

Neighborly Apologetics

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Neighborly Apologetics

The Problem of Evil & Suffering, Part 2

A Neighborly Apologetics Perspective

(Thumbnail Sketch from Del Tackett's Webinar, [March 7, 2023](#))

In the second session of Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar, titled "The Problem of Evil and Suffering, Part 2," originally held on March 7, 2023, and facilitated by Marc Fey, Tackett delves deeper into one of the most challenging questions facing believers and non-believers alike: why does evil and suffering exist in a world created by a good God? This webinar builds on the first part, emphasizing a "neighborly" approach to apologetics—rooted in loving one's neighbor through genuine relationships, prayer, and gentle discourse—rather than purely academic debates. Drawing from Scripture, personal anecdotes, and cultural critiques, Tackett equips participants to engage thoughtfully with those grappling with pain, fostering empathy while pointing to biblical truths.

The session opens with Tackett sharing his screen and welcoming attendees, noting the topic's vastness could span multiple sessions. He recounts a recent trip to North Pole, Alaska, with Marc Fey for an Engagement Project training conference, enduring minus 34-degree weather but marveling at the gorgeous scenery, including a glacier photo from the plane. This segues into promoting the premiere of "The Rise of Mountains," a sequel to "Is Genesis History?" set for Nashville and streaming release by late March. Transitioning to the core content, Tackett reviews neighborly apologetics as grounded in the Royal Law: loving one's neighbor with God's steadfast, sacrificial zeal for their true good. This drove early Christianity's spread and inspires the Engagement Project to empower ordinary families in kingdom work.

Framing the discussion with three key verses—1 Peter 3:15 (defend hope with gentleness), Colossians 4:5–6 (wise conduct and gracious speech), and 2 Timothy 2:24–26 (gentle instruction hoping for God-granted repentance)—Tackett confesses his past agenda-driven approach lacked wisdom. He stresses discerning neighbors' beliefs: believer or non-believer, open or closed to God, solid biblical worldview or not. For the latter, he recommends The Truth Project and Engagement Project. In today's culture, deep relationships built through prayer are essential, leading to worldview questions as seen in Dr. Rosaria Butterfield's story and "I Once Was Lost." Tackett distinguishes academic apologetics (valuable but not leading) from neighborly, which starts with trust and shares truth when questions arise.

Reviewing the three forms of the problem of evil: logical (Epicurus' argument against God's omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence), evidential (horrific evil suggests no caring God), and personal (where was God in my suffering?). The personal is most common, requiring empathy, not agendas. Tackett urges preparation: recognize the fallen world yields natural and moral evil; God's unchanging righteousness, holiness, justice, mercy, compassion, love, and goodness; and future restoration without pain. Evil is contrary to God's design; it stems from rebellion, resolved through

Christ's atonement and restoration. Resources like The Truth Project's anthropology and ethics tours aid family preparation.

Tackett critiques non-biblical (naturalistic) worldviews, pervasive in culture, for their dilemmas. In naturalism (e.g., Carl Sagan's cosmos of matter and energy), Dr. William Provine's logic yields no gods, free will, afterlife, meaning, or ethical foundation—actions are amoral. This contradicts labeling anything evil, as evolution deems strong-over-weak "good." Many hold this without grasping implications, leading to hopelessness. Western civilization increasingly defines evil via "homo Deus" selfishness: hearts dictate truth, "might makes right," personal pronouns as divine edicts, dissent as blasphemy.

On evil's origin, naturalism views man as basically good or amoral (Rousseau, Maslow, Rogers)—evil from culture or institutions, not inherent. This shifts blame from personal sin to systems, evident in modern responses to evil. Natural solutions: self-actualization, fulfilling desires against oppressive institutions like the church's absolutes. Tackett contrasts this with biblical wisdom, urging prayerful engagement to reveal contradictions, as only God opens eyes in a depraved culture.

Shifting to suffering—evil's result—Tackett explores the Book of Job. Job, blameless yet losing everything, suffers boils; his three friends "comfort" by accusing sin as cause, promising blessings via repentance. Job insists innocence, questioning God's justice. Cycles of lectures and responses ensue; friends speak partial truths but misapply, earning God's rebuke. Job speaks from misery, needing discernment. Elihu wisely summarizes without rebuke. God listens as El Roi (the God Who sees), present despite feelings of abandonment.

