

German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche boldly reported in 1882 that “God is dead.” Well I’m sure 6 million Jews in World War II might agree. Where was God when all hell broke loose in Germany? When a woman carried her baby for nine months, she became a mother. In the birthing moment the baby died. Where was God? My wife works in prenatal care in Radiology. Weekly women come out of the exam room with horrified stunned looks on their faces. They are carrying dead babies. Where is God in that?

Children have predators called pedophiles. Women get raped. An old woman gets beat up for 10 dollars in her purse. Where is God? Priests set up schools for kids and they abuse them. Aboriginals get their history, culture, and language crushed by the white man. Where is God? A man survived a horrific plane crash. The bodies were strewn all over the crash site. It was found that an emergency vehicle drove over the man’s barely alive body on the ground and he died. Fate maybe or where was God?

I want to be sick. I cannot talk about God like that. I equally hate talking about tragedy. It seems that bad things happen, yet were helpless to do anything about it. I guess we can do the unthinkable. Is the cup half full or empty? I really hate that saying. I think we should kill the cup! Still though, there is merit to positive thinking. Is God responsible, or to blame, for our misery?

I thought we could talk about God and find out if he is to blame for why you reject the real God. Some of us say they believe in a good God but not the church one. So do we have different Gods? My father and I had a philosophical discussion at a restaurant. What else can we talk about around the dinner table? He said he just can’t get past good people in different religions. If they are good people, then why are they going to hell if they don’t believe in Jesus? Why is the Christian faith so sure of itself, and so judgmental? Dad, those are fair questions.

There are many reasons we don't go to church. There are also many reasons people refuse to believe. Charles Templeton was a good friend and fellow evangelist of Billy Graham. In 1957 Charles let his doubt win over, and he declared himself to be agnostic. He believes something is out there but he is unsure what that is. Most people are agnostic. They believe in something, but believe in what? The problem might be: if the world sucks, then how can God be in control? Equally if God is in control then why does the world suck?

So far I have talked about belief, hope, faith, and love plus good and bad people. I have touched on physical, mental, verbal, and spiritual abuse by people. Can we connect those traits to God? If we are his people then why are we crushed under the weight of sin: our own and the sin of others. Where is God in all this? My answer is simple: don't blame God. Oh sure of course you would say that Patrick. Defend God when he killed my child. The problem with that logic is that we expect far too much and far too little from God.

Ok, let's take a breather and think about this. Why are so many of us leaving the church? We are denouncing faith left right and center. Why? Maybe it is several things, and they don't have anything to do with the actions of God. As humans we want our cake and eat it too. The real problem is us. We have always wanted to be the center of attention.

It's basic really. Think of a child. We treat a new born as gold. They get everything they desire. Many times they cry and we give them more. What happens when a two year old throws a tantrum in a store? Right, we get a hell of a mess. The store manager is asking us to leave. We get "The look" from our spouse for not doing the right thing to shut them up. Many times one parent says give in and the other says don't. The other customers want to kill us. Then there is this one little old lady who smiles at you because she has been there several times. Children are

raised as spoiled brats, and we spend the rest of our lives as parents trying to un-spoil them. That is who we are in Gods eyes.

God provided for us right from birth. First of all; we exist. If we think about our planet, and our existence on it, that is a major miracle in itself. We do not live in caves like the rest of the animals. We have everything animals don't like phones, cars, grocery stores, and shopping malls. We have police and justice. Ok that is not the best example but do animals have justice, safety, and consequences for their actions? If God is in it, we are the spoiled child of creation, yet we abuse that gift.

Let's look at two really good examples. I have a Pastor friend who does not believe in creation. He even thinks that miracles are not possible. Through "His" understanding and "His" eyes: truth is "His" by what makes sense in "His" mind. He joined a gay church because he sees freedom in Christ to be "Freedom to be who you want to be." His lead Pastor has chosen to not say "Jesus is God" anymore. The problem is in all this: there is a focus on what we see, believe, and understand. A divine God seems too unreal in this world. I will say more but hold on to that thought.

The second example is in Canada. Years ago, Canada had what we call Christian principles. We were for the most part founded on them. They are the Ten Commandments. They are easy nonrestrictive rules ex: don't steal and don't murder. I get it. At some point the Liberal government of the day decided to push it's ideology on the public realm. They began by saying the church and state shall not mix. That in itself is fine but what they meant was "State rules" hence out with the commandments.

