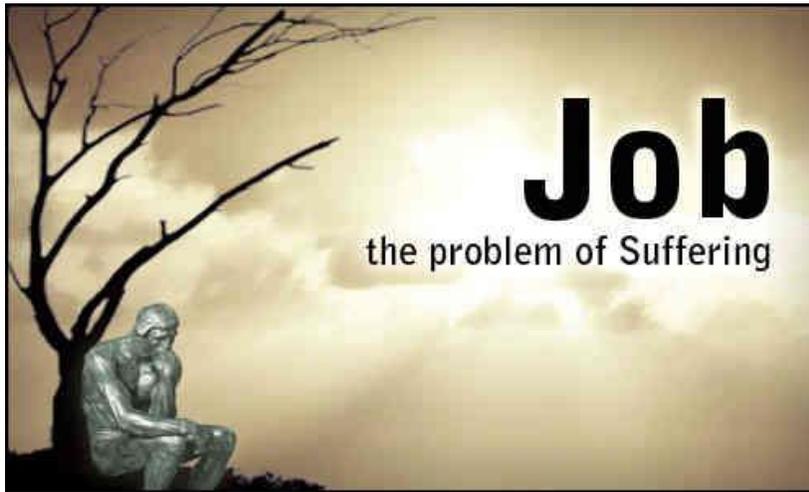


Daily Life with Christ. Love-39: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of proper love. Job-1, Richard's attack upon the goodness and love of God.



Characters: **George** is an evangelical Christian who is a biblical scholar with expertise in the original languages of Scripture. However, he rejects philosophy because he believes it corrupts one's view of the Word of God. He identifies himself as a Bible-only believer. **Stephen** is also a biblical scholar with expertise in the original languages of Scripture. However, he is philosophically informed. He identifies himself as a philosophical realist (as per the realism of Aristotle and Aquinas). He is adamant that philosophy is important to keep the believer from falling prey to modern philosophical ideas that have infected Christianity in respect to view of God, the Bible, and the spiritual life. **Richard** is an atheist who is a diligent follower of Richard Dawkins. He loves to engage Christians in attempts to show them how wrong they are about believing in God, let alone that He could be loving and good. He loves to destroy Christians.

Richard: (approaches George and Stephen). Hey, my name is Richard. I have been hearing you two talk about God's love and human love. Mind if I ask a question?

Stephen: No . . . not at all. I am Stephen and this is George . . . pleased to met you. What's on your mind?

Richard: I could not help overhearing your conversations about divine love, human love, and pseudo-love. Stephen, you said that God's love was pure, immutable, transcendent, and perfect.

Stephen: Yes, because the love is according to His very nature, which is pure, immutable, transcendent, and perfect.

Richard: You are aware of the problem of evil, right?

George: No!

Stephen: Yes. But I would call it the so-called problem of evil. There is no problem of evil unless one places God in the same category as a man. In other words, if God is like a man but just a larger version of man, then there is a problem. The problem of evil is mostly a result of modern Christianity's rejection of the classical view of God, the *Ehyeh/Esse* of Exodus 3:14, and

displacing Him with a God who is just a larger and more powerful version of man. Without realizing it, much of contemporary Christianity puts God in the realm of creation and thus places Him in the same physical and moral dimensions as a man—like saying that God is male and that is under human moral obligations.

George and Richard: What? . . . are you saying that God is female (George). . . or not moral (Richard)?

Stephen: No! He is neither female nor male. These are physical categories of creation. They are biological categories. God is not in a biological category. He does not have x or y chromosomes. He does not have male nor female genitalia. He transcends biological categories. God is not a creature and thus not to be categorized in any creature category—sexual categories or human moral categories. Again, he transcends both human physical categories as well as human moral categories. He is not part of creation.

Richard: You mentioned “moral dimensions.” Are you saying that God is immoral?

Stephen: No! He is not immoral. I am saying that He is not under HUMAN moral categories. Human morality is for humans. What is right or moral for any creature is according to its nature. God is not to be judged by any human moral or good standards. His goodness exceeds any creature goodness. Again, He is not part of creation. He transcends the goodness, morality, and even love of creatures. In sum, He is the wholly-other. There is no one like Him in goodness or love. In sum, it is a mistaken idea to put him under human love, biology, or goodness.

Richard: So, are you saying that God’s love is greater than man’s.

Stephen and George: Absolutely!

Richard: What kind of love is it that put so much suffering on Job. Your own Bible says that Job was a righteous man and yet god allowed all kinds of horrible things to him. Such a god seems more like a monster or devil who brings pain than a loving and good god.

George: You don’t understand because you are not a Christian with Bible doctrine. We understand these things because we have Bible doctrine and live in fellowship with God.

Richard: OK, tell me about your understanding.

George: Job is all about the angelic conflict. There is a conflict between God and Satan and the lessons in Job were for Satan and his demons.

Richard: So, all of the horrible things that happened to Job . . . like Job losing his wealth, animals, servants, children, friends, and his own health was to teach Satan a lesson? Seems like god loves teaching Satan a lesson more than his own love for righteous Job. Would you torture one of your friends to teach one of your enemies a lesson? Would you destroy his house, his servants, his children, and his health just to teach them a lesson? How can you say God is the epitome of love when He murdered Job’s servants and children and tortured Job with excruciating pain—all because of some angelic conflict? Just to teach others a lesson? What a

horribly monstrous god that you worship and dare say is a God of love! Such a god is not worthy to be worshipped. He is more like a devil than a god.

George: His ways our incomprehensible. We can't understand them.

Richard: But you said that Bible doctrine teaches you . . . and I have asked you to enlighten me. You claim that he is a god of love, and I am asking you how could he be a god of love given your biblical testimony in Job. Would you or could you worship god if I could show you that he is more like a devil? Would you worship god just because he is the biggest and most powerful, if deep down you really thought he was more like a devil as far as his actions? Do you worship him just because his title is god?

Stephen: If I may . . . Richard and George... The book of Job magnifies the goodness, love, and otherness of God in a most beautiful way . . . a 2nd person personal love between the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists and Job. Moreover, this love extends to Satan and the fallen angels. Throughout the entire book of Job, God calls all to enter into a 2nd person personal love relationship with Him. The book of Job is far from being inscrutable. And it is not just about some angelic conflict lesson. It is the story of how a transcendently loving and good God seeks to draw all to Him with love—all because He loves all with transcendent goodness and love.

(Pdf copy at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/042318.pdf>; for background and complete series, see <http://www.fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>).