God gives food for all creatures (Ps 136:25); even the lions (Job 38:39).

"… a time to be born and a time to die," Ecc 3:1a,2a

"The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil." Isa 57:1b

Some times can be evil. Psalm 37:19; 49:5; Matthew 6:34

"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." James 4:17

The Lord abhors (as evil) false weights. Prov 11:1; 20:10,23; Micah 6:11

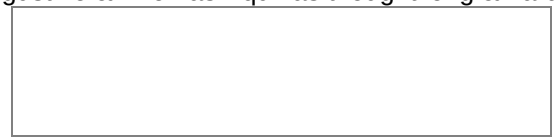
The sun rises on the just and unjust. Matthew 5:45

"Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Jms 1:17

What exactly is evil, anyway?

a) Whatever I do not like
b) Whatever is not good for me
c) Whatever is not the greatest good for society
d) Other

Augustine & Thomas Aquinas thought long & hard…



Three Analogies of Evil

1. Which part of a _____ is intrinsically evil?

2. Is a _____ a thing? Does it really exist?

3. Did God create the _____? Do they exist?

What is the definition of good? (Mark 10:18)

Do you agree or disagree: While some atheists might try to be good, they have no basis for being good.

Why does God allow evil in a fallen world?

Why do bad things happen to godly people?

The Parasite

Did God, who is perfect and good, create evil?

If not, then who did?

Does God use pain and moral evil?

_____1 Peter 1:6-7

_____ 1 Peter 4:1

_____ James 1:2-4

_____ Colossians 1:24

_____ Philippians 1:28

_____ 2 Tim 3:12; Php 1:29

But sometimes, _____
Job 1:8-12; 2:2-6

Is That OK?

(Bible verses are from the NIV.)

"I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." Isaiah 45:7 (KJV)
Modern translations say: "calamity" or "disaster" for "evil".

"Your ways, O God are holy." Psalm 77:13a See also 1 Peter 1:15

"You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell." Psalm 5:4

God does not tempt anyone. Jms1:13

_____

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,…" Rom 8:28

Joseph said to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good…" Gen 50:20

"…I raised you [Pharaoh] up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaim-ed in all the earth.'" Rom 9:17; Ex 9:16

For Disciples Only

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

DAY ONE
How do you respond when evil happens to you and not others, and you thought they were so much more deserving? In Psalm 73 how did Asaph almost respond, and how did he respond?

DAY TWO
How do we respond to "bad things" God allows or even sends? In 2 Kings 20:1-7, how did Hezekiah respond when he received news of what God said would happen to him?

What were results of his response? In other words, how many years was he given in 2 Kings 20:6, and how old was Manasseh when he became king in 2 Kings 21:1 and 2 Chronicles 33:1. What else do we know about Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:10-16?

DAY THREE
The Sunday lesson did not have time to discuss "hidden evil". Ponder James 4:17. What are some "stealth sins", that we usually do not think of as sin, but fall under James 4:17?

How does this relate to Romans 14:23?

DAY FOUR
The Sunday lesson emphasized what we should think about good and evil. But what should we feel about good and evil? What should our attitude be towards goodness and holiness?
Psalm 119:9-20; Do you really believe Psalm 119:1-2,5?

How does Philippians 4:8-9 apply to TV and movies that you enjoy?

DAY FIVE
For a healthy, devoted Christian, how should we feel about evil?
Rev 2:6; Ps 45:7; 97:10; Jude 22-23. Also Rom 12:19; Lev 19:17-18
When are Christians to flee? 1 Cor 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22
When are Christians to stand? Eph 6:10-19; Lk 21:19; Jms 4:7; 1 Tim 5:9

Why Is There Evil in God's World? – part 1

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to given an answer to everyone asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect," 1 Pet. 3:15 (NIV)

How do you handle the idea of evil in the world created by a good Creator? Today we hope to stimulate your godly reasoning skills to understand, and to be able to explain this to others.

There are two related answers: the answer you give a skeptic or someone who is wondering, and the answer for someone who is hurting. This explores the first answer, but part 2 gives the second.

If God Almighty is all-knowing and all-loving, why is there evil in this world?

God is _____ notes:	All that God decrees definitely happens. Isaiah 14:24,27; 43:13; 55:11; Jn 10:26-28 God is sovereign over all. Isaiah 6:5; Ps 103:14 He does as He pleases. Mt 20:15; Ps 115:3;135:6; Rom 9:20 Nothing is too hard for God. Gen 18:14; Job 42:2; Jer 32:17; Mt 19:26 He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim 2:13), lie (Heb 6:18; 1 Sam 15:29), or be tempted by evil (Jms 1:13). Nothing occurs besides what God allows. Job 1:12; 2:6; Jms 4:15 All things work together for His will. Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11 None thwart God's decrees. Isa 43:13; Rom 11:29 Many "succeed" in resisting God's commands. Acts 7:39,51; 4:11; 13:46; 14:2; 2 Cor 6:1 Some things are on our own initiative. 2 Cor 8:17
God is _____ notes:	He knows and sees all. 1 Jn 3:20; Jn 21:17; Ps 139; Pr 5:21; 15:3; Heb 4:13 He knows all the details. Isa 40:26; Ps 139:16 God knows for certain every day of the future. Ps 139:16; Isa 46:10; 44:7
God is _____ notes:	God is loving (not all-loving) 1 Jn 4:16; Ex 20:6 God is good to all, and has tender mercy over all He has made. Ps 145:9,17 He individually loves us. Jer 45; 35; Gen 20:3-7

God gives food for all creatures (Ps 136:25); even the lions (Job 38:39).

