. Feinberg lists several things one should *not* say to one who is hurting in a chapter entitled "Recipes for Disaster – or How Not to Help the Afflicted." John S. Feinberg, *Where is God: A Personal Story of Finding God in Grief and Suffering* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 27-48. Some of these things not to say are unbelievable and a few are downright shocking.

<sup>35</sup> Feinberg points out that this is the one thing that Job's friends did that was right. Feinberg, *Where is God*, 30-31.

give an answer, not to wait for crisis to ponder the things of God, but to prepare when things are good for the day of crisis or pain. The pastor or apologist must model this by coming to terms with the problem of evil both intellectually and from the Scriptures so that they will “always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

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