



Apologetic Fact Sheet 3

Key Statement: ‘If God is all powerful and loving – the presence of evil and suffering doesn’t make sense.’

Key Response: ‘I’ve wrestled with this too, and I believe just as there are many types of evil and suffering, a thoughtful response to your question has many parts’.

Key Content:

Below are some guidelines for part of a multi-faceted response to this question. But remember, use your *gentleness and respect*, there is often a painful personal reason behind this question.

1. **God’s Character:** I know and believe God is presented as powerful in the Bible (Gen 18:14; Luke 18:27; Matt 19:26; Isaiah 40:9) – he is also presented as loving (John 3:16 and 15:13).
2. **God’s Story:** My understanding is that the Bible presents humanity as part of God’s continuing story of creation (Genesis) and recreation (Revelation). This allows me to have hope for recreation in my own life.
3. **Mystery:** There is a mystery here, the Bible actually doesn’t state the origin of evil – it is a mystery (2 Thessalonians 2:7).
4. **The Reality of Hurts:** I understand the reality of hurt for everyone – the same part of the brain lights up for both physical and mental pain. I have experienced both.
5. **Freewill:** I believe we were created with the gift of freewill. This makes my relationship with God richer, and more dangerous. I can choose to love him, or not. Also, *sometimes* my poor choices result in my suffering.
6. **Purpose:** In retrospect, when looking back over my life I see good purposes have been achieved, for myself and others. Often these good purposes have been ‘birthed’ through the suffering itself, ie. perseverance. (Romans 5:1-5 & 8:28).
7. **God’s Presence:** The Bible promises me that I will always have God’s presence to comfort, guide and strengthen me during suffering, (John 14:16-18).
8. **God’s Participation:** This is a key concept – (2 Cor 5:21) God mysteriously and miraculously experienced more suffering than I will ever bear, (Hebrews 4:14-15). There is a universal set of emotions attached to suffering: loneliness, fear, disappointment, confusion, rejection, weariness, etc. Jesus’ life shows he experienced this range of emotion too; but, his responses model an ability to have peace despite pain, Isaiah 42:4b.

This is not all the answer to the problem of suffering; it is a partial response...but all of the responses open a doorway for *you* to share your own personal journey with God.