

# Neighborly Apologetics

Dr. Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics Webinar Series

## **26-0225wc - Neighborly Apologetics, Foundations-Basics, Dr. Del Tackett**

This detailed summary by Grok / X, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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## Neighborly Apologetics Transcript

### **26-0225-Transcript: 1 - Foundations, Basics (0:04 - 1:03:45)**

**Facilitator:** Scott Reynolds

(0:04) Okay, a quick welcome again to everybody. We've got folks joining here literally in real time.

(0:10) There's Dr. Tackett.

We are thankful that you're here tonight. All right, we're at the top of the (0:17) hour, Dr. Tackett. You're ready to get started, shall we? Let's do that.

Go ahead and pray, (0:23) Mark, and we'll go. All right, let me say a quick word of prayer. Father, thank you for this (0:28) opportunity to come under your word, Lord, and submit our lives.

Pray your blessing (0:34) upon Dr. Tackett's teaching. Give us ears to hear and, Lord, that we would all have hearts to obey. (0:41) Lord, that great glory would come to you.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, thank you, Mark.

(0:48) I appreciate it very much. I'm going to move over here and share my screen. We've got slides again (0:53) for you to look at, and hopefully all of this works seamlessly.

But again, let me thank you (1:01) for taking your time out of a busy schedule, no doubt, to be here this evening. We're going to (1:08) be going through the first of our list, the category that we showed you last time, the (1:16) categories of neighborly apologetics. This is number one on the list, and a lot of you said (1:24) that you wanted to start there, so I think we're just going to go through them serially, (1:29) and so we'll start with this.

Hey, Dr. Tackett, you do have a build window on your screen right (1:36) now. I do? Okay. You don't want to click out of that.

Get rid of that? All right, let's try that (1:52) again. Okay, thank you, Mark. How's that? It looks good.

Okay, great. So there's a good chance that (2:02) tonight there's no way we're going to get through

all of this. The Problem of Evil is extensive.

(2:10) I put part one here because I just have a sense that there's no way we'll get through everything (2:16) that we need to. Tonight is going to be more or less the thumbnail sketch of what this is (2:24) and a little bit of how we need to respond to it. My personal opinion is this, and we will (2:31) mention this a little bit more later, but when we come to this issue of the Problem of Evil and (2:38) Suffering, and I want to be careful how I say this, but listen carefully to it, and that is that this (2:45) Problem of Evil and Suffering is really not a problem for a biblical worldview.

(2:52) It is also a deep problem, so it's the easiest to handle and it's the most difficult to handle. (3:01) The easiest part to handle in this is the logical part, the issue associated with the reality of (3:09) what evil is and so forth. Intellectually, it's the easiest thing to handle, but it is also the (3:18) most difficult thing to handle.

The reason is because most times when people are struggling (3:25) with what we would label the Problem of Evil and Suffering is because there has been evil and (3:32) suffering that has dramatically impacted their life or indirectly their life through a loved one (3:40) or someone else, and so we can deal with this apologetically in an easy way from the biblical (3:49) worldview perspective, but as you're dealing with this in your neighbor's lives, it's not easy, (3:57) and it's one that's going to require a lot of prayer and a lot of sympathy and so forth. We'll (4:05) deal with those things in just a minute. Okay, I am convinced that we have to, if we're going to (4:12) be doing this the way we need to be doing it, is that we need to... Let me give this another shot, (4:19) Mark.

Okay, we're not advancing here, Mark. Can you tell me why? Let's see. (4:28) You want to back out of the... There we go, and then... No, let's give it a shot.

I just (4:34) got it wrong. Okay, how's that? Okay, so pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. (4:44) We want to make sure, and we're going to do this a little short summary, and we're going to do it (4:53) before each of these neighborly apologetic areas.

It'll get shorter each time, but it's important (5:01) for us to recognize and understand what we're doing and why we're doing it and the difference (5:09) between academic apologetics and neighborly apologetics. So all of this is stemming from (5:18) the royal law is what we deal with in the engagement project. (5:23) The scripture tells us that the royal law is to love your neighbor.

Paul says the whole law is (5:28) fulfilled in this one thing, love your neighbor. Jesus, of course, said everything is summed up (5:36) in this love God and love your neighbor. We talked about this last time in terms of what (5:43) does this really mean? We've defined love this way, and we did this in the engagement project, (5:49) that love is not just simply some kind of an emotional thing.

It's not something that (5:55) enhanced with my own script, but true, agapeo love, true love is a steadfast sacrificial (6:06) zeal that seeks the true good, the shalom of another. The word plesion, the Greek word (6:15) plesion that we translate neighbor and in this commandment, love your neighbor, is the one who (6:20) lives near. So it means, what it means is that when Jesus said, look, everything boils down to this, (6:27) love God, and have a steadfast sacrificial zeal that seeks the true good of the one who (6:33) and will have providentially lives near you, because we believe that your neighbors are not (6:39) there by chance, you don't live where you live by chance, that Mrs. Smith lives across the street (6:45) from you because you live where you live.