"… a time to be born and a time to die," Ecc 3:1a,2a

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The sun rises on the just and unjust. Matthew 5:45

"Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Jms 1:17

What exactly is evil, anyway?

a) Whatever I do not like. A nurse's shot.
b) Whatever is not good for me. 1 Cor 15:12-19; Mt 10:39; Mk 8:35
c) Whatever is not the greatest good for society. John 11:49-52
d) Other

Augustine & Thomas Aquinas thought long & hard…

> Evil is a deprivation of a lack of good. If an infant cannot walk or understand truth and beauty, that is not evil, because an infant was not created to do those things while still an infant. However, if an adult cannot do this, this is "metaphysical" evil.

Three Analogies of Evil

1. Which part of a deceitful weight is intrinsically evil? Dt 25:15; Lev 19:36; Prov 11:1; 16:11. Prov 20:10,23 and Mic 6:11 condemn those who use diverse and deceitful weights.
No part. It is the use and misrepresentation, not the physical attributes.

2. Is a hole a thing? Does it really exist?
Yes. It has no mass or energy, but you can sprain your ankle stepping in a lack of ground.

3. Did God create the shadows? Do they exist?
Shadows exist but nobody directly created them. They are indirectly created with the action of light and something to block the light. They really exist, because plants die in the shadows. Likewise a lie does not have independent existence, but it still exists; people can die because of lies.

What is the definition of good? (Mark 10:18)
Good is defined as that matches the character and desired will of God. We are to do good in 1 Tim 6:18, so we can be good in a limited way. God is both the source and standard of goodness, but nothing is totally good except Him. No other definition has a consistent, independent basis.

Do you agree or disagree: While some atheists might try to be good, they have no basis for being good. Agree, because otherwise good is relative. What is good for people and pest control companies is not good for rats, etc.

Why does God allow evil in a fallen world?
God gave us free agency to make choices. One consequence of the Fall was God not allowing sinful people to live in a perfect creation (Gen 3:17-18; 5:29; Rom 8:19-22;). God gave man dominion over this world, and Satan now has dominion (1 Jn 5:19; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; Jn 12:31; 14:30)

Why do bad things happen to godly people?
Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a book answering this. He gave the wrong answer (God is not Almighty). God allows not just evil, but injustice, but this is only temporary. Everything will be set right one day, which we call Judgment Day. The agnostic Martin Gardiner, in *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*, wrote: if you believe in justice, you have to believe in afterlife.

The Parasite

Did God, who is perfect and good, create moral evil? If not, then who did? Nobody, there are not two creators. Evil, like a parasite, does not have independent existence, but dependent. Good existed without evil, but evil cannot exist without good.

Does God use pain and moral evil?

Grief and trials refines our faith as gold 1 Peter 1:6-7

Suffering helps us die to sin. 1 Peter 4:1

Trials & testing develops perseverance to be mature and complete, lacking in nothing James 1:2-4

Be not for our sake, but for others. Colossians 1:24

Be a sign for unbelievers. Philippians 1:28

Comes with being a Christian. 2 Tim 3:12; Php 1:29

But sometimes, we see no other reason, except that our perseverance glorifies God. Job 1:8-12; 2:2-6

Is That OK? Sure. God is pure, and is not evil, but nothing restricts God from keeping His promise in Romans 8:28 to use all things, not just good things, for the good of His people.
(Bible verses are from the NIV.)

"I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." Isaiah 45:7 (KJV)
Modern translations say: "calamity" or "disaster" for "evil".

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God does not tempt anyone. Jms1:13

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,…" Rom 8:28

Joseph said to his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good…" Gen 50:20

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For Disciples Only

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DAY ONE
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Why Is There Evil in God's World? – part 1

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to given an answer to everyone asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect," 1 Pet. 3:15 (NIV)

How do you handle the idea of evil in the world created by a good Creator? Today we hope to stimulate your godly reasoning skills to understand, and to be able to explain this to others.

There are two related answers: the answer you give a skeptic or someone who is wondering, and the answer for someone who is hurting. This explores the first answer, but part 2 gives the second.

If God Almighty is all-knowing and ~~all~~-loving, why is there evil in this world?