Liberal ideology believes that we all have to find a way to not offend. There is no truth because everything is right. It gets crazy because victims and murderers have rights to be who

they are. Recently there has been a push to legalize prostitution, drugs, and gambling. This is my point. We all know these things hurt many people, but in the name of freedom we must be free to choose. It is offensive to deny anyone anything they want. However: God and religion must stay out, because it wants the 10 simple rules.

These two examples were to show you what freedom looks like. In reality we want our cake and eat it too. We are the spoiled child. John 8:36 says **“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”** These words are probably used quite a bit in my friend’s gay church. Whether or not the gay life style is a sin or not is not my fight. Do what you want. I just find it interesting that we find scripture to fit our life rather than making our lives fit the scripture. Liberal seems good because we get what we want, but the taxes we pay for the fallout from those habits are nasty. My young son says we should pay 50% tax so we are covered for everything. Does that include Gods opinion?

In the end we are stuck with a choice. Look at these two verses.

Genesis 15:16 **“In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”**

James 1: 14-15 **“But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; 15 then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.**

If we are considered Gods children then must he parent us differently: yes because he is God dumb ass. Now that is a silly answer. When we are in a store we want the parents to parent. When we see a kid acting up we think “Shut the kid up” and “He is a spoiled brat” all at the same time. In the end we don’t want our kids to be like that kid. It’s the same for God isn’t it? Don’t we want God to parent like we do? Does he have the right to parent his way?

We want to do drugs freely, but we want God to make sure it's safe. There was a girl distraught after a bar killing at 2 am. Her quote was interesting **“Why can't this just be a fun and safe place to party?”** How about in a bar at 2 am? Should that be a safe place? In the show “The Walking Dead” Rick gets stuck in a tank while surrounded by Zombies. Over the radio he hears “Hey dumb ass in the Tank.” Isn't it late at night where the bad people thrive? Have you ever seen a daytime bar killing? Maybe God should have said over a loud speaker to that young lady “Hey dumb ass in a bar at 2 am?” Question: should God make sin safe?

The verses above show the parenting of God. He is like us. We have fun with our kids until they break us. If a kid wines and then shuts up we ignore them, but if they push it they get a smack. As parents we wait until the sin (or action) is full. It hits the breaking point. God is the creator and parent of us. He waits until we are full of the sin. We as humans will never ever learn by being commanded to not sin. Hence, The Ten Commandments: that worked. We as a society have tossed them out. God provides and God gives his children and they respond or don't. That my friend is called: “Freedom of choice.”

Oh sure, we are not sure if we want that. Surely that did not apply to that guy; the guy who chose to kill; the woman who chose to overdose and cost the taxpayer tons in medical bills; and the Politian who chose to accept a million dollar taxpayer payout. Freedom does not extend out to them does it? We are free as long as it stays in our own barn right? When where the last time our freedom to sin did not go wrong? When did it not affect others? In all this should we blame God? All he did was give us total freedom. Where in “Total freedom” is restraint and control? Right, it is within us not God.

We give our children the freedom to not touch, do their homework, and not kick the dog. Do they comply? Nope, but they have the freedom and choice. Are we bad parents? Sure Patrick,

but God has the ability to stop this. Yes he does, and if he limits some people's choices he limits everyone's. Is that the price of the freedom we want? We want freedom, don't we? I just dialoged with a friend on face book; she wants to limit gambling but give freedom for drugs. Nice, she wants to gain freedom for her own desires but set limits for others. Again, it comes back to us doesn't it? We want what we want for our own interests over others: our cake and eat it too.

There was a show on the other day called Scorpion. The main character does not believe in God or faith. He does; however, believe in fate. Ok, so in this story a little boy is buried in a sink hole on a beach. The boy is in trouble because he is caught under a rock and the ocean is coming in. This man of Scorpion decided he can save the boy with his smarts. In the end he does and takes the credit. The frantic Mom says "Thank God" because he sent in a savior: the man from Scorpion. Is the mom or the man from Scorpion delusional?

Let's go in another direction because life on this planet is not that simple. There is this thing called Spiritual warfare. God seems to be battling with us all the time. We want to decide are own truth limits and so does God. In spiritual warfare there is another list of characters in the equation: Demons and Satan. God, for a very long time, has been at war with the spiritual. The big picture is beyond creation. Satan was thrown down on this earth with fallen angels. This probably was an epic war in the heavens. This simple planet then becomes more complicated.

