

Knowing Good & Evil

The Beginning: **Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15-17; 3:8-13**

- Questions for consideration:

- Was God looking to provide? Of course. His offer was genuine. He doesn't lie (**Hebrews 6:18**).
- Why give a tree they can't eat of? Free will. But He wasn't tempting them to sin (**James 1:13-15**).
- Was it wrong to break God's command? How could it not be? **1 John 3:4-6**
- Was it necessary for them to break God's command? Must we offend God to appreciate Him? That would go against a basic principle. Stick to basic principles when building a theory. We have to remember His holiness. **1 John 2:1. Romans 6:1**
- Was God genuinely disappointed? He immediately punished them. It was genuine. Like **Genesis 6**, He even regretted creating mankind.
- Did God want His people to be holy? This is stated through the word. It was made clear to Israel (**Leviticus 19**), and the "new Israel" (**1 Peter 1:13-21**).
- Was the whole thing likely to happen? Did God know this would happen? I can just tell you that He planned for it - **Ephesians 1:3-4**
- Can both things be true? I believe God can be holy and offended by sin, while also mercifully working with His creation when they sin against Him because of His love.
- I'm aware of other thoughts surrounding this topic, but I either (1) don't have the time, (2) don't have the answer, or (3) don't see the need to address this for this lesson.

Our Suffering: **Hebrews 5:8**

- Was it necessary?

- I know that suffering, though not what God desires, will be a teacher in this broken world. Jesus learned obedience through what He suffered, though He didn't suffer because of sin. I believe such passages (**James 1:2-4**) simply deal with a reality.
- God's preference is not that we suffer, but we have all sinned against God, and suffering is introduced again and again. What did God's punishment do for Adam and Eve? It would teach them. We can learn through suffering. It teaches us to obey. We even see this in Jesus. Why did He suffer? Because we sinned. That encourages obedience, not sin. Jesus experienced suffering in the flesh as we did, and it was additional fuel for obedience. We could use simple illustrations: There's no need to touch a hot stove, but at least when you touch it, you learn. Does the prodigal son need to leave home to appreciate his father? No, he should have appreciated his father's kindness from the start. God doesn't want you to suffer. He doesn't want us to learn the hard way. It's like Israel demanding a King. Okay, but this is what you're going to get. Wisdom would tell us to follow God and take note of how bad suffering is. I'd rather my mother and father remain married. I prefer to teach my children to look back at our marriage and say, "That's how you do it!", not "that's what you don't do." Wouldn't that be better for everyone? Yet, the reality is they'll see faults and learn from both. God can make good of every situation. He can refine and bring us closer

to Him in our suffering. Yes, I understand all of that, and the Scripture teaches so. But is it preferable? Go back to Proverbs and see if the message is: mess things up because then you'll appreciate godly living. Also, we've learned that suffering apparently doesn't work for most people, because most still turn away from God, and they use suffering as an excuse not to follow Him, which causes more suffering. The main message should be: follow God to avoid suffering. However, this doesn't happen. Jesus didn't suffer because He sinned, but one thing it did do: reiterate how we need God. Wouldn't you have preferred Jesus not to suffer because of our sin? So, yes, good can come from suffering, but suffering was not part of God's "good creation" at the beginning. Furthermore, though this is not the focus of today's question, I must reiterate the most basic lesson. We should not make excuses for our sin. Let's begin with "obey God." Let's end with, "but praise God who can turn our suffering into a blessing."