God is Almighty. God's power is bounded only by Himself. Everything happens that God commands. Nothing happens that God does not permit. God can chose for a time to delegate His sovereignty and to permit some things that break His heart, but ultimately everything is woven together in His plan.	All that God decrees definitely happens. Isaiah 14:24,27; 43:13; 55:11; Jn 10:26-28 God is sovereign over all. Isaiah 6:5; Ps 103:14 He does as He pleases. Mt 20:15; Ps 115:3;135:6; Rom 9:20 Nothing is too hard for God. Gen 18:14; Job 42:2; Jer 32:17; Mt 19:26 He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim 2:13), lie (Heb 6:18; 1 Sam 15:29), or be tempted by evil (Jms 1:13). Nothing occurs besides what God allows. Job 1:12; 2:6; Jms 4:15 All things work together for His will. Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11 None thwart God's decrees. Isa 43:13; Rom 11:29 Many "succeed" in resisting God's commands. Acts 7:39,51; 4:11; 13:46; 14:2; 2 Cor 6:1 Some things are on our own initiative. 2 Cor 8:17
God is all-knowing. All the past, present, and future, is avail-able to God. Scripture is silent on God knowing all details of all hypotheticals.	He knows and sees all. 1 Jn 3:20; Jn 21:17; Ps 139; Pr 5:21; 15:3; Heb 4:13 He knows all the details. Isa 40:26; Ps 139:16 God knows for certain every day of the future. Ps 139:16; Isa 46:10; 44:7
God is very loving. He's compassion on all, we cannot fathom His love for elect, but severe wrath too.	God is loving (not all-loving) 1 Jn 4:16; Ex 20:6 God is good to all, and has tender mercy over all He has made. Ps 145:9,17 He individually loves us. Jer 45; 35; Gen 20:3-7

Speaker Notes:

When I was a teenager, I grew up in a liberal United Methodist Church, where the Pastor did not believe the Bible was all God's word. One thing he told me that was that if God is Almighty, all-knowing, and all-loving, then how come there is evil in this world. In other words, if God is good and loving, he would not want to have any evil. One does not even have to be all-knowing to know that there is evil. If He is Almighty, He could stop all evil if He wanted to do so. So how come there is evil?

If a teenager like me came to you after being presented with this, what explanation would you give him, how would you answer him? Let's split up into groups and see what we can come up with.

First presented 7/18/04

…Death
"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Ps 116:15

People died who should not have died. Ezekiel 13:20

"The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil." Isa 57:1b

"… a time to be born and a time to die," Ecc 3:1a,2a

1 Cor 15:35-58 and 2 Cor 5:1-9 show that our heavenly body will be better than our earthly body.

No death, mourning, crying, or pain in heaven. Rev 21:4

…Passing though!
"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." 1 Pet 1:24-25. See Isa 40:6-8

Roleplay: When someone asks you why they are suffering, what do you say? Have one person act as the sufferer and the others give comfort in one of the following scenarios.
a) They have a terminal illness.
b) Their non-believing close friend died because of sinful choices they made.
c) Their child was sent to prison, for a crime they committed (or else a crime they did not commit).

The sufferer can be one of the following: (1) totally despairing of life, (2) thinking God is punishing them, (3) asking a lot of "God, why me?" questions, (4) or asking "Why would a loving God allow this?" questions.

What some other religions and (oops!) some Christians think too

You should eliminate your desire. _____

"May God make your sufferings a decrease of your sins. There is no heavenly reward for illness, but it does decrease any sin that a servant of God incurs." _____ vol.17 p.95

If you only had more faith… _____

_____, _____, _____ 9:1 though your illness or suffering is always a direct result of yours or somebody else's sin. But the tower of Siloam crashes down on this view. Luke 13:4.

Some sickness among God's people is discipline. Uzziah (2 Chr 26:15-21); David's son (2 Sam 12:14-18); Miriam (Num 12:12-15); Gehazi (2 Ki 5:19-27); Nadab & Abihu (Lev 10:1-3); Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10); Jezebel's bedmates (Rev 2:22).

But much is not. Paul first preached to the Galatians because of illness (Gal 4:13-14a); Epaphroditus (Php 2:26-27); Timothy (1 Tim 5:23); Paul's thorn (2 Cor 12:7-10); Elisha died of an illness. (2 Ki 13:14); Shunnamite's son (2 Ki 4:18-36)

Adam's Fall, and misunderstanding personal guilt vs. consequences.

Is This the Best of All Possible Worlds?

God did not make any mistakes. But did God really do the best job He could have? The brilliant co-inventor of calculus, Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716), defended that out of all the possible worlds God could have made, God made the best one. How would you defend this statement – or would you?

___, this is the _____ to the _____.

The Lifespan Promised to Christians

Believers are promised a long or prolonged life. Ps 91:16; Prov 3:2; 4:10; 9:11. Yet some Christians have short lifespans on earth, or worse yet, are murdered for their faith as in Rom 8:36 and Ps 44:22. How do you explain this alleged contradiction?

See Ps 23:6; 61:4. _____
God will not forsake us in our old age. Psalm 71:7-9

Can Pain and Grief Ever be Good?

Pain is _____ to a deaf world in C.S. Lewis's *The Problem of Pain*.

God's View of Death, and Our View

1. The book of Job and math. Job 1:1-3 & 42:12-13

2. Enoch in Gen 5:22-24

3. Flowers

4. Timeline

5. Corrie ten Boom

Press Outward, Upward, and Beyond – Php 3:8-21

Thou we live in a world of decay, we put our hope in the Lord of Life. The pain of a moment is small compared to joy eternally.
(Bible verses are from the NIV).