And so we want to see our neighbors that way, (6:54) and such a way to recognize, I believe this is

kind of the theme of the engagement project, (7:00) is that God has entrusted the primary work. If this is the royal law, then he's entrusted the (7:06) primary work of the kingdom to the common Christian family. And that is what we are (7:12) praying and hoping God will stir up again, that vision in the people of God, and that we'll begin (7:18) to engage those who are providentially placed around us.

I think this is ground zero in the (7:25) work of the kingdom, and in our straw man vision, we pray and hope that Christian families (7:34) are going to begin to build those deep relationships with those who are providentially (7:40) in their Jerusalem, that they will be engaged with their family together in prayer and in action. (7:47) They'll act with grace and wisdom and truth, being attractively winsome in the spirit of God, (7:53) bearing that fruit in them that is attractive, (7:57) tearing down walls, building up trust, doing the work of the kingdom. (8:05) This is why we're doing a neighborly apologetics because in our engaging of those who (8:14) are providentially near us, we need to be able to make a defense.

So I lay before you (8:23) memory verses, and I'm asking for you to consider doing that, to memorize those and (8:30) have your family memorize those. By the basis for our engaging of Mr. Smith across the street, (8:38) number one from First Peter, in your heart's honor, Christ the Lord is holy, always been prepared (8:47) to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, (8:52) yet do it with gentleness and respect. The word that is translated defense, (8:59) they're making a defense is apologia, where we get apologetics from.

(9:06) Our second verse is from Colossians 4, conduct yourself with wisdom toward outsiders, (9:14) making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always, always be with grace, (9:20) as though seasoned with salt, so that you might know how to respond to each person. (9:27) And I confess to you that much of my Christian life did not follow this, (9:34) that my speech was not always with grace, it wasn't seasoned with salt, (9:39) it was laden with the sight of beef.

And I wasn't particularly interested in how to respond to each (9:47) person, I was basically interested in my agenda and think through what I wanted to say. (9:54) We reminded you last time also, when God tells us here to conduct ourselves with wisdom toward (10:01) outsiders, which I did not do, I conducted myself according to my agenda. Conduct yourself (10:09) with wisdom toward outsiders that reminded ourselves that godly wisdom is not primarily for (10:17) you.

Most of my life I always thought that wisdom was for me, and I used that wisdom primarily from (10:25) the standpoint of making myself feel smart or whatever. I wanted that wisdom from God to make (10:31) myself smart and so forth. But godly wisdom is not primarily for you.

That's what Solomon asked (10:40) for. He didn't ask for something for himself, he asked for that which would bless the people of (10:46) God. So we ask for wisdom from God in order that that wisdom will allow us to love them properly.

(10:59) So we need wisdom and we need discernment when we engage with people according to Colossians. (11:07) And this is the graph that we used last time. I'm going to show it to you tonight.

I'll show it to (11:12) you probably three or four more times because in our wisdom and discernment coming to people, (11:18) especially we talk now about this problem of evil and suffering, it is extremely important for us (11:25) to not treat everybody the same. That's what Colossians is telling us. How are we going to (11:31) respond to each person? We need wisdom and

first of all we need to recognize that fundamentally (11:37) there are two kinds of people in the world.

There are believers and there are non-believers, and we (11:41) need to approach people based upon where they are. And if they are a non-believer, we need to recognize (11:50) are they open to God? There are non-believers who are open to God. They're willing to talk about (11:56) God.

They may even have some sense of a belief in God. It's not in Christ and not in a biblical (12:02) worldview way, but they're open to that. And then there are other non-believers who are absolutely (12:07) closed to that.

You cannot deal with these two people, both non-believers, in the same way. You (12:15) just can't. We need wisdom in how we deal with them.

And then of course for a believer, we need (12:23) to recognize as well there are believers who will profess to believe, who will live near you as part (12:31) of your neighbors and people you interact with. And there will be some who have a strong biblical (12:36) worldview and there'll be others who don't have a good worldview at all. We do not do, and I don't (12:45) mean to be overly critical here, but I will tell you, we do not do a good job in the modern (12:53) Christian church of building a biblical worldview in the heart and mind of people.

So there are a (13:00) lot of people who have even no biblical worldview. They profess Christ, but they have no real biblical (13:07) worldview, or they have a very shallow biblical worldview, or they've got a distorted biblical (13:13) worldview. And again, I will remind you and encourage you that if you have people, (13:20) believers, your neighbors and others that you're engaging, that you find they profess Christ, but (13:26) they just don't have a biblical worldview, then take them through the Truth Project.

I think it's (13:32) a great way to build that biblical worldview, and after that then take them through the engagement. (13:38) For those who do have a biblical worldview, then I encourage you to get together with them in a (13:44) group and go through the engagement together. That's not promoting me, it's to simply try to (13:51) get the body of Christ to carry this vision that God has laid before us.

We have been entrusted (14:00) with this primary work of the kingdom to engage those who have been providentially placed (14:07) beside us. All of this, of course, is in the context of relationships, and we must view (14:16) our engagement with people as being through relationships, deep relationships that we're (14:23) going to build. That may take a long time, and we need to be patient in that because we don't have (14:29) an agenda when we come to engage our neighbors other than to love them and to build that deep (14:37) relationship with them.

