

# Does God ~~not~~ Exist?

## The Problem of Suffering

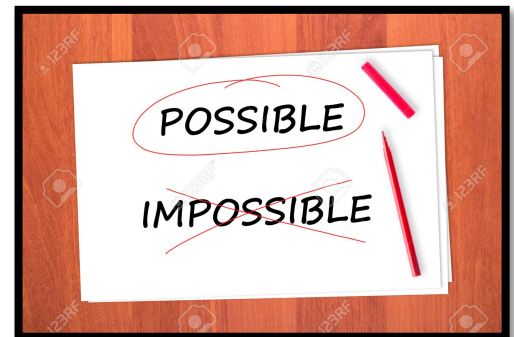
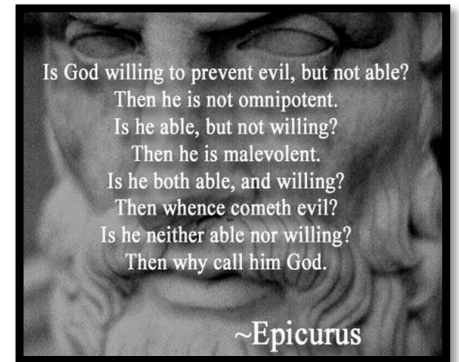
Video: "Problem of Evil" (Alvin Plantinga)

### THEODICY VS. DEFENSE

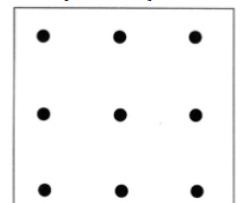
*Step 1: Either God cannot exist if suffering exists and/or it is very unlikely God exists if God exists.*

1. Answering this problem may not necessarily cure our curiosity. We may never know until heaven why PARTICULAR suffering occur. But, we can still overcome the objection that God cannot/probably does not exist based on suffering.
2. There are 3 versions of the problem of suffering: logical version, probable version, and the emotional version.
3. Logical version: it is impossible for an all good, powerful, and knowing God to exist if suffering exists
  - a. It's impossible because if God is all good a world without suffering is always preferable, if God is all powerful, he is able to create a world without suffering, and if God is all knowing, he is aware of it and foresees it.
  - b. Response (incorrect response): God is either not all good, knowing, and/or powerful
  - c. Response (correct response): God is all good, powerful, loving BUT...

God DOES foresee suffering  
God does NOT always prefer a world without suffering: some MIGHT be justifiable (e.g. character building, natural consequences, afterlife rewards, etc.)  
God CANNOT create any world he desires: worlds with free creatures MIGHT always contain suffering
4. Probable version: it is not impossible, but it *appears unlikely*, that an all good, powerful, and knowing God exists if evil exists
  - a. It's unlikely given the amount and kinds of suffering that God exists
  - b. RESPONSES
    - i. Even if it is likely, it is only likely if all other arguments for God fail
    - ii. Evil might be necessary for some purpose, e.g. **FREEDOM** (God must allow it for SOME reason)
    - iii. How could we possibly know evil is completely unnecessary?
5. Emotional version: God's existence is undesirable if evil (esp. certain kinds of evil) exists.
  - a. RESPONSE: counseling, Biblical meditation, all the steps to dealing with emotional/volitional doubt (Gary Habermas, Dealing with Doubt)
6. Sources of suffering: human free will and natural evil (earthquakes, tidal waves, tornadoes, etc.)



The Dot Puzzle: what appears impossible is possible



Draw 4 lines without lifting your pen, connecting all the dots.

### *Step #2: Suffering exists*

Sometimes a person (either a Christian or non-Christian) gets to this step and denies the existence of suffering.

1. Without suffering we have no need for God.
2. Without suffering (as evil) there is no need for the cross since there is no sin.
3. Without suffering (for the atheist) the problem of evil disappears!

*Therefore, God does not, or probably does not, exist.*