It seems on the surface to be stupid. Why would God throw evil down where his creation is? That in itself seems to be counterproductive. The interesting part is this: Satan needed a good lesson in devotion. He felt that he should be considered equal with God. We tend to think we are equal too. It all comes back to something said in Job 1. Look at Job 1:9-10 "**Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have you not put a fence around**

him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.”

These verses say it all. God has given us everything just like I said a few minutes ago. Satan has noticed. In a way God gave Satan everything in heaven too. He was even given a title right next to him on the throne. It must have bugged him that he was not number 1. We do that too. We say God is dead, science disproves God, and we don't need God in our State. Satan and humans seem to be a match made in heaven. I think God believes we are a match made on earth too. Why not put these to silly dumb bunnies together and let them kill each other.

The other side is devotion. If God gave us Satan and he gave us freedom, what would happen? The choice is simple: chose Satan, God, or neither. It comes back to Job 1. God is still saying to Satan “They will choose me still, even if you are right there.” Some choose Satan and others choose neither, but what bugs Satan are those who still choose God. Satan hates freedom of choice. God is loved more by those who freely choose to love over forced devotion.

God allows bad things to be played out. One thing the book of Job gives us is a picture of this spiritual warfare. Bad things happen because Satan can't help himself. Did you ever ask yourself “Why didn't Satan win Job over by blessing him?” It just isn't in his nature to bless. There is a reason he is a Prince of lies, death, and sin. It's his way of doing things. God's way seems to be to put us in harm's way and see if we love him unconditionally. I think he does that because that is where the greatest love is found.

In earthly spiritual warfare we have two types of creation wanting the same thing: they both want to be considered equal with God. Wait a minute Patrick; humans don't think they are equal with God. Oh they don't do they? Who took God out of our government, schools, and Christmas? Who put forth evolution theories? Who said God is dead? The Russians traveled into

space and pride fully pronounced that heaven was not there, God does not exist. We want to make the rules about sin. This is our world right? That is the crux of it isn't it. Whose planet is this?

This question is being played out in a war. This is a spiritual war between God and Satan. Any guesses who is in the middle? We are not pons. God is on our side. Back to Job 1 again. God says fine, go to my friend Job, but you can't harm him. Again Patrick what about those who die at the hand of a bad person? Who saved him? My answer is this: what do you want: freedom of speech; freedom to gamble; or maybe freedom to kill? What does freedom look like to you? The role you want God to play in your life will be the same for your neighbor's, right? That's the kicker. We all have a different point of view on what God's role should be. If you were God, what do you want freedom to look like? This comes back to my first chapter. Why do people tell me I am not who I think I am?

I am me. If you think that sucks then find a new friend. I am who I am. I can't and won't change for anybody. If I did then I'd have to change for everyone I meet. Each of us looks at the other different. I am me. In the same way God is God. He says he never changes so that we know who he is. The problem is that we and Satan don't like it. We want God to play ball with our individual view of God. Doesn't God have the freedom to be himself just like the freedom he gave us?

In the end of Job, God goes on a rant asking Job if he knows why things are the way they are. God poses a series of questions for Job to answer. In the end, Job is humbled because he does not know why. We all have many questions. Something's are just not answerable. The best answer I can give about why God does not protect us all is: freedom. In its fullness (there is that word again) freedom has to be given to all. True love has to be free. Within that comes the

freedom to choose. Freedom is: to sin or not. Sin is really anything we do for our own desire that hurts others. It's tough not to sin because we love to be spoiled like little children.

Look at God this way. He is the principle in a school. He says to the students to play fair when you're in the school yard. In class I will provide everything you need to learn and grow. Yet in school we cheat, play hooky, fight, and judge people around us. What is the principle to do? The school was meant to be a perfect environment for students. The principle could stop the bad kids. He knows who they are, but he is principled (pun intended). Play fair, this is a school. Sometimes he suspends but that is not his desire. He wants the students to get along.

That is God. We have been given so much to succeed. Yet we chose to pick up a gun and kill instead of hunt. We talk down to people instead of building them up. I don't have all the answers as to why this person died. Maybe it's just that simple: God took them out of this hell hole. Most of the time bad people get what's coming soon enough. Why do we talk about karma or your up and comings. What comes around does come around. Sometimes it just takes time.

God is the good guy in all this. God made this place for our good. We and Satan have turned it upside down. God gave us the ability to ask for help through prayer. We can read his word and feel his Spirit. We can keep our water and air clean. We can help rather than hinder.

