

Heaven-38 (Eternal Perspective: metaphysical nature of God's goodness and man's free choices)

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

Psalm 73:24. The connection between this life and the next, 2 Tim. 4:1-18;

Preparation for Bible Class—1 John 1:7 & its implications for the SL re: true conviction of Truth.

The 3 parts to Bible class.

1. Spiritual foundations: The three philosophical frameworks (2 slides)
2. Philosophical Realism: The two semantic triangles—non-realism vs. Realism (1 slide)
3. Development of Bible doctrine: Heaven—EP and metaphysical nature of God's goodness.

Spiritual foundations: The need to liberate Christianity and the Bible from cultural captivity.

1. The nature of philosophy and the three key philosophical systems.
 - a. Plato. Knowledge is not grounded in particulars. The stability is in otherworld.
 - b. Aristotle. Knowledge begins with sense perception but includes metaphysics.
 - c. American "philosophy" (Bacon/Reid). Knowledge is grounded in instinct + induction, which means that reality is grounded in each person rather than external world.
2. The disasters of American Baconian/Reidian common sense, inductive philosophy.
 - a. Historical ignorance of the development of Christian history and creeds. This leads to serious deficits as well as accepts of myths of the Enlightenment against Christianity.
 - b. Biblical illiteracy. Due to inductive approach there is a great deal of illiteracy regarding the focus and content of the Bible (contra Joshua 1:7-9).
 - c. From an conspicuous bondage to subtle bondage (cf., pastors & their inductive systems).
 - d. Subjectivity guaranteed by the inductive/common sense approach to solve problems.
 - e. An epistemology that consists of "sounding good."
 - f. Fallacious understanding of the structure of language and reality (cf., exegetical blunders).
 - g. Formulas for spiritual victory fueled by inductivism.
 - h. Reality starts with the mind and mental constructs rather than external world.
 - i. Loss of classical understanding of the nature of Esse, the constant sustainer of creation.
 - j. Loss of understanding of the nature of man re: affections and passions (AKA emotions).
 - k. Loss of natural theology as reflected in Romans 1:20-21 and Psalm 19:1-4.
 - l. Easy prey to prevailing ethos (zeitgeist). This is especially true with regard to naturalism.
 - m. Example of the disaster with inductive Bible study: Finis Dake (a conservative Bible bel.).

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-43

3: Epistemology 32
- Existence 50
- History 50

2: Metaphysics 32
- Trans. 50

1: Reality
- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Non-relativistic systems

Platonic Philosophy

- Plato fought against relativism.
- Believed no system of knowledge can be built on sense perception
- Knowledge must have a stable and infallible nature
- He was a man of another otherworld.



Aristotelian Philosophy

- Rediscovered in the Middle Ages
- Known as “The Philosopher”
- Formal logic (I, C, EM, syllogisms)
- Empirical and Metaphysical
- Defeated materialists
- Located universals within particulars
- Developed the four causes
- Developed philosophy of nature, psychology, politics, virtue ethics, teleology.
- Revived in the 19th and 20th century
- He was a man of this world.

American Philosophy

- Relativistic systems
- Subjective/Common Sense
- Subjective/Inductive method
- Rejection of metaphysics
- Start fresh with Bible only
- Anti-philosophical
- Absorbs culture



Bacon:1561-1626

An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense

by
Thomas Reid

Reid: 1710-1796

Outline

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ What is philosophy of language?
- ✓ Theories of meaning
- ✓ Plato (428-348 BC)
 - Cratylus
- ✓ Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Modern theories of meaning

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)

Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

W. V. O. Quine (1908-2000).

Noam Chomsky (1928-)

Realist view of meaning.

Foundation of meaning.

Communication of meaning.

Elements of language.

Function of language

Meaningful God-talk.

