




ADVENTUROUS  
APOLOGETICS

REASONS ON A MISSION

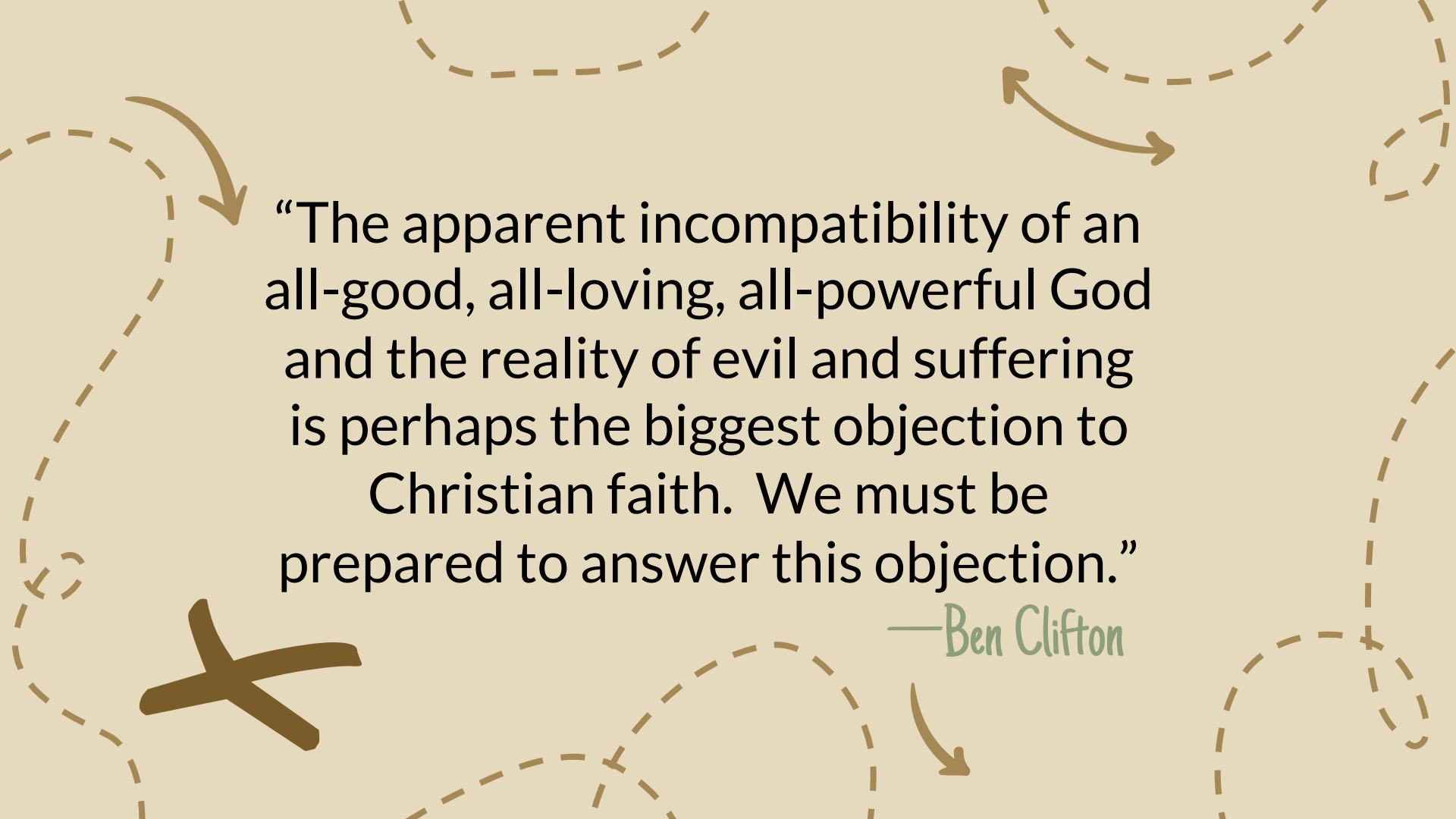


God, Evil  
— & —  
Suffering

Christian Answers  
to the Problem of  
Evil and Suffering

IF GOD IS GOOD, THEN WHY .....?