That brings us then to, if you recall, our time last time speaking of (14:50) Rosaria Butterfield, Dr. Rosaria Champagne and Foy Smith had her over for dinner. She said 500 (15:23) meals with Ken and Foy Smith, and then that incredible (15:28) statement that she made about Ken, that Ken was wise to know that if you only share truth as deep (15:34) as our relationship could stand. Just an incredible statement of the wisdom (15:40) of Ken and Foy Smith as they engage with Rosaria, that they understood that they could not lead (15:49) with their apologetics.

They had to lead with that relationship.

That brings us into the (15:57) verse 3, the Lord's servant must gently, gently instruct his opponents in the hope that God will (16:03) grant them repentance. God is the one who will grant the repentance.

That is why we're going (16:08) to be praying and asking God to do that. That he then will lead them to a knowledge of the truth, (16:15) that they will come to their senses, escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive (16:22) to do his will. These are the verses that guide us and direct us here in (16:29) an upper neighborly apologetics.

And then one last thing to remind ourselves is that there (16:35) is a difference between academic apologetics and neighborly apologetics we're talking about here. (16:42) We need the academic apologetics. We will be drawing upon that tonight when we talk about (16:49) the problem of evil and suffering.

It is important. And I'm so thankful for those (16:55) who have gone before us, all the way back to Augustine, that have developed this biblical (17:03) worldview approach, the truth claims associated with these issues and problems that are raised (17:11) against Christianity and raised against God and so forth. And they lay that out in an academic way.

(17:17) But we need that academic apologetics in order for us to do neighborly apologetics, but we can't (17:27) lead with the academic apologetics. You know, maybe a hundred years ago we could have. We cannot (17:33) do that anymore.

We have to lead with these significant relationships. And I think biblically (17:39) speaking, in such a way that people will then begin to ask us for the reason. But we need to (17:45) be able to respond to those questions when they ask us.

And that means we need to be prepared (17:53) to do so. And that, of course, is why we're doing this series on neighborly apologetics. (18:01) And these were the categories that we looked at last time we left off with this.

(18:05) And these are the 12, yay, 13 plus, that we will work our way through. (18:15) Starting with evil and suffering, absolute truth or relativity or (18:22) relative truth, the notion that there's only one way, religious pluralism, faith and reason, (18:29) free will and sovereignty, God's existence, and his nature, which is huge because (18:37) how many people have I known who have a problem with some aspect of God's nature? (18:43) The goodness of man, we'll speak a little bit of that tonight. Judgment and hell, hypocrisy, (18:49) and Christian crimes of the past, the claims of Jesus, the resurrection, which is probably (18:54) the number one apology for us.

Do miracles exist? Science and evolution, the veracity of the Bible, (19:03) contradictions in the Bible, and then the burning issues of our day. (19:08) So tonight, we're going to start with this first one, evil and suffering. (19:15) It has three forms that I think are important for us to understand as we build a relationship (19:23) with someone, with Mrs. Smith, who lives across the street, who hates God.

I used the analogy (19:31) so much, but she hates God. She's bitter, and no one comes to see her because she's a bitter old (19:40) woman. But she hates God because her husband died a horrible death of cancer.

She prayed and asked (19:46) God to heal him. He didn't, and so now she's angry at God. She hates

God, and so she's dealing (19:55) with the problem of evil and suffering.

We need to recognize that as a family. How do we recognize (20:00) this and understand that this problem will come in three different forms and how to handle this (20:10) problem? The first is the old classical understanding of the logical argument (20:19) that is laid forth using evil and suffering as a reason to then say that God does not exist, (20:27) and it goes something like this. If God were omnipotent and omniscient, then he could prevent (20:33) evil.

If he were truly good and benevolent, he would want to prevent evil. Therefore, (20:39) since evil exists, God cannot exist. Or he certainly isn't omnipotent and omniscient.

He's (20:47) not good. He's not benevolent. So that is the logical argument, as you will find it listed in (20:53) most of the apologetic books.

The academic apologetics will be listed in some form or (21:01) another. This really goes all the way back to about 300 B.C. Epicurus laid this out, (21:10) this argument. He laid it out, and it really hasn't changed much for well over 2,000 years.

(21:17) It's the argument against the existence of God because of the existence of evil and suffering. (21:26) And so I'm going to offer to you the reality that my guess is it's possible you will never run into (21:34) a neighbor who is laying forth the logical argument of evil and suffering. You may, (21:43) and if you do, then it will be good to study those, and we'll have that available to you.

(21:49) The second one is the one you will most likely come across, (21:57) but even more so the third one. The second one is what is labeled as the (22:02) evidential argument. You don't need to remember these names.

It's just that the second one is (22:09) based upon the evidence that people see. And it is oftentimes listed and defined somehow like this, (22:18) and that is that because there's so much evil, horrific evil, everywhere in the world, (22:26) and there really isn't much evidence of God, a God who cares, we don't see God stopping any of this, (22:35) then it's hard to believe in God. It's hard to believe that God exists.

So this is the evidential (22:43) argument, and we do recognize when people are struggling in their belief of God because of (22:51) this, as opposed to the intellectual argument of number one. But there is, and you will see this, (23:02) by the way, and you'll see this everywhere. You'll see it over and over again.

You'll recognize it (23:08) now. You may be familiar with George Carlin, a famous comedian. He said, something is wrong here.

