

The Problem of Evil and the Problem of Reductionist Arguments to Define the Unknown

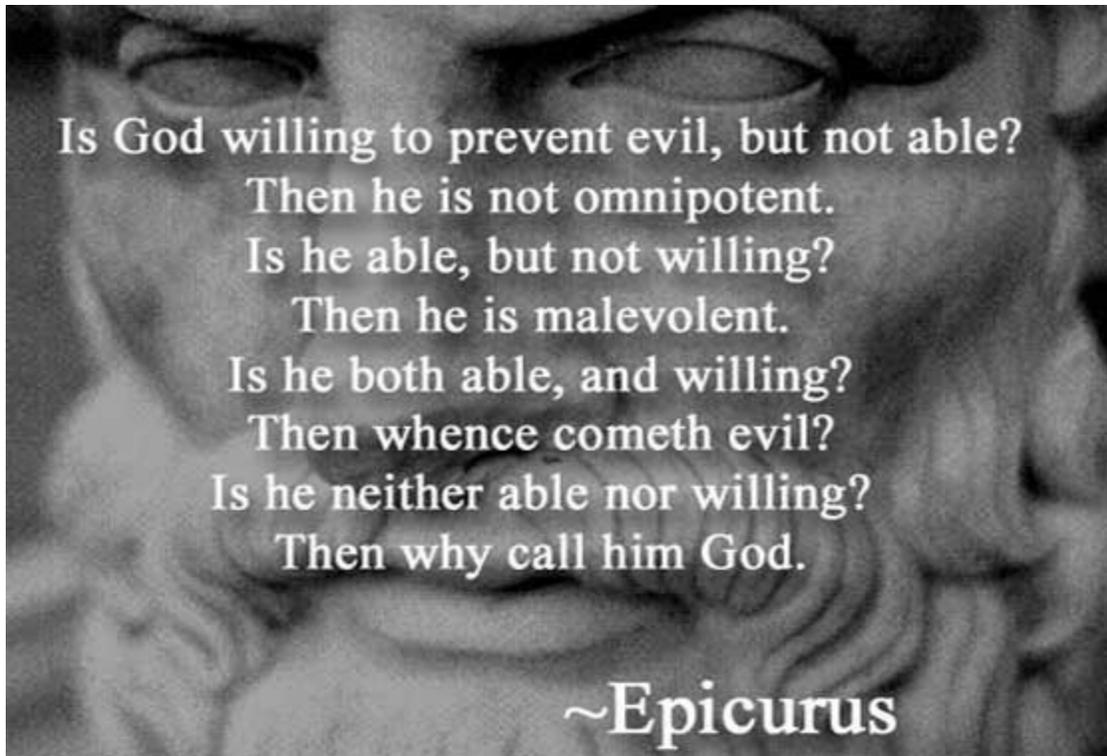
by [Nicole Smith](#)

On a surface level, the problem of evil involves a series of questions based on how evil can exist in there is a God, especially if such a God is considered to be an omnipotent figure that might have the ability to put an end to evil and sees that it exists.

This analysis of the problem of evil will first address some of the weaknesses inherent to asking such questions as they rely on the assumption that we [understand exactly what God is](#). After this critique is offered, a more general assessment of how we cannot ever know God is discussed in this or any other context. What emerges in this questioning of the problem of evil is that there while such a philosophical approach is inadequate for attempting to “prove” with any kind of empirical certainty that God does not exist, it nonetheless provides the potential of asking deeper questions about the nature of evil and including human beings and the notion of free will in the debate.

It is, after all, [human beings who enact evil](#) and this continues whether or not there is a proven God, so perhaps philosophy might be best reserved for examinations of human moral and immoral behavior and motivations rather than grappling with questions to apply to a formula that is inherently flawed in its design.

The problem of evil encompasses one of the most compelling philosophical questions that seek to whether or not God exists by examining several causal relationships that explore the nature of god, evil, and the possibilities such a God would have to notice and then expel evil, but in the end, the results of such questioning are hinged on questions that may make false and unreliable suggestions about what god is or is not, which means that the final result of the reductionist argument is not valid. However, despite the lack of [validity one finds within questions about God](#) and the problem of evil based on faulty questions, using the ideas expressed in the problem of evil to guide further inquiry about the topic of how evil can exist if there is a higher power that is omniscient is incredibly useful and leads to more interesting questions. The main weakness with the problem of evil is that the argument itself is constructed using concrete notions of what God is (despite the interjection of “if” as in “if god is omniscient”) and what evil is. It seems that to form a slightly more reliable measure of whether or not God exists using reduction to eventually boil down to answer, there would have to be more known and proven about God.