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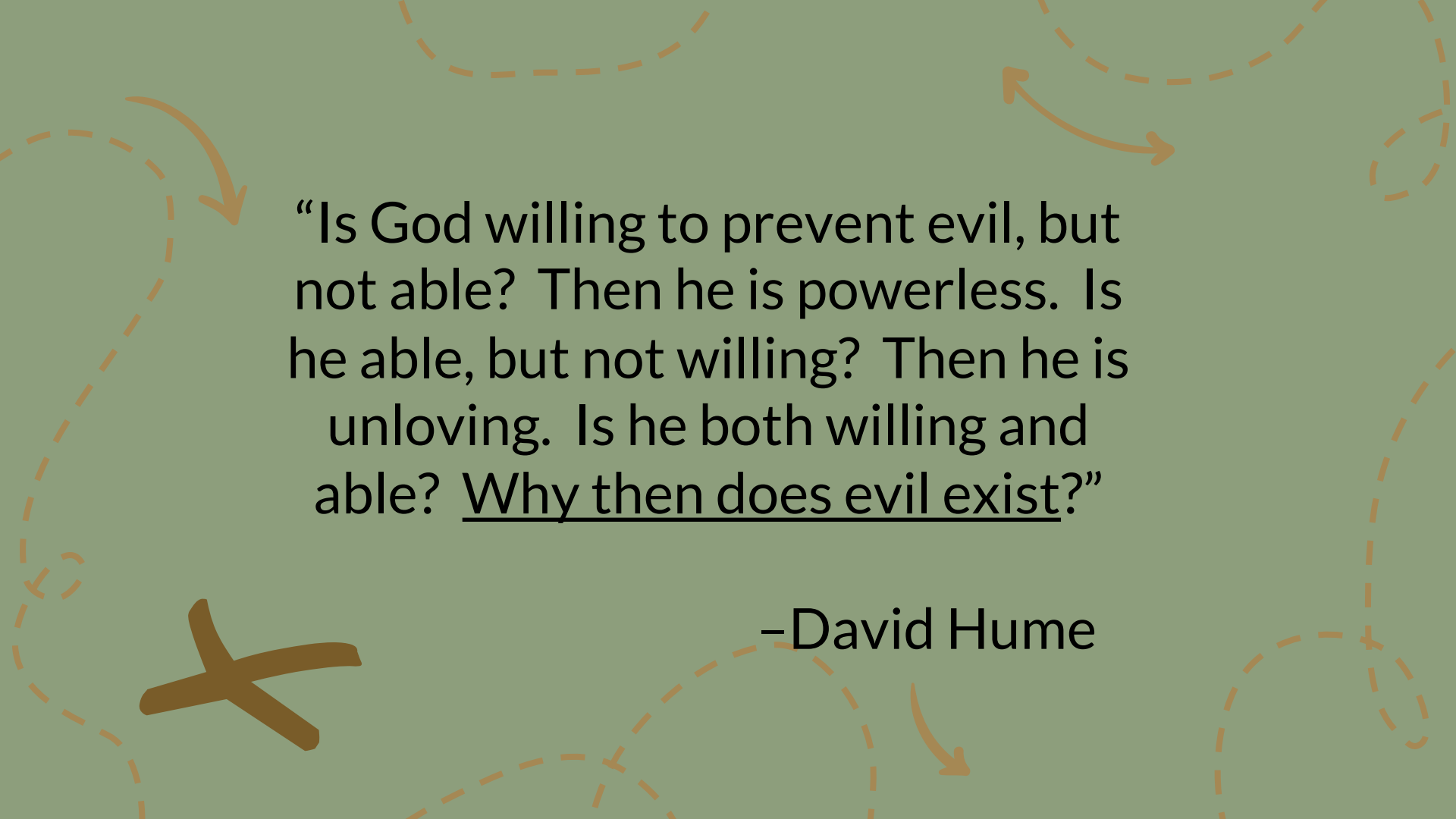
“The apparent incompatibility of an all-good, all-loving, all-powerful God and the reality of evil and suffering is perhaps the biggest objection to Christian faith. We must be prepared to answer this objection.”

—Ben Clifton



# WHAT EXACTLY IS THE PROBLEM?





“Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is powerless. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is unloving. Is he both willing and able? Why then does evil exist?”