"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zeph 3:16-17

…The Goal
"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Heb 12:2-3

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

Life is fleeting. Ps 39:4-6

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,…" Rom 8:28

For Disciples Only

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

DAY ONE

In 1 Sam 1:8-18, Hannah was in tears because she could not have children. Eli, a godly man, did a particularly poor job of comforting her. Why did that not bother Hannah too much? How do respond when you could use some comfort, and you get someone like Eli, or Job's friends? (For a clue, read 2 Cor 1:3-11.)

DAY TWO

Psalm search: People need different kinds of comfort in different situations. Find verses in Psalms that address each situation.
Sickness 6, 30, 41, 102, 103
Feeling alone 13
Dangerous situations 23, 46, 88, 91, 116

DAY THREE

Regardless of whether someone is just paranoid, or people really are out to get you, people need to pray those situations to God. How do Psalms 3, 7, 11, 22, 56, 69, 70, 74, 140, 143 help. What if you were betrayed by a former friend, as in Psalm 55. Who is really the one friend we can count on?

DAY FOUR

Someone can feel very depressed after they sin. But be careful with that: while godly sorrow leads to repentance, worldly sorrow leads only to death (2 Cor 7:9). What can we learn about comfort after repenting from sin in Psalm 32, 38, 130, 51 + 2 Sam 12:13-19,22?

DAY FIVE

Do believers ever get depressed for no specific reason? David did. How do Psalm 40, 42, and 63 help us pull out of that?

Why Is There Evil in God's World? – part 2

Answers for the Hurting

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For Justas the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows". 2 Cor 1:3-5 (NIV)

You are at a hospital, and someone there is dying. What do you say to them and their loved ones? Do you discourse on moral vs. metaphysical evil, what atheists who have no hope think, and why they are wrong? No, because that could be a case of saying the right things at the wrong time. That may not be what they need. But what do you tell them?

Before you say anything, look behind the question and see what it is they are really saying. It might be this: "How can feel comfort, when it makes so little sense to me that this bad thing should happen here right now."

Seven Things to Avoid

1. Think that you can _____ their pain, or _____ "cure" them. Don't tell them to _____.

2. _____ how they feel. Don't forget that _____ people respond to grief very _____, based on the type of grief, their past experiences, age, personality type, and theology.

3. Give the impression as to exactly _____.

But you can help them see _____, _____ and _____.

4. _____ their hurt. Be careful with _____, it can appear like you do not care. Show that God cares, and also put it in perspective.

5. _____ their _____ or _____, as David and Absalom did in 2 Sam 13:20-22

6. _____ to them to make them feel better. _____ cannot comfort.

7. Lose you moorings and get _____ yourself. Sharing their grief is good, but keep your anchor strong. Go to the rock that is higher than you. Ps 61:2

…Death

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints." Ps 116:15

People died who should not have died. Ezekiel 13:20

"The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil." Isa 57:1b

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1 Cor 15:35-58 and 2 Cor 5:1-9 show that our heavenly body will be better than our earthly body.

No death, mourning, crying, or pain in heaven. Rev 21:4

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The sufferer can be one of the following: (1) totally despairing of life, (2) thinking God is punishing them, (3) asking a lot of "God, why me?" questions, (4) or asking "Why would a loving God allow this?" questions.

What some other religions and (oops!) some Christians think too

You should eliminate your desire. Buddhism. A teenage boy in Thailand ran away from home to join a drug gang. A Buddhist counseled her to decrease her desire for him. A Christian counseled her to pray for him.

"May God make your sufferings a decrease of your sins. There is no heavenly reward for illness, but it does decrease any sin that a servant of God incurs." *al-Tabari* vol.17 p.95

If you only had more faith… a Christian Science practitioner told my grandmother that, when my grandfather was dying of lung cancer.

Job's friends, Jews, John 9:1 though your illness or suffering is always a direct result of yours or somebody else's sin. But the tower of Siloam crashes down on this view. Luke 13:4.

Some sickness among God's people is discipline. Uzziah (2 Chr 26:15-21); David's son (2 Sam 12:14-18); Miriam (Num 12:12-15); Gehazi (2 Ki 5:19-27); Nadab & Abihu (Lev 10:1-3); Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10); Jezebel's bedmates (Rev 2:22).

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Adam's Fall, and misunderstanding personal guilt vs. consequences. Do babies dying prove their guilt for Adam's sin? How about baby kittens?

Is This the Best of All Possible Worlds?

God did not make any mistakes. But did God really do the best job He could have? The brilliant co-inventor of calculus, Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716), defended that out of all the possible worlds God could have made, God made the best one. How would you defend this statement – or would you?

No, this is the best possible process to the best of all possible worlds. The best of all possible worlds is where all freely chooses to love God.

The Lifespan Promised to Christians

Believers are promised a long or prolonged life. Ps 91:16; Prov 3:2; 4:10; 9:11. Yet some Christians have short lifespans on earth, or worse yet, are murdered for their faith as in Rom 8:36 and Ps 44:22. How do you explain this alleged contradiction? One person left Christianity because of this alleged problem.

