



The Problem of Evil with Dr. David Schenk

Lesson 4: Standard Responses: Free Will Defense

Outline:

Theodicies underneath the Greater Good Argument

- A theodicy doesn't mean that someone explains all evil away.
- A theodicy is any attempt imaginatively to figure out what the Greater Good God has in mind for evil.

Free Will Defense (F.W.D.)

- For at least some of the evil that we see in the world (the evil due to human agency), the Greater Good is our morally and aesthetically significant free will (our autonomy to choose right or wrong, goodness or evil, beauty or ugliness, truth or lies).
- Our autonomy is such a redeeming good that God is justified in permitting our corruption.
- If He stopped all the evil, we couldn't have genuine free will if none of the consequences of our choices ever came to us.
- Questions:
 - What makes free will so important that God would allow such evil into the world? How is God justified in allowing evil for the sake of free will?
 - **Real responsibility requires real freedom.** In order to have genuine moral responsibility there has to be genuine autonomy (genuine self-governing power in our choices in our actions).
 - Hume said, "Ought implies can." Any real moral burden presupposes real moral power.
 - **Real love requires real freedom.** You want your children to do as they're told, but you would never want them to do it because they have no capacity to think for themselves anymore.
 - In order for love to be real, it cannot be compelled or forced.
 - **Why does God create?** He was not bored, lonely, or needy. His act of creation cannot be compelled and is not whimsical. C.S. Lewis answers: **God created in order to increase joy.** Joy is good, so He wanted to make more of it (to increase its scope and its intensity). God also created to increase goodness and beauty.
 - All goodness, all beauty, all truth stems from God and points back to Him. God puts creatures capable of knowledge into the



Cosmos in order to reflect in some finite way His perfect knowledge.

- God is utterly free regarding creation, nothing can constrain him. God himself has libertarian free will.
- God's autonomy is one of the beautiful things about him.
- God gives us our limited finite human autonomy, as a way of mirroring (imperfectly) his absolute autonomy because this increases goodness.
- **Real freedom increases goodness.**