–David Hume

# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:

1. If God exists, then he would not allow evil and suffering to exist
2. Evil and suffering exist
3. Therefore, God does not exist



THE CHARGE:  
EVIL DISPROVES GOD

THE RESPONSE:  
EVIL ACTUALLY PROVES GOD



# EVIL ACTUALLY PROVES GOD EXISTS




1. Evil implies good
2. If there is good and evil, then there is a moral law
3. If there is a moral law, there is a moral law giver
4. The moral law giver is God
5. Therefore, if evil exists, then God exists



BUT WHY DOES GOD ALLOW EVIL?

# THE PROBLEMS OF EVIL:

1. INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM OF EVIL
  - The incompatibility of God and evil
2. EMOTIONAL PROBLEM OF EVIL
  - Comforting those in suffering
3. MORAL EVIL
  - Evil that results from moral choices and actions
4. NATURAL EVIL
  - Suffering that results from natural phenomena



WHY IS THIS  
IMPORTANT?

# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



1. We must present a coherent worldview.
2. We must strengthen our faith in preparation.
3. Comfort and console those who are suffering.



# THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM

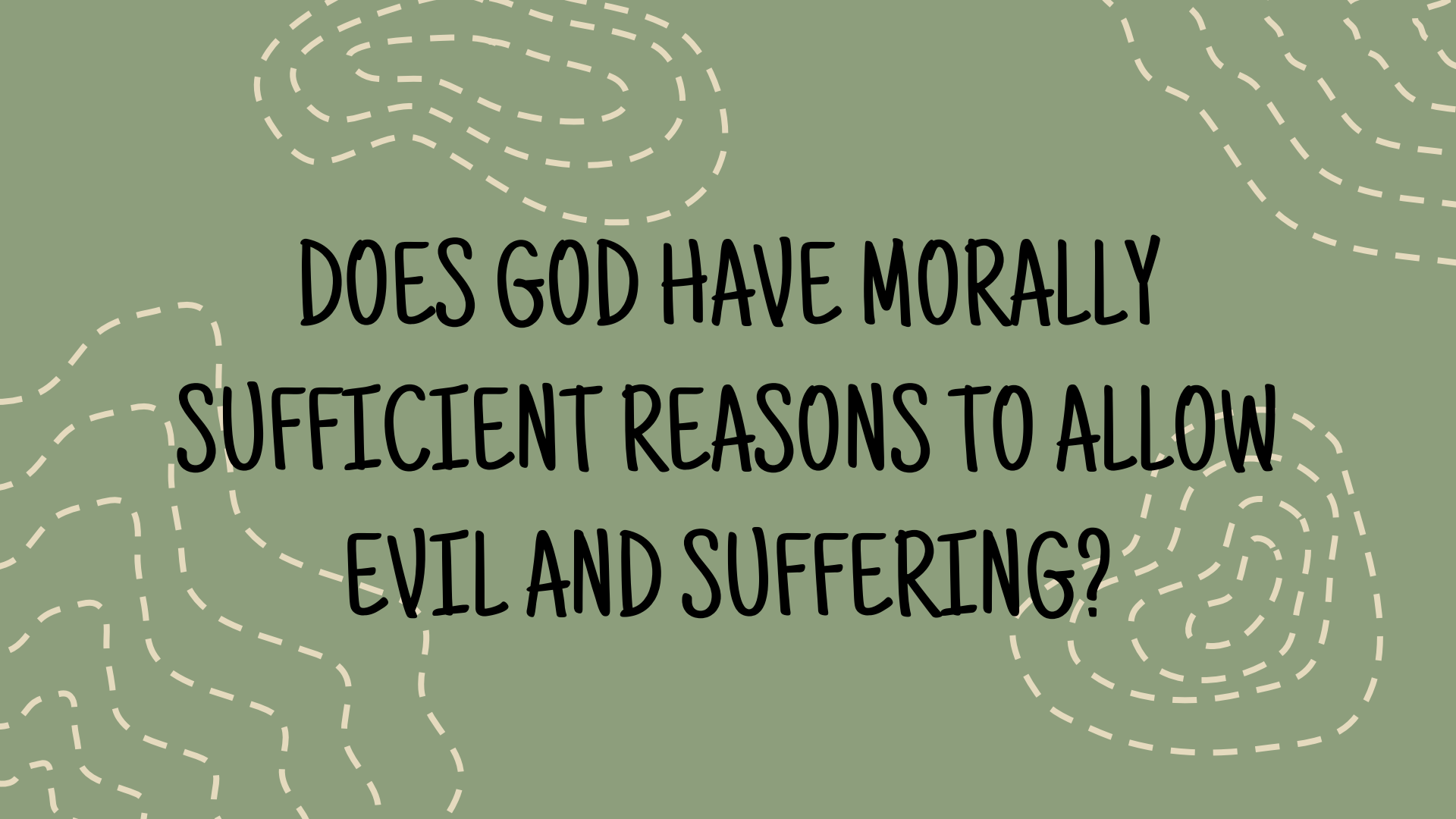


# RESOLVING THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM:



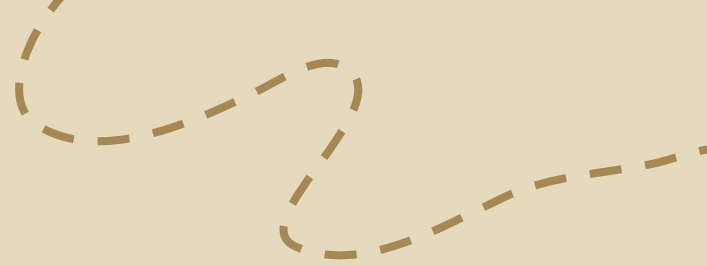
