

HOW CAN I RESIST EVIL?

WEEK EIGHT

Most of us would say we're pretty good at resisting "evil." Evil is a strong word after all. If we break down this idea of evil, it really means anything that separates us from God. If God is truly good, then anything against Him is naturally evil.

How do we avoid giving into temptations to do things that aren't what God has for us? How do we follow God in a way that brings us closer to the good that He has in store for us?

Learning what God says is good and what He says is evil is a brave and intentional first step.



Kids Ministry Staff
at University Carillon

EXPLORING THE QUESTION

MAIN IDEA

Evil exists in the world around us. Dependence on God (counting on God, leaning on Him) is the only way to truly resist evil.

CONVERSATION

(questions your kids may ask you)

- Who do you think is the most evil Disney character?
- What are some bad qualities and some good qualities a person can have?
- How do we avoid doing evil/bad things?

RESOURCES

- Adult Alpha guide
- Excerpt from "Engaging Theology" Textbook
- Video: The Bible Project - "Blessing & Curse"

ALL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:
universitycarillon.net/AlphaKids



▶ ALPHA ADULT GUIDE: WEEK EIGHT

See next page(s) for the Adult Alpha guide.

▶ EXCERPT FROM "ENGAGING THEOLOGY"

See next page(s) for the resource pulled from the theology textbook, "Engaging Theology."

▶ VIDEO: THE BIBLE PROJECT - "BLESSING & CURSE"

"Blessing" is a religious-sounding word that we use a lot. We say "Bless you!" after a sneeze, or that we're "so blessed" when life is good. We may even use #blessed when posting a vacation photo. But what does blessing mean in the Bible? In this video, we trace the theme of blessing and curse in the Bible to see how Jesus defeats the curse and restores the blessing of life to creation.

WATCH VIDEO

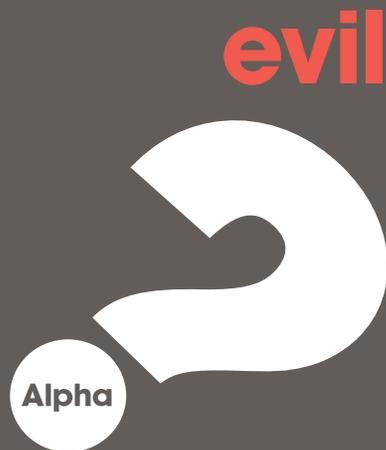
- ▶ Want to discuss this question further? Reach out to one of our pastors by emailing pastors@universitycarillon.net

Get in touch.

kids@universitycarillon.net

WEEK EIGHT

How can I resist



ALPHA GUIDE

Where does evil come from?

- Triple alliance:
 - World – the enemy around
 - Flesh – the enemy within
 - Devil – the enemy above

1. WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE THAT THE DEVIL EXISTS?

(Romans 12:21)

- Scripture: The Bible presents a personal, spiritual being in active rebellion against God
 - Old Testament (Isaiah 14; Job 1; 1 Chronicles 21:1)
 - Jesus (Luke 10:17–20)
 - Peter (1 Peter 5:8–11)
 - Paul (Ephesians 6:11–12)
- Tradition: Christians down through the ages have believed
- Reason: It makes sense of the world we see around us
 - Why do bad things happen?

Avoid two extremes: Disbelief vs unhealthy, excessive interest

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2. WHAT ARE THE DEVIL'S TACTICS?

(Genesis 3)

- The devil wants to destroy our lives (John 10:10)
 - Doubt (Genesis 3:1, Matthew 4:3)
 - Temptation (Genesis 2:16–17)
 - Deception (Genesis 3:4)
 - Condemnation

But, 'there is... no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:1)

3. WHAT IS OUR POSITION?

(Colossians 1:13)

- We are transferred from the dominion of darkness to the kingdom of Jesus
- We experience God's love
- It's a process – we won't be complete until Jesus returns

4. HOW DO WE DEFEND OURSELVES?

(Ephesians 6)

'Be strong in the Lord... Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.' (Ephesians 6:10–11)

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1 Focus on Jesus – belt of truth (v.14)

- 'I am the truth.' (John 14:6)
- Authenticity, integrity, openness in your life

Keep your relationships right – breastplate of righteousness (v.14)

2

- Keep short accounts with God
- Ask forgiveness from God and others

3 Get involved in service – boots of the gospel of peace (v.15)

- The readiness to speak of Christ (Isaiah 52:7–10)

Trust God in difficult times – shield of faith (v.16)

4

- The devil will challenge us with doubt, fear, anxiety, lust...
- Keep trusting; don't give up on your faith

5 Win the battle of the mind – helmet of salvation (v.17)

- Salvation = freedom
- Protect your mind: temptation starts with a thought, which leads to action

Know your Bible – sword of the Spirit (v.17)

6

- Soak yourself in the word of God
- The only offensive piece of armour (Hebrews 4:12)

An excerpt from Engaging Theology (Chapter 5: God and the World) pages 103, 111-112:

The Identity of the World: It Was Created Good, But Is Fallen

The Story of God is unfolding in this world. God's self-revelation in Christ, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is the fulcrum of history, and to understand God and his world, we must understand the world's beginning and goal. This section focuses on the beginning (**protology**), but the end (**eschatology**) is always in mind because the goal is no less important. In fact, as we look at the end of the Bible in Revelation 21-22, when God's kingdom and presence are fully established here on earth, we encounter the imagery of the garden of Eden from Genesis 1-2. The culmination of history is a fulfillment of the beginning, so eschatology and protology go hand in hand. The basic story of the Bible is summarized like this: creation, fall, and new creation. God cares for this world and works toward not only restoring his people but also creation itself. This highlights two points which will be our focus: creation is worthy of being restored and creation needs to be restored.