One of the first elements that should be addressed in a discussion of God and the problem of evil is the matter of omnipotence and supreme moral good. Although one can argue that the ideas expressed in questions about the problem of evil revolve around a distinctly Christian notion that evolved well [before the Enlightenment period](#), of God as one who is all-knowing and morally perfect, this might make a sound international or inter-faith argument a bit weaker. Still, if taken at face value, the problem itself questions how, if there is a supremely knowing and supremely “good” and morally perfect god, evil can exist and more specifically, how a god that was good was allow evil. If there was such a thing as an all-powerful God, such a figure would assumedly recognize the vast amounts of evil that take place and would understand this evil in the context of his own perfection of understanding of what perfection would encompass. Such a God, being omnipotent, would also be able to detect evil, as he would know all and would have the ability to put an end to evil once and for all as presumably he would have the supreme knowledge and ability to enact any great change he wished. What is most complex about God and the problem of evil is that if a God was one who was perfect, he would not only be able to recognize all forms of evil but would be able to get rid of all traces of it at any point he wished, not just for the benefit of humans, but because he as a perfect figure would have a desire to rid the world of evil.

Despite a few of its weaknesses which will be discussed below, the problem of evil argument presents an interesting way to question whether or not God exists, even if it cannot provide a sound or perfectly acceptable answer. After all, there is no way for any

mathematician, scientists, or philosopher to ever come close to designing some infallible formula to answer such an ethereal question. What the questions surrounding the problem of evil do is set up the ideal scenario—that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and morally perfect and then, by suggesting that a God would both recognize the presence of evil and allow it to continue, or not recognize it all would mean that God is not one of the aspects defined that made him God in the first place. In other words, this logical only holds if God is imagined as a “figure” that has substance, understanding, makes conscious decisions—this idea does not account for alternate views of God who could be, for some, a withered old tree in the middle of a clearing rather than an ephemeral being who watches us all at once, knows everything, and has a supreme moral will.

The elements just stated serve as prefacing questions to the real debate which is, if there is a god who is omnipotent and who is morally perfect, how could he allow for evil to take place? This continuation of evil could mean a couple of different things, all of which would serve to weaken many foundations of the Christian faith. For instance, the problem of evil states that the continued presence of evil must mean that either God is not know that evil is occurring, does not have to ability to prevent evil, or simply does not have any will to bother making evil stop. The reductionist argument that takes all of these “facts” in mind about God and then reduces them down to a formula that is much like if x exists but is dependent on y to be valid, then x cannot exist. Certainly, in this argument, God does not exist. However, while the questions of the problem of evil are thought-provoking, in themselves they do not provide a reliable formula for determining whether or not God exists, instead it is more a philosophical exercise that creates more questions than answers. One of the most profound problems with the “problem of evil” argument is that, as noted earlier, it is too sure in its assumptions about what God is and heavily relies on the Christian tradition of the all-seeing, all-knowing God who actively rejects evil in biblical tradition. Furthermore, in these many assumptions made about the nature of God and evil, there are far too many places where weaknesses in the conditions that lead to the final reductionist argument that God does not exist. Problems with the questions themselves mean that the answer is not valid, which does discount this theory as being any kind of reliable measure about whether or not God exists.

There is no way to empirically prove a formula that either confirms or denies the existence of God, no matter how carefully constructed it might be. If I were to give my own overall assessment of this theory, it would be that it provides a useful roadmap for asking more comprehensive questions about God and how evil (especially to such drastic degrees) can exist but little else. The fact is, when it comes to theological philosophy, we have spent thousands of years taking wild stabs in the dark—there is no way to prove or analyze that which we cannot see. Even more importantly is the

argument that if there actually is some kind of omnipotent, perfect being that is guiding us or at least observing us, who are we, as mere mortals to seek to define and understand what this being's purposes are? To further highlight this idea, we could still have a God that is all-powerful, all-knowing, and has the ability to stop evil when he sees it but who chooses not to so that humans can exercise freewill. Perhaps, more interestingly, this God considers our "right" to exert freewill and make our own way more morally correct and more aligned with the divine than interfering directly to prompt us to change the course of our lives and world. Again, there cannot be answers when we seek to define God because it might very well be that if such a divine entity existed, he or she might have motivations that are far too great for our minds to grasp and accept.

It seems that the best way to consider objectively the problem of evil is to take an anti-establishment stance in terms of organized religions and unified theories of what God is. For thousands of years religions have identified their own diverse deities and have used such deities to construct systems of moral behavior and action that are appropriate for that culture. Arguing that the problem of evil either proves or disproves God could only be adequately done so (although proof would still never emerge) the person making such an argument did so from the perspective of one with a clear notion of exactly what God's motivations were. Since we can never know that if a God exists, such a figure would conform to our ideas of what we think God should embody (moral perfection, complete reign over our lives, omnipotence) we can never fully understand evil. All that we do know at this point is that human beings have the ability to make their own decisions that are free. Perhaps then, until some major event happens that somehow puts the God puzzle together for us and lets us finally see if the notion of God is fallacy or truth, philosophy as a discipline should spend more time examining freewill and the concept of human goodness and evil to come up with a paradigm that will help us in the here and now. We need philosophy to pose questions about our lives, cultures, and inherent motivations and embedded ideas in order to progress as citizens of our communities and the world.



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