1. If God exists, then he would not allow evil and suffering to exist
2. Evil and suffering exist
3. Therefore, God does not exist

But what if God has a greater good planned that is worth the evil and suffering?



DOES GOD HAVE MORALLY  
SUFFICIENT REASONS TO ALLOW  
EVIL AND SUFFERING?

# MORALLY SUFFICIENT REASONS:



## 1. Our Salvation:

- a. The Gospel is the greatest revelation of God's merciful love and holy justice.
- b. But without evil, the Gospel does not exist.
- c. Therefore evil is necessary for God's greatest revelation.

# MORALLY SUFFICIENT REASONS:



2. “Free will defense”:
  - a. Creating humans with moral responsibility is a greater good than the evil and suffering that inevitably ensues.

# MORALLY SUFFICIENT REASONS:



3. Soul-forming effects of suffering
  - a. Suffering can result in blessings (Beatitudes)
  - b. Faithful suffering can be a powerful witness (Job)
  - c. Suffering can be used by God to display miracles (John 9)
  - d. Suffering can be the occasion for courage and heroism, benevolence and empathy, self-sacrificial love (John 15)
  - e. Suffering helps us identify with the suffering of Christ (1 Pe 4)
  - f. Suffering can be a form of discipline from God (Heb 12)
  - g. Historically, suffering results in church growth

