

**Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People? Or,
Why Do Good Things Happen To Bad People?**

Category: Justice/Fairness/Sovereignty/Providence

Often, a cocky college student or a surly skeptic will haughtily ask,

“Mr. Moore, if God exists, and is all-powerful and all-good, why does he allow bad things to happen to good people?”

Food for Thought

Neither of these questioners normally is seeking either an answer or an understanding. What to do? It is time to ask a question. (They want God to be omnipotent but not sovereign – they will handle the sovereign part themselves).

Me	Surly Skeptic (student in this case)
<i>I am glad you asked, but I'd like for you to help me figure the answer out. Tell me, what is a "good" person like?</i>	
	What do you mean?
<i>I mean it simply, what do you think a "good" person is like? I think we may have different notions about "good" people.</i>	
	Well, good people do good things.
<i>Okay, I know I caught you off-guard. Let me ask this, what is a "bad" person like?</i>	
	(Sort of laughing) Okay, a bad person is the opposite of a good person and does bad things.
<i>Does a good person ever do a bad thing?</i>	

Me	Surly Skeptic (student in this case)
	Hmmm, I guess so.
<i>So, we have a good person who can do and has done a few bad things. You and I have created a kind of Frankenstein, I think.</i> (laughing).	
	Yeah, but why all this?
<i>What if I said that all “good” people do “bad” things, ‘cause it is true if you think it through? If a man does a bad thing, the Bible says he is a “bad” man, not a “good” one. But, I think you actually mean that a relatively good man ought not to have bad things happen to him, right?</i> Now if my surly skeptic has softened, I would continue to probe and go around the mountain. Unfortunately, Mr. Surly Skeptic suddenly became frustrated and decided to live up to his name...	
	Look, cut the crap; just answer my question — that is, if you can.
<i>Okay, but watch that attitude. I had hoped you and I could discuss your question and reason through it together. But, since you want it straight, I’m your man. First, let me ask you, do you seriously think I’ve never heard this question before? (This is hard on pridefulness)</i>	
	Silence
<i>Your question is stated incorrectly. It ought to be, Bill, why does even</i>	.

Me	Surly Skeptic (student in this case)
<p><i>one good thing ever happen to a bad person?</i></p> <p><i>You see, even a single sin damns a man because the standard is “be ye perfect, even as I am perfect.” One sin makes you a “bad” person, and for goodness sakes, you know that I know that even you and your best friend both sin almost constantly.</i></p>	
	Well, that’s kind of offensive, but okay, I don’t always do right I guess.
<p><i>So, God hates sin, is angry with sin and it is just or fair if one of the enemies He has has nothing but “bad things” happen to them!??</i></p>	
	Enemies? I’m a good person who has done bad things, but I am basically good.
<p><i>I told you that our notions about “good” people would be vastly different.</i></p> <p><i>There are no “good” people. Yet, God is merciful with earthly gifts to “bad” people every moment. For example, “bad” people are breathing because He wills them to right now.</i></p>	

What I just said to the surly skeptic is true. Why one good thing happens to any of us should be a cause for wonder. You see, justice demands that every sin receive

its just reward/punishment. Any person who sins is not a “good person” in God’s eyes. What we receive when good things happen to us are called mercies to us.

In the end, I almost always am asking two questions,

- **What is man like?** According to the scriptures. (I covered this pretty well in question/topic #26, so please refer to that, or watch the video that accompanies this video.)
- **What is God like?** According to the scriptures. (Again, please refer to question/topic #26. If you prefer, watch the accompanying video.)

An accurate reply to both of these questions will explain many of life’s mysteries.

Examples: bad things do happen to good people, and good things do happen to bad people — why?

This question appears with literally a hundred variations:

- My Aunt Beulah, a devout Christian, has stage-four liver cancer, but her sister, Islamae, is as wicked as they come, spends every leisure hour playing either Bunco or Bingo! Why is my aunt Beulah going to die while Islamae is healthy as a race horse?!
- Sir, my husband was unloading the groceries and slammed the rear door on the car down without looking. I had bent over to tie my shoe and had set the baby carrier down in the back of the car for just a second. The hatch door fractured the baby’s skull, and it appears permanent brain damage may have happened. I don’t know what to think. But can you tell me why God didn’t prevent it? He could have, right? Doesn’t He love us?
- Mr. Moore, this is Anna, please come to the hospital. Some drunk driver raced through a stop sign and hit Todd’s car on the passenger side and rolled it over. Todd’s in critical condition, can you come? (On the way to the hospital, one better prepare to answer the question that is certain to come – (“Why did God let this happen?”))