See Ps 23:6; 61:4. Long life is eternal life in heaven. God will not forsake us in our old age. Psalm 71:7-9

Can Pain and Grief Ever be Good?

Yes, it can bring people to God. Pain is God's megaphone to a deaf world in C.S. Lewis's *The Problem of Pain*.

God's View of Death, and Our View

1. The book of Job and math. Job 1:1-3 & 42:12-13 Everything was doubled except the children. Job still had his original children in Heaven.
2. Enoch in Gen 5:22-24. He walked with God, and one day, God said, "it's getting late, and we are closer to my house than yours, so why don't you just spend the night in my house?
3. Flowers. Believers are like flowers in God's garden. Sometimes God wants to pick his flowers and take them inside.
4. Timeline. Draw a line representing how long your eternal life will be. Now mark on it how much of it is on this earth.
5. A Jewish violinist in the concentration camp held up her gnarled hands and asked: "If God is so loving, how come he allowed the Nazi soldiers to do this with their rifle butts. Corrie ten Boom answered, "I don't know. But I do not that Jesus too suffered unjustly, He was tortured, and He understands your suffering."

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Thou we live in a world of decay, we put our hope in the Lord of Life. The pain of a moment is small compared to joy eternally.

(Bible verses are from the NIV).

"The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zeph 3:16-17

…The Goal

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Heb 12:2-3

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

Life is fleeting. Ps 39:4-6

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,…" Rom 8:28

For Disciples Only

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

DAY ONE

In 1 Sam 1:8-18, Hannah was in tears because she could not have children. Eli, a godly man, did a particularly poor job of comforting her. Why did that not bother Hannah too much? How do respond when you could use some comfort, and you get someone like Eli, or Job's friends? (For a clue, read 2 Cor 1:3-11.)

DAY TWO

Psalm search: People need different kinds of comfort in different situations. Find verses in Psalms that address each situation.
Sickness 6, 30, 41, 102, 103
Feeling alone 13
Dangerous situations 23, 46, 88, 91, 116

DAY THREE

Regardless of whether someone is just paranoid, or people really are out to get you, people need to pray those situations to God. How do Psalms 3, 7, 11, 22, 56, 69, 70, 74, 140, 143 help. What if you were betrayed by a former friend, as in Psalm 55. Who is really the one friend we can count on?

DAY FOUR

Someone can feel very depressed after they sin. But be careful with that: while godly sorrow leads to repentance, worldly sorrow leads only to death (2 Cor 7:9). What can we learn about comfort after repenting from sin in Psalm 32, 38, 130, 51 + 2 Sam 12:13-19,22?

DAY FIVE

Do believers ever get depressed for no specific reason? David did. How do Psalm 40, 42, and 63 help us pull out of that?

Why Is There Evil in God's World? – part 2

Answers for the Hurting

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For Justas the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows". 2 Cor 1:3-5 (NIV)

You are at a hospital, and someone there is dying. What do you say to them and their loved ones? Do you discourse on moral vs. metaphysical evil, what atheists who have no hope think, and why they are wrong? No, because that could be a case of saying the right things at the wrong time. That may not be what they need. But what do you tell them?

Before you say anything, look behind the question and see what it is they are really saying. It might be this: "How can feel comfort, when it makes so little sense to me that this bad thing should happen here right now."

Seven Things to Avoid

1. Think that you can eliminate their pain, or quickly "cure" them. Don't tell them to just cheer up. Even believers, such as David and Paul suffered grief.
2. Assume how they feel. Don't forget that different people respond to grief very differently, based on the type of grief, their past experiences, age, personality type, and theology. Before communism, many Chinese Christians were taught that God would save them from suffering and persecution. Then the Communists came….
3. Give the impression as to exactly why God allowed their specific situation.

But you can help them see outward, upward and onward.

4. Trivialize their hurt. Be careful with humor, it can appear like you do not care. Show that God cares, and also put it in perspective.

5. Ignore their grief or situation, as David and Absalom did in 2 Sam 13:20-22

6. Lie to them to make them feel better. Insincerity cannot comfort.

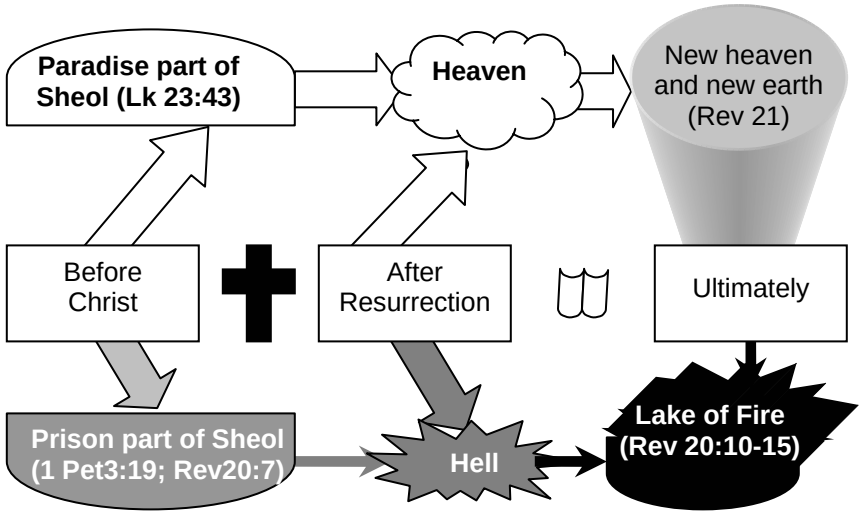
7. Lose you moorings and get despondent yourself. Sharing their grief is good, but keep your anchor strong. Go to the rock that is higher than you. Ps 61:2