## MORALLY SUFFICIENT REASONS:



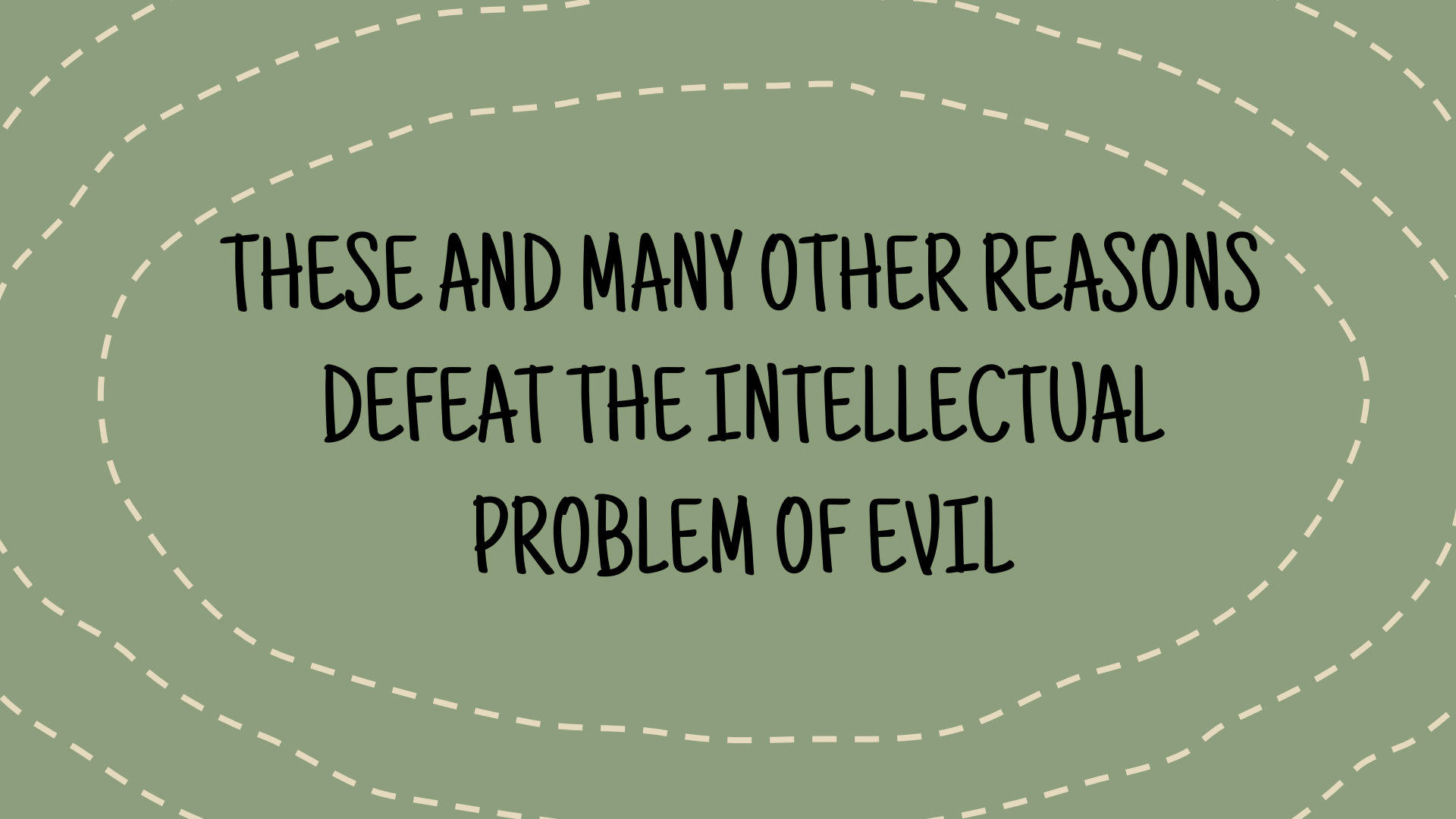
4. Natural “evil” is a consequence of the greater good of a universe designed for life.
  - a. Natural “disasters” result from a greater good
    - i. Water cycle means floods
    - ii. Fire means wildfires
    - iii. Volcanic/tectonic activity restores soil
    - iv. Wind and weather bring storms
    - v. Viruses provide more benefits than harm
  - b. Pain is our body’s protection



# MORALLY SUFFICIENT REASONS:



4. This present temporary creation with evil and suffering is the necessary prerequisite for the new eternal creation without evil and suffering:
  - a) God defeats evil in this creation through the glory of the Cross
  - b) God builds his kingdom of saved sinners in this creation
  - c) God reveals the perfection of the coming creation through the imperfection of this present creation



THESE AND MANY OTHER REASONS  
DEFEAT THE INTELLECTUAL  
PROBLEM OF EVIL



# THE EMOTIONAL PROBLEM

# DEALING WITH THE EMOTIONAL PROBLEM:



1. Give the church a strong foundation against the intellectual problem of evil so that it is resolved even in the face of the emotional problem.
2. Avoid the “prosperity gospel” that falsely guarantees worldly blessings to the faithful, or conversely that suffering is always the result of unfaithfulness.
3. Do not give answers to the intellectual problem when people are suffering and experiencing the emotional problem.

## DEALING WITH THE EMOTIONAL PROBLEM:



4. Weep with those who weep (Rom 12)
5. Give time to grieve (Ecc 3)
6. Sit in silence with those who are suffering (Job 2)
7. Be present against loneliness of those suffering (Heb 10)
8. Pray out Scripture, especially the Psalms
9. Encourage those suffering that they are sharing in Christ's suffering (Phil 3)
10. Attend to physical and material needs of those suffering (Matt 25)
11. Remind those suffering that the intellectual problem has been answered and should not destroy our faith.