(23:20) War, disease, death, destruction, hunger, filth, poverty, torture, crime, (23:27) corruption, and the ice capades. Something is definitely wrong. This is not good work.

(23:35) If this is the best that God can do, I'm not impressed. Resumes like this do not belong, (23:43) or these do not belong on the resume of a supreme being. So what Mr. Carlin is expressing here, (23:52) even though he's doing it in his comedic style, is expressing this evidential form of the problem (24:01) of evil and suffering, and that is that you look around the world and you see all of this (24:07) horrible evil, and you say, like what he said, you know, is this the best God can do? God doesn't (24:15) seem to do anything about this, and I don't see much evidence for God, and I'm not

too sure I (24:23) believe in God.

So that's the evidential argument. I think most important is this third one, (24:30) the personal argument, and that is, just as it states, this is something deep and personal with (24:38) someone, you know, and it would be often, you might hear Mrs. Smith say this, you know, where (24:44) was God, you know, when my husband was dying? He could have stopped. He could have stopped it.

He (24:49) could have stopped the evil. He could have stopped the suffering. I asked him to, but he didn't, (24:55) and therefore I hate him, you know.

I'm angry at him. I've rejected him. I don't want him (25:03) in my life anymore.

I'm through with God or what, all the kinds of things that would be said. This (25:08) is most likely the most form, the most prevalent form of this problem of evil and suffering that (25:18) you'll come in contact with. Evil will be expressing some personal tragedy, the consequences (25:31) of evil and suffering that have affected them either directly or indirectly through loved ones (25:39) and so forth, and because of that, they have become angry with God, and in many cases, (25:47) they've rejected God.

I can't tell you how many people I have read of and I've personally engaged (25:55) who have walked away from God because of this personal argument regarding evil and suffering. (26:04) So, it is a real issue. It's a real problem, and we need to know how to deal with it, (26:13) but we're not going to deal with it primarily from the academic perspective.

Remember, (26:20) we're going to deal with this as far as a neighbor is concerned, a friend of ours (26:28) is concerned. We're going to build a relationship with them, and though we're going to lead with (26:34) sympathy and empathy, therefore we're not going to lead with, well, here is the reason why you're (26:41) wrong and so forth, the way I used to do this, unfortunately, but we're going to be asking (26:48) questions about, tell me, Ms. Smith, tell me about what happened. I want to know, and we weep with her (26:56) as we hear her describe the circumstances that have brought about that personal worldview she (27:04) now has about life and in particular about God as a result of evil and suffering being in her life.

(27:18) Well, the first thing we need to do is to prepare ourselves, and now that we were talking (27:25) here about neighbor apologetics, about how do we engage with Mrs. Smith, (27:30) but we'll also need to make sure that we have a good solid foundation on this issue. So (27:38) we need to prepare ourselves, and I would say we need to prepare our family. (27:42) So if our family is beginning to build the relationship with Mrs. Smith, and all of a (27:46) sudden we begin to realize this is what she's struggling with, and maybe at the outset, (27:52) we as a family begin to say, you know, what Mrs. Smith is struggling with is what's called (27:56) the problem of evil, and so we need to prepare ourselves, first of all, so that we understand, (28:03) you know, how does one who believes in Christ, believes in the Word of God, has a biblical (28:11) worldview, how do we understand this issue first, ourself, in our own mind, in our own heart, (28:19) and so we have to look at that from a biblical worldview first, in ourself, and prepare ourself, (28:24) because there's no way we're going to be able to help Mrs. Smith if we don't have a good handle (28:33) on how God has answered that question for ourselves, and so I almost apologize here.

(28:41) What we're going to do tonight is almost a thumbnail sketch, and no doubt my guess is that (28:47) you will have other things you can add to the list that I'm going to put up here, and (28:54)

hooray. I'm glad that you can do that, but for us tonight, we're going to simply look at this in a (29:02) very simple, straightforward thumbnail sketch form, but I gave you three fundamental truth claims (29:13) that God has given to us. He has given to his people, those who profess Christ, those who (29:20) believe that God has spoken to us, he's given to us his Word and his truth.

We see it in the (29:26) world around us. We see it primarily in the special revelation of the Word he's given to us. (29:30) We see it in Christ himself.

We see it in the character and nature of God, (29:36) and these three fundamental truth claims, I would submit to you, are sufficient for us to answer (29:45) the issue of evil and suffering. It doesn't mean it allows us to feel good about it. It doesn't mean (29:52) it allows us to instantly make Mrs. Smith well.

It means that from God's truth, (30:00) we can answer this question, and that's why I said that for us, the problem of evil is easy (30:09) mentally. It's not easy for those who do not believe in God, and we'll talk about that in (30:14) just a minute, but number one, first of all, and it's extremely important for us to recognize, (30:21) when we come to the issue of evil and suffering, we have to recognize and understand we live in (30:28) a fallen world, and man has a fallen nature. This is the sort of all the evil and suffering (30:37) that we see around us.