Analytic Philosophy

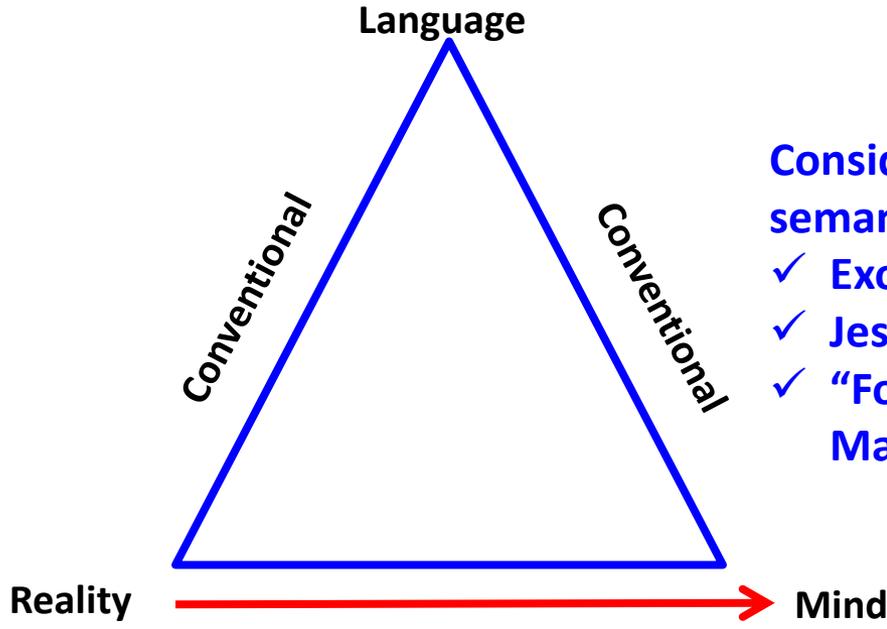
Conclusion.

Analogy.

Metaphysical analogy.

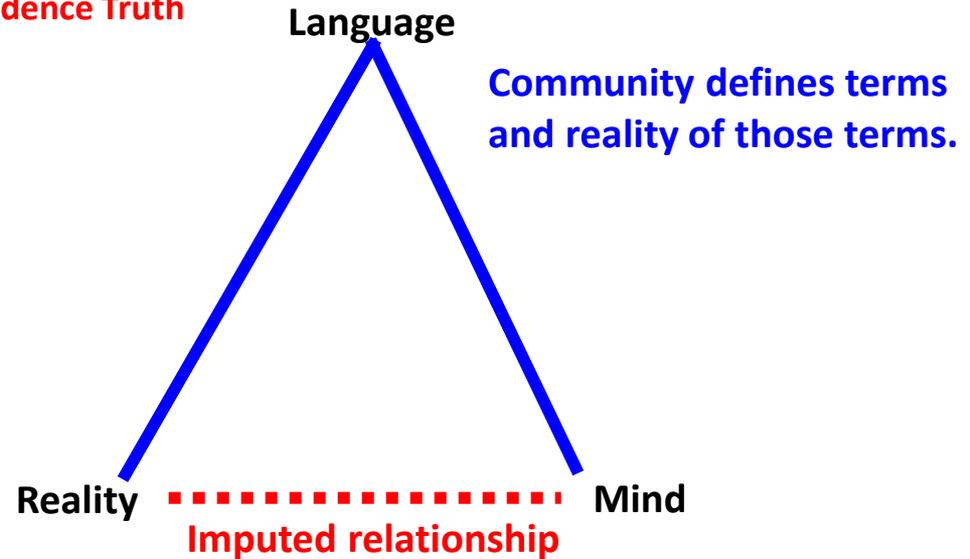
Philosophy of Language-43 Aristotle

Language



Consider the following in the two semantic triangles:

- ✓ Exodus generation
- ✓ Jesus' generation
- ✓ "Forgiveness," Matt. 6:12, 9:12; Mark 11:26; 2 Cor. 2:7.



Warnings:
Matt 6:19-34
Rev. 14:13
2 Cor 5:10
Rev. 19:8



Temporary Heaven

John 17:24; Philip 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 1-19

Eternal Heaven/Earth Rev. 21-22

Christ and the fate of unbelievers and believers:

Matthew 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

Eternal Hell

Rev. 20:11-15; Matt 10:28-30



Temporary Hell Luke 16:19-31



IMPORTANCE OF THE EP.

Serious reflection on the various passages that we have been studying will reveal to any believer a great deal about his spiritual life and faith. It is hard to see how rejection of the EP could not be sign of loss of faith. The passages contain the core Christianity:

1. Philip. 1:21-23
2. Matt. 5:1-16
3. Hebrews 11-12:2
4. Col. 3:1-5.
5. Philip 3:18-31.
6. Heb. 2:14-15.
7. Rom. 8:18.
8. Matt. 6:19-34

A study of contrasts: TP vs EP regarding natural disasters

Scotland's Herald
Jesus Christ (Luke 13:1-5)
Eleonore Stump

Heaven 38: (EP: The metaphysical nature of God's goodness and man's free choices)

1. The 100% goodness of God must be understood on a metaphysical level. This is required not only in understanding His uniqueness, but also in defending attacks against Him in light of human suffering.
2. It is a grave, but all too common, error to ascribe the goodness of God according to human moral categories. This is a categorical error (cf., the way we predicate goodness to different things). In this view God is morally good if He acts in accordance with human moral duties, obligations, and laws. In other words, God is a Good Boy if He behaves Himself according to human and societal constraints. Any view of God that views God through human nature rather than the other way around, will distort the nature of God.

