



## Essential Philosophy with Dr. David Schenk

### Lesson 12: Solution to the Problem of Evil

#### Outline:

##### Solutions to the Problem of Evil continued: *The Greater Good Argument*

- The Greater Good Argument claims that God is omnibenevolent even though he was unwilling to prevent all real evil. Furthermore, God is justified in allowing evil if that evil is needed by God to achieve *a greater good* or for the ultimate perfection of God's creation.
- A major issue of the Greater Good Argument: *People have trouble imagining how it is possible for a truly great good to require genuine evil.*
- **Example 1:** Cherry Garcia Ice Cream (3:30)
  - Ice Cream
    - More cream and churning
    - Milk and cream from fully-pastured Vermont cows
    - 10/10, a perfect ice cream
  - Chocolate
    - Rich cocoa, perfect chocolate
    - 10/10
  - Cherries
    - Real, honest, dark Vermont cherries
    - Not everyone likes cherries, so they get a 6/10
  - Average score of 26/30
    - Cherry Garcia's value as a whole is better than its separate parts.
- **Example 2:** David's Indian Curry Ice Cream (12:05)
  - Ice cream 10/10
  - Chocolate 10/10
  - Punjabi Curry (HOT) 10/10
  - Sam Smith Nut Brown Ale 10/10
  - Average score of 40/40, so what is wrong with this?
    - The ingredients might be fabulous by themselves, but not for an ice cream!
    - The real value of a recipe is in how the parts fit together.

##### Theodicies of the Greater Good Argument (17:40)

- While the Greater Good Argument shows that the existence of a perfect God is logically compatible with the existence of real evil, *it does not show why God would allow such evil.* Theodicies offer plausible explanations for what greater goods might justify God allowing evil.



- **Theodicy:** the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil

## **Greater Good Theodicy #1: Free Will Defense (FWD)**

*How can Free Will justify the evils we see in this world?*

### Reality of Love (20:30)

God is love itself. But for love to be real, it cannot be compelled. Therefore, God wants our love freely and gives us free will to choose loving him.

**Example:** Parents want their children to love them for the right reasons (rather than a love-inducing micro-chip installed in the children's minds)!

### Reality of Moral Responsibility (24:45)

Without free will, there would be no moral responsibility.

Immanuel Kant said, "Ought implies can." If we ought to choose right or wrong, then we have the moral power to choose right or wrong. That choice must be our own, or we do not have free will.

### Increase Goodness of Creation (26:28)

Why did God create the cosmos at all? He was not compelled to create, nor did he need to create, so why?

- **God created the cosmos to increase goodness and to increase joy.** In doing so, God increased his own nature by reflecting it through his creation. **God put his own traits of Free Will and creation into his children.**

See C. S. Lewis' *Surprised by Joy*—Joy is not always fun; joy can hurt us. We feel joy, for example, when we look at a vast mountain range and feel small in comparison. The mountain's aesthetic beauty hurts us, but it is good.