This is a picture, if you recall a number of years ago, that (30:45) horrible, horrible tsunami that hit Japan, and just a horrific destruction that took place there, (30:54) and now, of course, we are reminded of this 7.8 earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria just (31:04) not more than a day or so ago, and the thousands of people that have lost their lives, (31:10) and the horror associated with that, and people buried, and so forth. We call this natural evil, (31:18) and it's right to call it that, because we see this natural form of evil that presses upon us (31:28) in these catastrophic events that we see. We see it in ourselves.

It's called natural evil. (31:36) They call it growing old, and the infirmities that come from that. If you've never been close (31:46) to a loved one who has suffered from deep dementia and other mental incapacities, and so (31:55) forth, it's a horrible, horrible thing.

Those are all, in many cases, I'm not talking about some (32:03) where physical problems were caused by other problems, and so forth. We're talking about the (32:08) natural weight and pull of a world that has fallen, and the world around us that brings this (32:19) natural evil, but even more troubling is the moral evil that we see all around the world that (32:29) that is imposed upon humanity because of the evil nature of man himself, (32:36) and we saw this evil in Memphis not too long ago, and how difficult it is to even imagine (32:45) that people have that kind of evil in them that would inflict horrible things upon another (32:53) human being. So the reality of evil and suffering is ubiquitous.

It's everywhere around us, (33:02) and in some cases there are catastrophic natural events that occur that bring this to mind, (33:07) and in some cases there are horrible, horrible events where man himself proves to be unspeakably (33:15) evil towards other people, and therefore that evil brings about horrible suffering in their lives. (33:23) God speaks of this to us when he says that the creation waits in eager expectation. (33:31) See, the world fell.

The whole world fell, and when it fell, it wasn't just man that fell. The (33:39) entire creation fell. Now everything pulls us towards death and destruction, and God tells (33:47) us in his word that

even the creation was subjected to frustration and hope, and we'll (33:54) talk later about the hope that lays before us, but the hope that all of that will be liberated, (34:01) bodies to decay, and the creation groans, and we ourselves groan inwardly.

We groan inwardly, (34:10) even when we're not directly affected by the evil that we see around us. We groan inwardly when we (34:17) see the suffering of people and the people around us and sometimes even close to us and even (34:25) ourselves. So we live in a fallen world, and man has a fallen nature.

It's one of the key (34:33) truth claims that we understand because God has told us why we're in the situation that we're in, (34:41) and we need to remember that truth claim from God. And second of all, and it could have been the (34:48) first, these aren't in order of priority here, but number two is who God is and the reality of who (34:58) God is. Evil and suffering, this problem is going to drive people away from the truth of who God is, (35:07) and they're going to conjure up in their minds that God is evil, and I will remind you that (35:14) nothing is new under the sun.

If we go back to the Garden of Eden, we will find that in the (35:28) was not good, that God was oppressing her. God was keeping her from good things. He was not a good (35:37) God.

He was an oppressive God and all of those things. And so evil and the evil one and the (35:45) world of flesh around us, our fallen nature itself will pull us away from a proper understanding of (35:54) who God is. It will attempt to distort who he is, twist who he is, and so we need to rest upon (36:03) the reality and the truth of who God is.

I've listed a few of his attributes there. We could (36:10) list a ton of them, but these are ones that are relevant to this issue of evil and suffering, (36:18) that God is righteous. He is holy, and we'll speak of this in a minute.

Without those aspects of God's (36:25) nature, we have no basis for even understanding or calling anything evil. He is righteous, (36:32) and because he's righteous, because he is holy, we have an understanding then of what is evil. (36:38) He is just, and he will bring about justice in the end.

Oftentimes, I know it hits me over and (36:48) over again how even the Psalmist cried about this, that it appeared like the evil prospered, (36:56) and wanting God to bring justice. He will bring justice. No evil will not be accounted for.

No (37:04) evil will go without justice, and for those of us who are in Christ, we should rejoice constantly (37:12) before the Lord. That justice that was due to us has been taken by Christ for us. He bore all of (37:21) it.

He bore that for us, but God is just, and he will bring justice, and he is merciful. He's (37:29) compassionate. He's loving, and he's good, and he is good always.

He is immutable. He doesn't change. (37:38) He doesn't wake up on the wrong side of the bed today and throw a tornado into your path.

(37:49) He doesn't look at your life and say, you know, how many times have you done this over and over (37:54) again, and then send some wasting disease into your life. God is not that way. He is unchanging.

(38:05) He is just, and he is holy, and he's righteous, but he has shown his compassion and his love (38:13) toward us through Christ, and so these are the truth claims associated with who man is, what the (38:20) truth about it, the world around us, the truth about man, the truth about God, (38:26) and then the third one, well, before I do that, I have this verse from Job just because sometimes (38:34) when we come to this issue of evil and suffering, it is so easy for us to get on our high horse. (38:41) It's so easy for us to accuse God and blame God and get angry at God, and why didn't you, (38:46) and why won't you, as if we are the ones who are in charge, and we're the ones who know. (38:53) We know what's good, and he doesn't, and so forth.

I just thought this verse from Job is just so (39:00) appropriate at this point in terms of how we realize just who God is and who we are. (39:05) Then Job replied to the Lord, I know that you can do anything, but no plan of yours can be thwarted. (39:13) You asked, who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance? Surely I spoke about things I did (39:20) not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

You said, listen, now, and I will speak. (39:27) When I question you, you will inform me. I have heard rumors about you, but now my eyes have (39:32) seen you.