# JOB'S STORY

1. Perhaps the earliest written Scripture
2. God challenged Satan with Job's example.
3. Satan accuses Job of a health and wealth gospel.
4. God allows Satan to test Job by removing his wealth and his health.
5. Job's faith is revealed.
6. Job's friends comfort him (good).
7. Job's friends misguide him with incomplete reasons for his suffering (bad).
8. Job responds that while he doesn't understand, he knows his redeemer lives.
9. Job demands an answer to his suffering.
10. God provides an answer Job doesn't expect.
11. Job's experience moved him from someone who had only "heard" of God to someone who "saw" God. He moved from religious to relationship.
12. Job's suffering was the means for this transformation, his story remains for us.



# THE NATURE OF TRUE BLESSINGS:

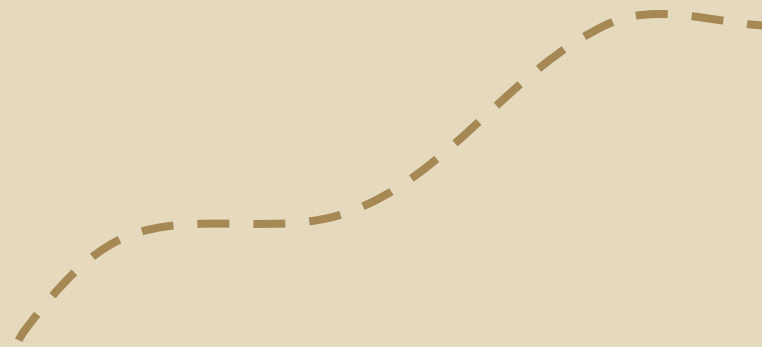


- We often mistake worldly blessings for true blessings
- Worldly blessings:
  - Things that gratify our flesh (health, wealth, power, sex)
  - They can be good, but when abused are bad
- True blessings:
  - Things that grow us closer to God
  - Suffering is not good, but when it grows us closer to God, that result is a true blessing
- The suffering Job endured was not good, but the result of his transformation was a true blessing.
- We must embrace Romans 8:28: God works all things for good for those who love Him.