Additional Speaker Notes:

The Protestant Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716), co-inventor of calculus was brilliant. He knew both Latin and German at 8, when his father died. He began teaching himself Greek and Protestant theology by age 12. He wrote on mathematics before he was 21, and wrote a critique of Locke's philosophy. He thought a newborn soul is not a blank tablet, but rather an unworked block of marble, with hidden veins that affect its ultimate form.

Presented 8/8/2004

The Bible Suggests the Following on the Afterlife



Christ preached to those locked in prison (1 Peter 3:19). Eventually death (Hades) and Hell are thrown into the Lake of fire along with those whose name was not found written in the book of life (Rev20:14).

Who's Responsible
"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs." Jonah 2:8

Hell is Severe
"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." Rev 21:8

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Mt 25:41

Hell is eternal
"Then they will go away to eternal punishment (*kolasin aionion)*, but the righteous to eternal life." Mt 25:46

They [Sodom and Gomorrah] serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. (*pyros aioniou gikun opechousai*)" Jde 7

"And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for any-one who receives the mark of his name." Rev 14:11

"And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev 20:10

The Severity of our sin
The magnitude of our sin
The extent that sin has filled us
The enormity of Who it was we sin against

Does God take any pleasure in people going to Hell or not? Ezekiel 18:23,32; 2 Peter 3:9

Tale of Two Pastors

Images of Hell
Gehenna – Cosmic __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Cosmic __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

My House

The cosmic fire of classical __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Is growth good?

Other Descriptions of Hell

"When the world dissolves, all places will be hell that are not heaven." (Christopher Marlowe)
"Hell is the penitentiary [prison] of the moral universe." (J.S. Wrightnour)
The wicked in hell shall be always dying but never dead." (Thomas Watson)
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The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice in comparison of the fire of hell. (Thomas Brooks)
"He shall have hell as a debt who will not have heaven as a gift."

C.S. Lewis, and How Are the Doors Locked?

C.S. Lewis said, "In the end there are only two kinds of people. People who say to God, "Thy will be done", and the other kind, whom God says to them, "Thy will be done."

Is there any way someone already in Hell can repent and go to Heaven? Luke 16:19-31

Those Who Died Before Hearing the Gospel?

J __ __ __ __ (Jn 3:36; 14:6, 10:8, Rom 11:1)

J __ __ __ __ __ (Rom 2:11-16; 3:20; 4:15; 5:13)

J __ __ __ __ __ (2 Thess 1:6; John 5:22,23; Matthew 12:36; Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1), and

G __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (Rom 3:21-26; 5:6-8)

S __ __ __ __ (Acts 4:12; Titus 2:13-14; 1 John 2:2; 3:8; Heb 2:9; Rom 3:21-26; 1 Tim 2:4-6; 4:10; John 1:29; 3:17; 8:24; 10:7-8,14-16; 14:6; 6:45; Gal 1:6-9;

Oh, how terrible is the place, where man's freedom to choose to be separate from God, drifts away in the justice of its consequences.

(Bible verses are from the NIV).

For Disciples Only

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

DAY ONE
Does God hold people accountable for what they could not know? Rom 4:15; 5:13
All ignorance is not necessarily "innocent ignorance". What are some examples of ignorance that is not innocent? Rom 1:28
How does 2 Peter 2:19-21 fit in?
Thought to ponder: if people reject the truth of God they have been given, and kill God's messengers (Mt 23:37), is God obligated to give them more truth?

DAY TWO

God has great patience (2 Peter 3:9) and He is slow to anger (Ps 108:8b; 145:8). But is there any limit to His patience or not? See 1 Thess 2:16.

What are two ways God was patient with the people of Judah in the time of Jeremiah? For a hint on one, why was the exile 70 years? (Lev 26:31-36)
See also Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10,16; Dan 9:2

DAY THREE

Even when Jesus Himself preached, as well as did miracles, that was not enough for some; they would under no circumstances believe. Likewise some people will repent when punished; yet others in a similar situation will not. Even in Exodus Pharaoh would not repent. What do you think is the difference in 2 Cor 7:10 between godly sorrow that leads to repentance and worldly sorrow that only leads to death?

DAY FOUR

Some theologians such as John Stott have wandered saying that Hell is not eternal. How do these verses show it is?
God's Judgment is final. The Lake of Fire is eternal. Rev 20:10; 2 Thess 1:9; Hebrews 6:2; Jude 7
Unbelievers are eternally punished. Mt 25:41,46; Rev 14:9-11;~19:3;~22:15

DAY FIVE

Destruction does not mean non-existence; Satan, beast, & false prophet will suffer forever in the lake of fire. Luke 21:16+18; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20; 20:10.