Therefore, I take back my words and repent and dust and ashes, and oftentimes we need (39:40) to be reminded that, you know, God is everything that he says he is, and we are not. (39:48) We are not him. We are not smarter than he is.

We don't know better than he does. (39:53) Our plans aren't better than his plans, and so this third one is also important for us because (40:01) it is the hope that lays before us in the midst of living in a world of evil and suffering, (40:10) and that is that God will, in this proper time, restore all things and there will be no more evil, (40:19) and in that restoration of all things, the end of all things, God will bring justice. (40:25) And of course, in the midst of all of this, and we'll speak of this shortly, (40:32) is the reality of what Christ has done for us.

We will look at that when we look at the solution (40:38) for evil in just a second. So we read this in Romans 5, (40:44) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus (40:49) Christ. Through him we have also obtained faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in (40:55) the hope of God, not only that we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces (41:03) endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us (41:09) to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been (41:14) given to us.

This is part of our hope that God will one day bring all of this to an end, and so (41:26) therefore, even in the trials and travails of what we're going through here, that God has given us (41:37) hope, and all of these things are brought about by the result of God's good plan. (41:46) Well, the biblical worldview gives us a solid basis then to answer the problem of evil and (41:53) suffering. I told you that I think it's an easy answer the biblical world gives for us.

I apologize (42:01) as this seems too simplistic. I'm not writing these things out for you in an academic form. (42:08) I'm writing them out for us in terms of our families for a neighborly apologetic approach, (42:15) but here are three questions that would form, to some extent, the questions that come as a result (42:24) of the problem of evil and suffering.

There are probably a hundred more, but these are the three (42:31) I want to do with tonight, and

fundamentally, what is evil? Where does evil come from, (42:37) and what is the solution for evil and suffering? And I would submit to you (42:43) that a biblical worldview that God gives to us gives us solid answers to these questions, (42:52) and they seem simplistic, but I think the answer is simple. What is evil? Well, evil is anything (43:00) that is contrary to God's design and His order. Anything that's contrary to God's design and (43:07) order.

We may think, well, wait a second. Just eating a fruit from a tree doesn't seem evil, (43:17) but look at when we acted contrary to God's design and contrary to God's order, the evil that (43:26) came upon the world, the universe, and mankind in particular. Honestly, folks, we live in a day (43:34) and a time where evil is so minimized, true evil is so minimized, that we somehow think that these (43:45) things that are now okay in our culture can't be labeled evil.

In God's eyes, they are, (43:55) and they bring about suffering. So, the second, where does evil come from? Well, (44:00) that's also simple as well. Evil comes from, it results from rebelling against God's design (44:07) and order.

When we rebel against God's design and order, that is when evil arises, (44:18) and that evil brings forth suffering and all of the pain and anguish that we see in the world (44:26) around us, originally from Adam and Eve's sin. Well, what is the solution to evil and suffering? (44:36) And all of that rests, the solution is in Christ's atonement and God's justice and the restoration of (44:46) all things. If we spend another time on this, we will deal with these in more detail, (44:57) but I lay these out for you to recognize and understand that the biblical worldview that (45:02) God has given to us and the truth that God has given to us provides a simple answer to (45:06) these questions, and it would become more clear when we look at the dilemma here that exists for (45:13) those who do not have a biblical worldview or reject a biblical worldview or reject the notion (45:19) of God's existence and so forth, because, and this is what I mentioned in the beginning, that (45:24) the problem of evil is not a problem for us.

The problem of evil is for those who stand on (45:32) the other side of believing in God and believing in a biblical worldview, because when we come to (45:38) the fundamental issue of what is evil, recognize and understand that if you have a naturalistic (45:48) worldview, then you have a deep, deep problem of trying to define what evil is. In the Truth (45:56) Project, we played a clip from Dr. William Provine, and he was an evolutionary biologist and (46:07) naturalism was his philosophy, and he agreed that if the world is simply a natural world, (46:22) and evolution explains the rise of living creatures and the diversity and so forth, (46:28) then there is no ultimate foundation for ethics, and he openly declared that. There is no ultimate (46:35) foundation for ethics, because in reality, and I think that's the second bullet here, in naturalism, (46:40) all actions have to be amoral.

Every action, the natural world, is viewed as a series of causes (46:49) and effects. You and I are material machines, and those material machines are reacting to stimuli. (46:59) So, stimuli causes a response in us, and every action is a natural action.

(47:08) It can't be an unnatural action, because where would an unnatural action come from (47:14) when a world is defined by nothing but natural? There is nothing, we have a little box that I used (47:21) in the Truth Project, Cosmic Cube, that there is nothing outside of that box. There is no God, (47:27) there is no supernatural, everything exists in that box, and everything is a natural process (47:35) of cause and effect, stimuli and response, and that is why Dr. Provine then said there is no (47:43) ultimate foundation for ethics. In other words, there is no ultimate foundation for calling

(47:47) anything right or wrong, good or evil.