God Created a Good World. One of the most basic things we know about God is that he created the world. The first line of the Nicene Creed emphasizes this: "We believe in One God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen." Christians dispute the timing and process of creation as described in Genesis, but few would doubt that God is shown to be the Creator. And according to Genesis, one aspect of creation is central: God created a "good" world. Creation is described as "good" seven times in Genesis 1. Though things quickly go wrong (as we will see), God does not just throw it all away. Creation is good; it is worth being restored.

Yes the World is Corrupted. Just as the creation narrative in Genesis speaks of the goodness of creation, so too it addresses the introduction of evil into creation, especially in Genesis 3. Sin corrupts people, relationships, and the land itself, exactly undoing God's intention for each. In addition to human sin, the biblical account also includes demonic agents enticing and leading humans into sin. Consider the snake in the garden in Genesis 3, as well as the "sons of God" (also known as the "Watchers" later in Jewish tradition) in Genesis 6. The role and identity of these demonic powers is unclear throughout much of the Old Testament, but their role becomes clearer in the New Testament, particularly through Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism. Corruption in the world is not limited to human and demonic agents; the physical creation itself is corrupted by human sin (cf. Rom 8:17-23).

God Restores. The Story of the Bible is ultimately about salvation history, starting with the call of Abraham and God's promise to bless the world through him (Gen 12). This was fulfilled through the advent of Christ and the Holy Spirit. In mysterious wisdom, God chose for this restoration, which has been achieved in Christ, to play out over time, so the problems of human, demonic, and physical corruption will not be fully resolved until the end of the age.

Problem of Evil and Theodicy

When we consider evil in the context of providence and agency, fundamental problems arise for those who think, as Christians do, that God is good and all-powerful. In reality, however, all religions have tried to make sense of evil, whether they attribute it to fate, illusion, demons, or otherwise. Christians have traditionally considered the topic of evil in light of the biblical narrative rather than being limited by philosophical quandaries.

In the Old and New Testament, God's people faced evil from the perspective of a covenant encounter with God. God's deliverance of the Jews from the oppressive evil of slavery was a defining moment in the Old Testament. The exodus narrative does not explain evil straightforwardly; instead, it focuses on God's active agency to save his people from evil, especially in response to the people's prayers. We see, for example, prayers for God's action against injustice in the psalms of lament (e.g., Pss 3; 13; 17; 22). The book of Job is an extended lament and exploration of God's sovereignty in the face of unjust suffering. Fundamental to the narrative is that Satan and his demonic minions actively perpetuate evil. The Bible sometimes explains suffering as a punishment for sin, but often the two are unrelated. Scripture tends to focus not on the source of suffering but on the eschatological hope of restoration when God overcomes evil. Following this model, the New Testament focuses on Jesus as the **Messiah** who conquers evil through a new exodus (his death during Passover) and establishes the hoped-for kingdom.

Modern people process evil in a distinct fashion. Unlike biblical writers who saw evil as inevitable, moderns see themselves as entitled to "pursue happiness." When evil and injustice disrupt life, they feel someone must be held accountable—a ruler, a doctor, or God. The ancient believer knew that evil was derived from the Devil. God stood over them, but they still wondered why he mysteriously delivered some people but not others. Modern persons, by contrast, have expunged the Devil from the system so only God ultimately takes the blame for evil. They

think they stand over God, deciding whether “God” is a concept they will embrace or reject. Evil and suffering count as evidence against the idea of God. If God is powerful (able to help) and loving (wants to help), then there must be some explanation as to why God permits suffering. Crudely, we must ask “Can we defend the just character of God in the face of evil?” The term **theodicy** (Greek: theos, “god”+ dike, “justice”) is fashioned in the modern period to convey this question.

Defenders of God have created numerous arguments. They borrow ideas from ancient Christians, who ironically never framed theodicy in these modern terms. From Irenaeus, they borrow a notion that some evil is required for humans to progress as mature souls. From Augustine, they adopt the idea that evil emerged when creatures misused their God-given freedom. Some add that freedom was essential for genuine fellowship. Others craft sophisticated defense strategies to show that a loving and powerful God can logically coexist with evil.

Some see this as an exercise in logic or philosophy that must be settled before we can study theology. Irenaeus and Augustine show greater wisdom. They describe God’s victory over evil as unfolding in history and centered in his Son. The gospel is a Christian answer to evil.

Conclusion

In the face of this evil, we can lose sight of the wonder of creation and more so the wonder of the Creator. Though God is distinct from the world, the narrative of Scripture demonstrates his continual triune engagement with the world. With the immanent Trinity we see God’s uniqueness from creation, but with the economic Trinity the focus is specifically upon God’s action in the world. The Father is Creator, the Son becomes incarnate, and the Spirit is present with his people. Though we at times struggle to reconcile how evil relates to his providential care, the incarnation of Christ and the life-giving presence of Spirit reveal God’s holy love.