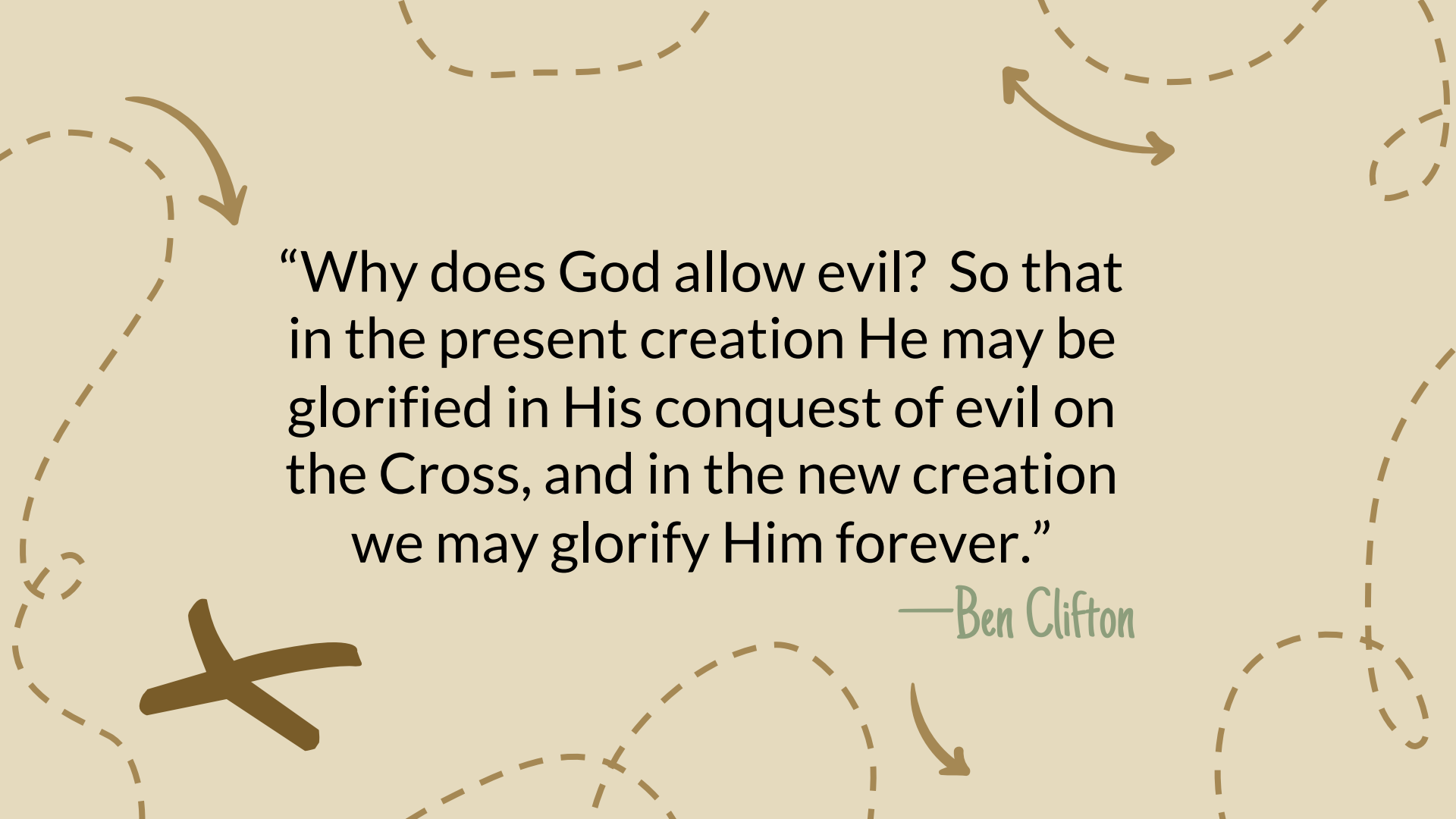
# A BIBLICAL THEODICY

A JUSTIFICATION OF GOD AND EVIL  
AND SUFFERING



# A BIBLICAL THEODICY TO CONSIDER

- By his good and all-wise counsel, God decreed to create humans in his image (and create everything else that has been created)
- God's eternal creation is one in which his glory is fully manifested, and which reflects his perfection
- Perfection includes:
  - The greatest demonstration of God's merciful love and holy justice
    - This is the demonstration of the Cross, made real by God allowing evil
  - Perfect created beings which freely love and eternally glorify God
    - Innocent love (of Adam and Eve in the Garden) is unstable, destined to fall, and imperfect
    - Only redeemed sinners (resurrected saints) can love perfectly for all eternity
    - Redemption of sinners requires God to allow the evil of the Fall
- To achieve his decree, God created this present creation, which, while not perfect, is the perfect and necessary prelude to his new and eternal creation.
- In this present creation, God reveals his merciful love and holy justice on the Cross, and through his grace redeems his adopted children. This present creation necessitates evil. But God is morally justified in allowing evil for the greater good of the new eternal creation.
- In the new, eternal creation, perfection is at last achieved.

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“Why does God allow evil? So that in the present creation He may be glorified in His conquest of evil on the Cross, and in the new creation we may glorify Him forever.”

—Ben Clifton



# OTHER WORLDVIEWS


STEP 3

# PROBLEMS WITH OTHER WORLDVIEWS:



1. Atheism: Evil (and Good) don't exist because God doesn't exist.
2. Buddhism: Evil is rooted in desires, so we must cease desires.
3. Hinduism: We pay for evil through an endless cycle of karma.
4. Islam: We pay for evil through our works of righteousness in obedience to Allah (Bad news).

Christianity: Evil is conquered on our behalf by Christ who bore the penalty of our sin, and by his grace we are saved into eternal life with God (Good news).




# RESOURCES TO GROW

## Essential Books on Evil and Suffering

- *The Many Faces of Evil*, by John Feinstein
- *Why God Allows Evil*, by Clay Jones
- *If God Is Good*, by Randy Alcorn
- *Job*, by God






Q & A





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