3. Moreover, the attempts to disprove the *existence* of God because He does not fit the societal norms are non-sequiturs. The proof or disproof of God is a metaphysical move, not behavioral or psychological issue. In other words, God does not have to be a good, and well behaved God before He can exist.

4. To prove that God is evil would require demonstrating that His goal is evil in what He does. In other words, one would have to prove that God promoted evil for the sole sake of evil. Let us be clear: God has suffered more than any person who has ever lived. No one has ever suffered as much as the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundation of the earth and suffered for every person who has ever and will ever exist.

5. Moreover, free will needs to be understood on a metaphysical level to avoid neo-deistic concepts of God and creation. It is often thought as if free will exists independently from God's causal action. Conceptualized, it is often depicted as if people act freely apart from God's causality.
6. This implies that when people are acting freely they are somehow acting outside of God's causality. Even though classical theists agree that the world is sustained by God every moment, some turn around and say that when man makes a choice, God is not causally operative in the choosing. The attempt is to depict God as adopting a "hands-off" attitude—to protect Him.

7. Since, *Esse* is the source of everything that exists, then He is also the source of all free will actions. He does not merely observe or permit.

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

8. It needs to be remembered that God is not an item in the universe. It is not as though He is an extrinsic agent working on and tinkering with things like free choices. In making the world to be, His causality extends to everything that exists, and free choices are as real as anything else in the world. If you think Mt. Everest needs God to account for its being as opposed to non-being, then you ought to think that all human choices need God to account for their being as opposed to their non-being.

9. All free will activity goes back to God as its cause of existent. God is the ultimate activator of all operations of everything. Nothing can be causally independent from God. If it were, it would not exist at all. If God did not exist, then every operation would instantly cease.

10. We are not free in spite of God, but because of God. This means that every act of free choice goes back to God as its cause, whatever people freely do falls under the providence of God. He is the ultimate activator of all operations or all agencies. He is 100% in control in the deepest levels.

11. Historical overview of the two viewpoints that provide us with a broad framework for the discussion of free will.
 - a. Desiderius Erasmus authored *On Free Will* (1524). He believed that God gives the unbeliever free choice that does not require further divine empowerment.
 - b. Martin Luther responded with *On the Bondage of the Will*. Luther noted that free choice is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him.” Moreover, he wrote that “all the passages in the Holy Scriptures that mention assistance are they that do away with ‘free-will,’ and these are countless . . . For grace is needed, and the help of grace is given, because ‘free-will’ can do nothing.

12. An unbeliever has free choices, but only within his natural fallen nature. He has no inherent desire to live for God or the EP.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Jeremiah 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? *Then* you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

13. Scripture calls man to make free choices for God and the plan of God and continually describes him as having the power to make meaningful choices.

Deuteronomy 30:11 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹² "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' ¹³ "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' ¹⁴ "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Ezekiel 33:11 "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'

Proverbs 4:13 Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. ¹⁴ Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men. ¹⁵ Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.

Joshua 24:15 "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

James 4:4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 Peter 4:3 For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

MORE ON THE 100% GOODNESS OF GOD, 100% OF THE TIME

1. The modern loss of eternal perspective coupled with an attempt to provide some cover for God for suffering on this earth has resulted in a modern downgrading of the sovereignty, the power, the knowledge, and the love of God in contemporary “theology” (process theology). However, this is no solution. It actually makes things worse. For it means that God cannot be 100% good in all of His attributes. The whole point of suffering is to bring about Hope, which is the eternal perspective.

Romans 5:3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

2. Limiting God's attributes is no solution! Consider the Word of God. Note the absoluteness of all of the classical attributes of God, which enables God the ability to be 100% good, 100% of the time.

Isaiah 46:9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; ¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it, surely* I will do it.

- Note the sovereignty and omniscience of God and the goodness of God in times of enormous suffering.

Luke 1:37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

- The words of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Genesis 18:14 "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."