Why Is There Evil in God's World? – part 3
How to Deal with Hell?

"Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God:" Rom 11:22a (NIV)

The last two sessions taught that

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

There is one troubling thought though; for some people everything does not work together for good in the end. In fact, they end very poorly. So how are we to understand God being a God of love with their being Hell?

Sharing the gospel with others is not to be a "sales job" accentuating the positives, and denying the negatives, but a genuine heart-to-heart discussion of all the truth. So how do you explain about Hell when asked?

Question to ponder: Are the gates of Hell locked on the outside, or are they locked on the inside? (from C.S. Lewis in the *Screwtape Letters*)

The Severity of Hell

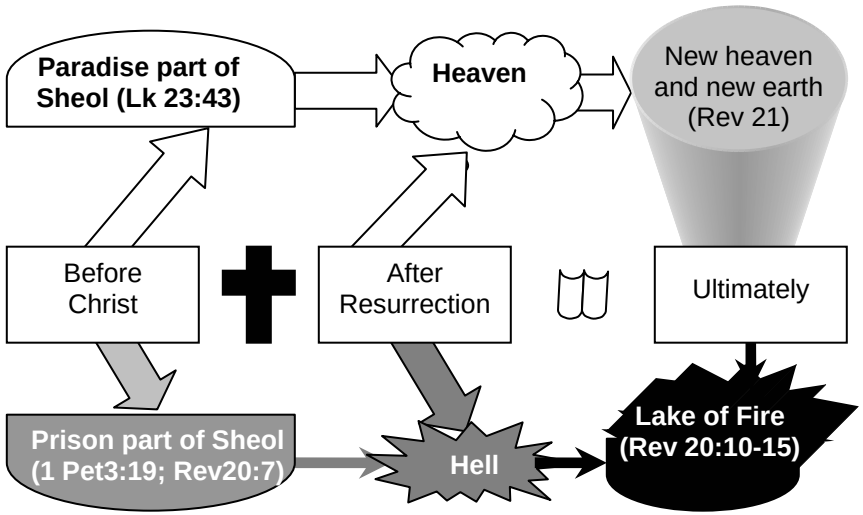
Is there really painful consciousness after death? Rev 20:10; Lk12:5;13:28;16; Ezk 32:31-32; Mt 3:12;5:21;13:42,50;22:13;25:41; Is 50:11

How severe is Hell? Ps 11:6, Mt 13:40-42,50; Heb 10:27

Is Hell really forever? Mt 18:8; 3:12, 2 Th 1:9

How can Hell be forever if people perish (Luke 13:3,5; John 3:16; 2 Th 2:10 and are destroyed (2 Th 1:9; 2 Peter 3:16; Mt 10:28; 1Cor 3:17; Php 1:28; Jms 4:12; Rev 11:18)?

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The Severity of our sin
The magnitude of our sin
The extent that sin has filled us
The enormity of Who it was we sin against
Does God take any pleasure in people going to Hell or not? Ezekiel 18:23,32; 2 Peter 3:9 Definitely not.
Tale of Two Pastors. Why was one pastor fired for saying all who reject Jesus go to Hell, and his replacement said the same thing? The 1st said it gleefully, and the 2nd said it with a tear in his eye.

Images of Hell
Gehenna – Cosmic trash dump
Quarantine Cosmic wild animal zoo
My House. I want to keep out what is filthy and causes disease. I have the right to refuse entry to those who would want to hurt my family. If I think I have that right, shouldn't God do the same?
The cosmic fire of classical Hinduism, which teaches that all will be absorbed in the cosmic fire.
Is growth good?Imagine someone having a sin in this life, such as greed or lust. Imagine having the desire for that sin grow by 0.01% per year. Now imagine that the person has been in Hell for a million years, and has the certain knowledge that the sinful desire can never be satisfied.

Other Descriptions of Hell

"When the world dissolves, all places will be hell that are not heaven." (Christopher Marlowe)
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C.S. Lewis said, "In the end there are only two kinds of people. People who say to God, "Thy will be done", and the other kind, whom God says to them, "Thy will be done."

Is there any way someone already in Hell can repent and go to Heaven? Luke 16:19-31. No. C.S. Lewis in The Great Divorce was wrong. The doors are locked on the outside as well as on the inside.

Those Who Died Before Hearing the Gospel?

Jesus (Jn 3:36; 14:6, 10:8, Rom 11:1)

Justly (Rom 2:11-16; 3:20; 4:15; 5:13)

Judges (2 Thess 1:6; John 5:22,23; Matthew 12:36; Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1), and

Graciously (Rom 3:21-26; 5:6-8)

Saves (Acts 4:12; Titus 2:13-14; 1 John 2:2; 3:8; Heb 2:9; Rom 3:21-26; 1 Tim 2:4-6; 4:10; John 1:29; 3:17; 8:24; 10:7-8,14-16; 14:6; 6:45; Gal 1:6-9;

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How to Deal with Hell?

"Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God:" Rom 11:22a (NIV)
The last two sessions taught that
a) God understands and comforts us in our suffering
b) Our sufferings and death are small in light of the eternal riches of Heaven
c) Everything work together for good for those who love Him. (Rom 8:28)
There is one troubling thought though; for some people everything does not work together for good in the end. In fact, they end very poorly. So how are we to understand God being a God of love with their being Hell?
Given that God has both Great Love and Great Wrath, how are We to Understand the Lake of Fire?
When we talk with others, do you respond when they ask about God sending people to Hell? Fumbling? Embarrassment? How do we truthfully, accurately present Hell, the way God would want us to do so? Sharing the Gospel is not a "sales job" where you accentuate the positives and deny the negatives. No, it is to be an honest, forthright discussion of the truth of eternal things.
Sharing the gospel with others is not to be a "sales job" accentuating the positives, and denying the negatives, but a genuine heart-to-heart discussion of all the truth. So how do you explain about Hell when asked?
Jesus mentioned Hell (Gehenna) more than Heaven. We are not to shy away from it, but simply to communicate the truth and seriousness of it.
Question to ponder: Are the gates of Hell locked on the outside, or are they locked on the inside? (from C.S. Lewis in the *Screwtape Letters*)

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Is there really painful consciousness after death? Rev 20:10; Lk12:5;13:28;16; Ezk 32:31-32; Mt 3:12;5:21;13:42,50;22:13;25:41; Is 50:11
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A house that is destroyed by fire, can still have its shell standing.

Speaker Notes:

The week after the first session, my web site, www.Biblequery.org, got an email on this very question. So at the end of this class we will try to answer this email together. Before that, we are going to learn a lot of background from the Bible and the wisdom of some other Christians. Now I have already given him a preliminary answer, but I told him that I would give him a more thorough answer later. So would you all like to help come up with the best answers we can to his questions?

To believe in heaven but not in hell is to declare that there were times when Jesus was telling the truth and times when he was lying." (John Blanchard) One of the most common words Jesus used for "Hell" is *Gehenna*. Gehenna was actually the trash dump outside of Jerusalem. They would pile the refuse out there, and when it got high enough to stink, and there were enough rats and other creatures, they would burn it. Hell can be thought of as a "cosmic trash dump" of those who choose to be unfit to be with God in Heaven.

Imagine Hitler being in heaven, without ever repenting of what he did. Imagine millions being forced to live with a Holy God forever, against their will. Can you even imagine this? I can't. Rather, I think that if Someone finally says they do not want to love, serve, and worship God forever, God reluctantly says "OK". God will build a separate universe just for them, and they can do whatever they want in that universe. This universe we call Hell. Of course God is the source of all love and goodness, and they not experience those things there. They may have former friends with them in Hell, but without the love, they will not be their friends anymore. People are not all there is in that universe. Demons and others will be there with them.

Some theologians such as John Stott have fallen into error by denying the permanence of people in Hell. It is true that many places in the Bible refer to destruction and perishing. However, it also says, "the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever". The Devil, beast, and false prophet torment, *Basanisthosontai* in Greek, forever and ever (Rev 20:10)

Consider this, if a reprobate person was not driven to insanity when they first entered the Lake of Fire, it is possible their sanity could become questionable by the second million years. A person still has consciousness and some rationality left, but definitely less rationality than when they entered. Even if a person's rationality/possibly consciousness diminished by 50% every hundred years, it would never reach zero. Thus there could be an initial destruction (of all hope, etc.) when a person enters, Hell, a never-ending process of destruction (rationality, etc.) and also a permanence (soul, existence, etc.) Of course, God has not told us that the "etc.", and it is not something we need to know all about if we are not going to experience it.

Rev 1:18 Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades.

Extra notes only if needed:

Apart from the Bible, did Jewish people in Jesus' day and before have any concept of eternal conscious punishment? If nobody had that concept, then the rich man being consciously punished would be foreign concept to them. It is a given that the Sadducees did not, for they did not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits (Acts 23:8). If some did have a concept of eternal, conscious punishment, then it is only natural for hears of the rich man and Lazarus teaching to interpret that as a confirmation of that teaching.

Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians believed in a place called Aralu in Babylonian. It was an unpleasant, depressing place where everyone went after death and existed with a shadowy existence forever. Jewish literature that refers to conscious punishment for evildoers is Enoch 22:1-4 Two parts of Sheol, for righteous and unrighteous. After judgment, for the unrighteous pain and plague forever. The story of the rich man and Lazarus, with two parts and torment for the rich man, has similar theology as Enoch 22:1-4.
Other references to eternal punishment for the wicked:
Assumption of Moses 10:10
2 Esdras 7:36
Sons of the Maccabees when being burned to death "we will burn only for a little while, but you will burn for all eternity."
Judith 16:17 "fire and worms he will give to their flesh; they shall weep in pain for ever."
Psalms of Solomon 3:13
By the way, Jude apparently quoted from Enoch and the Assumption of Moses.

In Revelation chapters 14 through 18 God's wrath is pictured as an insanity-producing wine. Is Hell a place of insanity. Who knows if people are sane when they are thrown in, but it is hard to imagine them being sane after they are there.

First presented 9/4/2004

For more info contact www.BibleQuery.org