In fact, if one holds to the evolutionary theory, (47:57) that everything has arisen as a result of this long process of the stronger destroying the weaker, (48:08) and doing away with the weaker was the right way for evolution to bring us upward in this (48:18) chain of higher and higher progression of more and more complex things and so forth, (48:24) then one would have to argue that the destroying of the weak is actually a good thing. But evil, (48:31) if you try to define evil from that worldview perspective, it's extremely difficult. The only (48:37) way you can define evil is if you do it in a pragmatic way.

In other words, for example, (48:45) you might say, well, people can have different opinions on whether it's good to kill babies (48:55) or it's wrong to kill babies simply from a pragmatic perspective. So one might argue, (49:00) well, it's good to kill babies if you can't provide for them, if you can't feed for them, (49:05) if you have other more important things in your life that you want to get on with and so forth (49:11) that will allow you to self-actualize and all that kind of stuff. You could define that (49:18) pragmatically that it is good to kill babies.

Somebody else would say, no, it's bad to kill (49:23) babies because the babies will eventually be able to support you in your old age and so forth. So (49:28) there may be some pragmatic discussion associated with right and wrong, but it's not an absolute (49:34) moral ethic. It's a pragmatic position that one takes.

So if you do not have a theistic view, (49:46) if you have a non-theistic view of the world, the problem of evil becomes extremely difficult (49:55) because one would be subject, first of all, to the question, how can you call anything (50:00) evil? If you say there's a problem of evil, if you talk about the logical argument for evil (50:07) and say that God then therefore doesn't exist, then you say, well, how can you even call anything (50:11) evil? Because everything is a natural action. Nothing can be labeled as good or bad, evil (50:19) or wrong. And so in naturalism, all actions have to be amoral.

So I thought I would at least (50:27) mention the Western civilization in our day. Evil is, in addition to these things, (50:37) also defined by an amalgamation of homo deus. This is the progressive form of the self-centeredness (50:47) in Western civilization that has arrived at a position that the individual can speak as a divine (50:58) agent.

In other words, the individual has the right to speak in divine terms associated with (51:06) what is good and what is bad. And so I've used this example before, but if I declare that I'm a (51:13) woman, that is to be viewed as a divine proclamation and everyone has to bow down to that. (51:21) If you disagree with that, then you will be considered to be a blasphemer, (51:27) speaking as the divine proclamations of the homo deus heart.

And so evil is being defined now (51:40) by the homo deus, that divine heart speaking what is true and what is not true, what is evil and (51:50) what is good, what is right and what is wrong. Coupled with, as we have thrown God out of (52:01) our thinking, our public square and so forth, that might as return to make right. So if you have (52:10) enough votes, whether that's enough votes on the Supreme Court or whether that's enough votes to (52:17) get people elected to office, enough votes to get people to do the things you want, then that might (52:26) of the electorate can make right.

Or it can be simply the declaration of a court or the (52:32) declaration of a judge who sits in the

seat, makes a proclamation. He has the might to define what is (52:43) right and define what is wrong. So if the Supreme Court declares that it is right to kill babies, (52:51) then the Supreme Court is safe.

So if the Supreme Court then later changes its mind and says, (53:00) which they didn't do, which they didn't say it's wrong, but they didn't say, (53:05) we don't have the power to make that decision constitutionally and that decision is made by (53:11) the states, then the state Supreme Courts are now given the right to make decisions of what is right (53:20) and what is wrong. And then I've spoken often about a new worldview that is sweeping through (53:27) Western civilization. And anything, as we just spoke, that now denies the divinity of the homo (53:35) deus, we now all call evil.

So where does evil come from? Part of this dilemma of the non-biblical (53:46) worldview. First of all, again, evil can't come from man. This is the position of naturalism, (53:56) which we've already talked about.

If man is basically an evolved beast, a material being (54:03) of responding to stimuli, he can't be evil. He's basically good or amoral. His actions are natural (54:14) actions.

Well, we can't live that way. And no one who even has a non-biblical worldview would (54:21) practically be able to follow that kind of thinking. But that is the thinking of that (54:25) position.

And it leaves him in a very difficult position associated with this problem of evil (54:30) and suffering. Because if man is basically good, Maslow and Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Carl (54:37) Rogers, we talk about this in the Truth Project, their attempt to try and solve this logical (54:47) problem that they have with evil is to say, well, man isn't the source of evil because (54:57) he's a natural man and so forth. So therefore, their position was, and it now laid the foundation (55:05) for what is happening in 2023, and that is the socialist institutions that are the source of (55:14) evil.

Well, we've dealt with the illogical notion associated with social institutions, but man is (55:21) basically good or immoral, but how can socialists be? Anyway, you come to the point where we believe (55:27) that if there is evil in the world, it doesn't come from the individual. It comes (55:34) from the social institution. So in 2023 in Western civilization, (55:42) evil, therefore, now comes from that which is systemic rather than personal sin.

So what we saw (55:51) happen in Memphis, for example, rather than the deep acknowledgment of the sin within those men (55:58) and being able then to deal with that, the personal sin that moved them to do that, (56:09) we try to wash that away because we don't want to deal with personal sin because personal sin (56:16) causes us to think of a personal God and a holy God and a righteous God and an absolute truth (56:22) and an absolute moral position, an absolute ethical foundation. We don't want that, and so (56:27) we will not see, you will not see anyone, anyone. I don't care what you watch, what news programs (56:35) you watch, what magazine you read and so forth.