- God speaking to Abraham.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

- Promise for all church age believers.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

- The one who died for us has all authority in Heaven and Earth.

Revelation 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

- Revelation to suffering John who is exiled on the island of Patmos.

Psalms 103:13 Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.

- God has real affections for believers that are analogous to a human father's compassion.

Isaiah 49:15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. ¹⁶ "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*; Your walls are continually before Me.

- God has affections that are analogous to those of a mother.
- God is omniscient.

Jeremiah 32:16 . I prayed to the Lord 'Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, ¹⁸ who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. The LORD of hosts is His name; ¹⁹ great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds;

- This was prayed at a time when the armies of Babylon were advancing against God's people.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.

Psalm 145:9 The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

Acts 14:17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

Matthew 5:45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

- God’s goodness extends to all people. This includes good things to humanity at large, manifested in both nature and culture, in such good things as families, animals, forests, rivers, music, art, and sports.

Job 1:21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

- Consider the devastating loss of Job. The entire universe was observing Job and observes us.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones.

- Death for the believer from God's perspective.

Jeremiah 33:11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting"; *and of those* who bring a thank offering into the house of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first,' says the LORD.

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him,

Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

- Note how God's goodness is tied to His loyal love.

2 Cor 12:7-10: Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- The goodness of transcendent humility, joy, and strength in suffering.

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

- The goodness of the transcendent vertical perspective.

2Co 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

- The blessed, transcendent, eternal perspective.

1Pe 4:13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

- The goodness of sharing and being conformed to the image of Christ with transcendent joy.

Nehemiah 9:17 "And they refused to listen, And did not remember Thy wondrous deeds which Thou hadst performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But Thou art a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness; And Thou didst not forsake them.

Nehemiah 9:32 "Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who dost keep covenant and lovingkindness, Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before Thee,

- God love, especially His loyal love abounds throughout the Word of God. It proliferates. It's overflowing, even excessive—something all sufferers need to hear and believe.

1 John 3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

Romans 5:5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

1 John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

- The love of God must never be separated from His holiness. Technically, His nature is one. This is called the aseity of God.

3. To affirm the Goodness of God is not to say that God will always appear to be good, that when He is good the believer will always like Him for it. There are times when God's acts of goodness may appear harsh or even cruel—as noted in many of the previous passages. Kindness, or feeling good, is not the same as love and goodness.
4. We need more help at *being good* than *feeling good*. God's goodness is far greater than ours. It is only through the eternal perspective and faith can we live with absolute assurance of the goodness of God even in painful and horribly difficult times.
5. The bottom line: we can use the trials of life to draw closer to the lover of our souls and gain virtue like Tada or we can become victims and lose our faith like Bart Ehrman.

More on Suffering

1. God uses suffering for His glory. It is imperative that we understand that the universe is all about God and His glory. Moreover, whatever exalts God's glory also works for the ultimate good of believers. In other words, His glory accrues to the believer's eternal benefit.

Isaiah 48:10-11 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction, 11 for my own sake, for my own sake I do this.

2. God uses suffering to refine and mature us. It really is difficult to grow spiritually when all is going well.

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

3. God uses suffering for the good of displaying His work:

John 9:1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.

4. God uses suffering for the good of motivating believers to trust Him,

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

5. God uses suffering for the good of cultivating humility, 2 Cor. 12:7-10.
6. God uses suffering for the good of exposing idols in our lives, Mat. 6:24; 1 Cor. 10:7-14; Col. 3:5.
7. God uses suffering for the good of reminding us that we are not in control.
8. God uses suffering for the good of breaking our independence and arrogance so we will trust Christ. Suffering shows us who we are so we can see what we need.

9. God uses suffering for the good of building Christlikeness,

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

10. God uses suffering for the good of motivating us to live in His holiness. God is far more interested in holiness than health.

Hebrews 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

11. God uses suffering for the good of bringing us into an intimacy with Him that would be otherwise impossible.
12. While it seems counterintuitive to thank God for the good of sufferings, the fact is that the Bible commands it and countless people have been transcendentally blessed by it.

Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

13. The existence of evil does not contradict God's goodness since God can use evil to bring about a greater good.

14. A good God will eliminate evil as far as He can without losing a greater good or bringing about a greater evil. God could eliminate some evil, but the result would be a greater evil. For example, He could have killed Adam and Eve after they sinned, but then there would be no human race. He could have prevented Joni Tada from breaking her neck, but it would have been a less good from the eternal perspective.