

ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS

A New Kind of Answer

Actions answer tough questions when the body of Christ does God's work.

Job 2:11–13

More than apologetics or great theological responses, Christians need to commit to loving their neighbors in the face of evil.

Mistakes to Avoid

If these kinds of attitudes accompany your answers to difficult questions, even the best argument will fail.

1. Impatience, unkindness, or intolerance for skeptics or people with genuine questions
2. Appearing brusque or prideful
3. Treating a legitimate question as if it could easily be answered

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

When dealing with tough questions about God and evil, the most severe weakness of some Christians has been the tendency to confront the apologetic challenge and fail to hear the voice of suffering behind the question, “Where is your God?” To not weep with the person who suffers, but rather offer platitudes, Bible verses, even excellent philosophical lectures, is like sending greeting cards to people in a burning building. We need to listen to the voice and not merely the words.

My hope is that Christians will *become* the apologetic—choosing to live in a way that is much more important than spoken words, no matter how articulate, profound, and convincing the arguments. They will, instead, work where there is human suffering and demonstrate to the world that God *is* doing something about it: he is sending us into the heart of it to heal it.

Christians are not likely to produce many new and satisfying answers to why and how God acts in pain and evil. But, in the future, they can come alongside others in hardship as they, with their lives as much as their words, try to show others how God enters the places of dark suffering. In these situations Christians can demonstrate how God does deal with evil—not as a theoretical challenge to be solved but as a tragedy to be remedied. In this way, Christians can live as people who have been enlightened by Jesus Christ, who was both victim and victor over evil and suffering.

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Reflect

1. Describe a time when God's love was demonstrated to you in difficult circumstances.
2. Describe a time when a bad attitude got in the way of a good answer.
3. What ministries does our church have that allow church members to be involved with people in the midst of their suffering?