When it comes to things that happen like happen (56:40) in Memphis, you will not hear anyone talk about personal sin. I mean, you may hear a Christian (56:44) person talk about it. You won't hear, you know, the media talk about it.

It will always be couched (56:50) in terms of what the institution, what institutions have done. It's the fault of the institution or (56:56) it's systemic rather than personal sin, and now the problem of

evil, the crosshairs of the problem (57:10) of evil is now turning rapidly, quite rapidly, upon those who promote views of human sexuality (57:20) or sin that come from the biblical worldview, and just as my position and my perspective on this, (57:29) that that target will become increasingly focused upon us because we are then, will be part of the (57:38) systemic problem in our culture that brings about evil as a result of our position, okay? (57:47) In fact, what is the solution for evil and suffering? Well, here's also the dilemma of the (57:53) non-biblical worldview, because Maslow said, well, the solution to evil is getting in touch (58:01) with your real inner self because you find evil, that man is basically good, and what happens when (58:06) people like us who have a biblical worldview that would say to you, that say no to yourself, (58:13) as the scripture says, deny your flesh, he would say that's evil. It's evil to have someone deny (58:22) who they really are inside, and that personal who I am has become the divine declaration of homo deus, (58:32) and so we're still sitting on this foundation that Maslow laid for us in the academic world.

(58:40) Getting in touch with your real inner self is the solution to all of this, and that is (58:46) what we see all over our western culture today, is that people think the solution is to follow (58:55) your own heart. The second, since evil comes from social institutions and all efforts to solve evil (59:02) and suffering are focused on social institutional reform or replacement, to throw it out, and that's (59:07) part of the new worldview that is sweeping through us, and it goes back to what we were talking about (59:12) earlier, but the focus will always be upon institutional problems, it's not the personal (59:20) sin. So anyway, in western culture, the solution isn't going to be increasingly focusing (59:30) upon canceling or silencing or marginalizing those who hold or speak of the old ethic notions.

(59:42) Okay, so a biblical world gives us that solid basis, though, to answer the problems of evil. (59:49) We'll close with this from Ephesians 6, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, against the (59:53) rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the (59:58) forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be (1:00:03) able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand firm.

So we need to recognize again, (1:00:09) as we begin to engage the people around us, that our battle is not against them, it's against (1:00:18) the thinking, and the world, the flesh, and the evil, against the spiritual battle, and that's (1:00:24) why we need to be in prayer, diligent prayer, our families need to be in diligent prayer for (1:00:29) Mrs. Smith, praying that God is going to give us an opportunity through our sympathy and empathy, (1:00:35) our building a relationship with her, asking questions about her life, and so forth, that God (1:00:41) will open her eyes, soften her heart, now that she might begin to ask questions as Rosaria (1:00:48) Butterfield began to ask questions of Ken and Floyd that her worldview could not answer. (1:00:54) So that's why we're doing this, we're going to turn the world upside down through our interaction (1:01:01) with people. So Mark, I'm done here, I think we've run right up to the end of the hour.

(1:01:11) Yes, we have. Thank you, Dr. Tackett. Awesome, awesome truth to consider.

A couple of things (1:01:20) as we close. First, I will be sending out a link to the recording, as well as Dr. Tackett's slides. (1:01:27) Second thing is, I know a number of you have asked about the engagement project, so I'm going to send (1:01:31) a couple links out for that, as well as how to access the online training and other information.

(1:01:37) And then finally, I'm going to stay on for a couple of minutes here. If you have a specific (1:01:43) story or detail to share about your own life regarding a situation you're facing (1:01:53)

that illustrates the evil and suffering that Dr. Tackett's been talking about tonight, (1:01:57) I know some folks have already posted a couple of those in the chat, but if you want to share (1:02:01) those with us, we're going to review those. Dr. Tackett may take one or two of those (1:02:06) as examples for next month.

And then also, if he doesn't address your situation, (1:02:16) you can be confident that we'll be praying for your situation. When it comes to evil and suffering, (1:02:22) as we know, it's deeply personal. We all have stories related to what Dr. Tackett's been (1:02:28) talking about tonight, so we would count it a privilege to pray with you around any of those (1:02:33) situations.

And with that, I think we're ready to close. Dr. Tackett, would you want to (1:02:39) last comment or close our time in prayer? Yeah, I'll just close time in prayer. And (1:02:46) thank you again for being with us, Father.

We come before you and recognize that you hear (1:02:53) the cries, the blood crying up from the ground with pain killed stable. And Father, you understand (1:03:01) the suffering that we go through. And yet, Lord, you are good and kind and merciful to us.

And (1:03:07) we trust that you will bring all of this to an end someday. But we pray, Father, as we think (1:03:15) through these things, especially of the people that live around us that have been hit hard by (1:03:23) these things. And therefore, their thinking has gone awry and they've rejected you or walked away (1:03:29) from you.

That, Father, you would, through our prayers and love and relationships, you would (1:03:34) allow us the opportunity to be able to speak with them and address the truth that you've given to us (1:03:40) and the hope that lays before us. Thank you, Father. We do all this for your glory in Jesus' name.

Amen.