



Essential Philosophy with Dr. David Schenk

Lesson 13: Theodicies for the Greater Good Argument

Outline:

Theodicies for the Greater Good Argument:

- Free Will Defense (FWD) Theodicy (see Lecture 12)
- Virtue Theodicy
- Connection-Building Theodicy
- **Problem:** While the FWD is a theodicy for the Greater Good Argument, it does not explain why God allows natural evil. The Virtue and Connection-Building Theodicies tackle natural evil as well as moral evil.

Virtue Theodicy (4:00)

- Humility (the opposite of pride)
 - For humility to be possible, humans must lose sight of their own egotistical selves. To do this, something has to lower their pride and egos.
- Compassion (the Incarnation story)
 - It is logically impossible for people to act with compassion in a universe with no pain and suffering (due to moral evil or natural evil). We can be compassionate in a world with suffering.
- Generosity
 - It is impossible to have generosity in a world without deprivation. Deprivation and need do not exist because God thinks it is good for things to suffer— deprivation and need serve as an inspiration for charity.
- Patience (8:48)
 - Patience allows humans to develop morals. We cannot develop patience without issues that test our patience.
- Fortitude
 - Fortitude involves strength of character, perseverance, and will power. We cannot build fortitude without experiences that require fortitude (including moral evil or natural evil).
- **Reading:** For more information on the Virtue Theodicy, moral evil, and natural evil, read Richard Swinburne's "Why God Allows Evil," available online.



Connection-Building Theodicy (11:15)

- The Connection-Building Theodicy builds on the Virtue Theodicy; it was developed by Robin Collins, a philosophy professor at Messiah College.
- The Connection-Building Theodicy recognizes that there are greater goods that exist as relationships or connections between people. These are not individual virtues that people might have, such as humility or generosity. Rather, they are morally redeeming relationships we have and maintain with others that justify and redeem the natural evil that exists in the world.
- Examples:
 - Gratitude
 - Trust
 - Bonds of Affection
 - Needing each other

Review:

- The three theodicies - Free Will Theodicy, Virtue Theodicy, and Connection-Building Theodicy - explain the bulk of evil we are familiar with in our world.
- Free will, developing virtues, and relationships are the greater goods that justify evil and suffering.