I will spare you the other 97. All three of these people are suffering, questioning, and deserving of an answer. You may now wonder why I wasn’t more patient with the surly septic. I informed you then that, normally, neither a cocky college student nor a surly skeptic truly seeks an answer or an understanding. I usually attempt to

engage them both to see if my judgment is incorrect.

If you look back, I was congenial as long as the surly skeptic allowed a discussion to go on. When he grew frustrated and aggressive, I changed my tactic. I quit questioning, and I reproved him. I then aimed at his pride by saying, "Do you seriously think I've never heard this question before?" The Devil is prideful and so are his minions.

I only embarrass such men and women if they seek only to demonstrate how clever they are. But, if it's a group setting, and they are attempting to destroy the faith of sheep who are nearby, I invoke the "no jerk or devils rule". If a man or woman's only reason to bring a question up is to either mock God or to destroy the faith of nearby believers, then I make sure I embarrass them publicly. I will make it clear to the listeners that the surly skeptic's question and replies are sophomoric. I will often ask simply,

"Is there any question of your own you can ask me, or do you only have the four you got from Google?"

You get the idea. I rarely feel the need to do this.

But what of the genuine, heartsick questioners?

- **First, I comfort and console.** Each person, each setting, each set of circumstances is unique.
 - Can I call anyone for them?
 - May I locate food for them?
 - Can I take care of their home life for them?
 - Can I arrange childcare, etc.?
 - Can I pray for them? I pray knowing God hears. I ask if I may, and when permission is granted, I pray and I do not care who is in the room.

It is stunning that God draws so very near at such times.

- **Second, I respond to the question.**

I have no canned speech, but I know that I'm going to address God's goodness, God's power, and God's sovereignty when the right moment presents itself. My entire world and thought is seen through the spectacles of

God's sovereignty and God's providence.

With certainty I state that no blessing nor accident nor tragedy is out of God's control. I remind myself and everyone present that God is wise and in control. This assurance is wondrously assuring, because it's true.

If these two concepts are a bit foggy in your mind, I humbly suggest a simple book I once wrote titled, A Bartender's Guide to Providence, How the World Really Works. It is written in the same manner as this is, as if we were sitting across the kitchen table from one another. Whatever my writing deficiencies may be, please remember, my goals are simple. Be truthful and be plain. I am quite an ordinary man, and I write for ordinary people just like me.

The ability to respond to why such a bad thing happened to such a good person can be daunting, and it will be impossible if you do not bathe in sovereignty and providence. If you stumble a bit, just call, email, or write to me.

I have decided to end here. I haven't actually addressed part 2, why do good things happen to bad people? Why would I stop then? I stop because the answer lies within a discussion of sovereignty and providence. It is one of my favorite discussions, but it is like viewing a diamond, one must look at every facet to appreciate its beauty and value. The only difference between the beauty and value of a diamond and the beauty and the value of understanding sovereignty and providence is that the latter is heavenly, and the former merely earthly.

I close by reminding you that if you are consoling a believer, you should always make room for Romans 8:28.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Final Thoughts

Francis Crick, the famous scientist (think D.N.A. work) said, "you are a pack of neurons." That is the orthodox Atheist's belief.

Crick is not right, but suppose, for a moment, that he was.

Then does blather about good and evil matter? In other words, if all of us are merely

matter that is governed by our D.N.A., and if the 100 million or so neurons in our brains are firing off, but not as a result of our choices, but rather as a merely mechanical action or reaction, why would 'good and evil' matter? You see, the true Atheistic worldview maintains that good and evil are individually decided. Therefore, good and evil are meaningless. That is true solely in an Atheist's delusion.

But you see, Atheists are hypocrites. When there is no trouble in their worlds they drone on endlessly about no rights and no wrongs, no good and no evil. But, when life's seas grow rough, when someone steals their car, they scream louder than all others about right and wrong and good and evil.

If an unbeliever's vitriol persists, I gently but firmly, while consoling them, say, "friend, I do need to give you a biblical word of caution just now, it is from the book of Isaiah, Chapter 45, verse 9.

"Woe to him who strives with His maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to Him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or shall Your handiwork say, 'He has no hands?'"

My friend, God is in control.

Please consider watching my videos on providence and sovereignty for a full presentation of both.