The faulty premise: suffering equals personal sin; righteousness guarantees physical blessings (echoed in prosperity gospel). Job's case: blameless but in Satan's affliction, part of a larger story. Jesus rejects this in Luke 13 (Galileans, Siloam tower) and John 9 (blind man for God's glory). Suffering sources: personal/others' poor choices, natural/moral evil, or God's sovereign story. Believers glorify God amid unexplained pain, as entitlement fuels complaints.

Christ exemplifies: Isaiah 53's suffering servant bore our pain. Romans 8: share sufferings for glory. Romans 5: glory in sufferings producing perseverance. 1 Peter 4: trials test faith; suffer righteously, blessed. In persecution (e.g., baker Jack Phillips), praise God. Scripture ties suffering to resurrection: Mark 8, Luke 24, Acts 17/26—Messiah suffers and rises. 1 Corinthians 15: resurrection swallows death, perishable clothed imperishable, ending suffering.

Tackett previews Easter-timed sessions on resurrection claims, referencing his 40 articles. Marc Fey handles logistics: recording/slides emailed, past webinars at delttackett.com. Tackett prays thanks for Job's insights, urging glorification amid suffering for God's glory.

This webinar equips for neighborly apologetics: empathy, discernment, biblical truths against naturalistic flaws, and hope in resurrection. In a suffering world, relationships reveal God's goodness, pointing to ultimate restoration.

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Neighborly Apologetics:

The Problem of Evil and Suffering, Part 2

A Neighborly Approach - (Insights from Del Tackett's [March 7, 2023](#) Webinar)

In the second session of Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar ("The Problem of Evil and Suffering, Part 2," March 7, 2023), Tackett explores one of Christianity's toughest questions: why does evil and suffering persist in a world governed by a good, all-powerful God? Facilitated by Marc Fey, the session promotes "neighborly apologetics"—engaging others through deep, prayerful relationships rather than academic arguments. Rooted in the Royal Law (loving one's neighbor with God's sacrificial zeal), this approach fueled early church growth and empowers ordinary families via the Engagement Project.

Tackett frames the discussion with three Scriptures: 1 Peter 3:15 (defend hope gently), Colossians 4:5–6 (wise, gracious speech), and 2 Timothy 2:24–26 (gentle instruction awaiting God-granted repentance). He stresses discernment—identifying if neighbors are believers/non-believers, open/closed to God, or lack a solid biblical worldview—while building trust so questions naturally arise.

The problem of evil appears in three forms: logical (Epicurus: God cannot be omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent if evil exists), evidential (horrific suffering suggests no caring God), and personal (most common: "Where was God in my pain?"). Tackett urges empathy first, especially for personal suffering.

From a biblical view, we inhabit a fallen world yielding natural and moral evil. God remains unchanging—righteous, holy, just, merciful, loving—and promises ultimate restoration without pain. Evil defies God's design, arising from rebellion, and finds resolution in Christ's atonement and future renewal.

Tackett critiques naturalistic worldviews (pervasive today): no ultimate ethics, free will, or meaning; actions are amoral. Yet people label things "evil," creating contradictions—evolution celebrates strength over weakness, while culture blames systems, not personal sin. Natural solutions center on self-actualization against "oppressive" institutions like the church.

Turning to suffering, Tackett examines Job: blameless yet afflicted, his friends wrongly assume sin causes pain and repentance brings blessings (a faulty premise echoed in some prosperity teachings). Jesus rejects this link (Luke 13; John 9). Suffering stems from personal/others' choices, natural evil, or God's larger sovereign story. Believers glorify God amid trials, sharing Christ's sufferings for future glory (Romans 8; 1 Peter 4).

Ultimately, the answer lies in Christ's resurrection—suffering leads to victory over death (1 Corinthians 15). Tackett previews resurrection-focused sessions and closes in prayer for glorifying God in pain.

This webinar equips believers to respond with empathy, wisdom, and hope, turning suffering into opportunities to reveal God's goodness.

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