John F Kennedy said in his Inaugural address as president to the American people "**My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.**" Maybe we should be asking what we could do more than what God can do. Is it possible God should have addressed humans in Genesis 1 the same way? We ask way too much of God and we equally ask way too little. We only tend to pray in hard times; go to church twice a year; and clean off the dust of our Bible so it looks used. We fail to see what God has done, and we fail to ask what he can do.

This whole chapter is not just a rant or information session. I know people blame God for stuff. They don't go to church because God let a baby die. They refuse to be Christian because some Pastor stole money or a Priest sexually assaulted a boy. We have a ton of excuses for not believing. Oh but we do believe. When pressed most people say they do but... It's time we grow up and face the mirror. God is not the problem: we are. We want this life our way. We set up different churches to suit our taste. If its Gods church then did anyone ask him what his taste is? Does each McDonalds look different? Overall they do so don't argue with me. I can still get a big mac and fries anywhere in the world at McDonalds. His church just might look far different than we think.

God's church looks different in our world because we want it our way. We like certain preaching, certain music, and certain values. A gay believer would not like going to a conservative church and vice versa. Who is right in that situation? We want God to make the playground safe, but leave me alone if want to bop Betty Sue for stealing my boyfriend. Drinking is fun and safe until something goes wrong (usually does). If I drink and I drive: God save me from my mistake of killing someone. We want no responsibility for the things we want. Just like spoiled children.

Your excuse for not believing in God is because he does not change. We would have to change to fit God and that is a problem. This book is about knowing you, knowing people, and knowing God. They all work together, but we must adjust to those around us. I am not saying change but adjust. A reset on your thinking might be needed. Maybe you are to blame for your problems. Maybe you allow bad people to be bad towards you. Maybe you allow yourself to hate rather than look for the good in things. Maybe, just maybe the real answer to your problems is in the mirror.

Maybe, the answer can be also found in a picture. I find it strange that we want people to be just like we picture them to be. I read a book called “Love Addiction.” The most interesting part was what where addicted too. You would think its sex or drugs. Sometimes yes, but in many ways we are truly addicted to a picture. I have a picture of the perfect wife. I have a picture of what is a good time. I have tons of pictures of you, me, and life. When the real world does not match our picture then we get disappointed. It’s the same with God. The picture of him is never what he is really like, and that is troubling.

One other thing the addictions book said was that we try and accommodate the picture. We are tempted to change the person in the mirror to align ourselves with others. We change our lives to align ourselves with life around us. Changing who we are to align is a deadly mixture. Part of our problem is mixing what we see in the mirror; the picture we have of others; and expectations in life. False pictures dive us insane as we try and be everything to everyone.

Paul in the Bible is still Paul but he said in 1 Corinthians 9 **“To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.”** We are compassionate to those who are vegetarian at dinner. We are careful to say the right things in public. We go to “their” choice of movie. Many times we like meat, have alternate opinions, and hate dumb movies, but we do these things for others because we love people. Paul is not asking us to change but to be compassionate and mindful of others.

Life deals us strange cards sometimes. What we want and what we get are often two different things. It’s when we blame others and blame God for what happens, we get into a tight spot. Being you, should not hinge on everything around you. You are who you are in all

circumstances. Believing should not hinge on what happens in life. You can still be you and believe. Mixing our expectations, life's messes, and our picture of this world can distort reality.

Don't blame God for the world he gave us. It began with being called by him "Very good." God did not make anyone do anything they didn't do in their own hearts first. It says in Exodus that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. What God did was allow Pharaoh the opportunity to play out what his heart wanted. He did not really want to let Moses and the Israelites go. God gave Pharaoh the same opportunity that he gave to Satan in Job.

He gives us the same choices today. The real question should be: "What does your heart really want?" Do your actions reflect God or your own heart's desire? I am asking you to begin to believe again. I know you already did at one time. Don't blame God for what people do freely. Don't blame the church for the bad people in it. The church began as good. People begin as good, but sin and desire get in the way.

Satan can't make you do anything. He does however see you sneak a peek in a playboy, or take an extra sip of whiskey. He can see what you secretly desire. Satan just provides simple steps for you to have those secret desires. It's not his fault they lead to trouble many times. To him you're the fish and he gives a pretty nice looking hook.

I'd like to end this chapter with a revisit to James 1. Sometimes the Bible hits it right on the head.

James 1:12- 16 **"Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. 13 No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. 14 But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; 15 then, when that**

desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved.”

I guess I could have quoted James and have not written 13 pages of nothingness. Yet I see my desire for you in these verses. I just wanted to guide you back to James. If Job had this chapter how would it have changed that book? Job is all about arguing who God really is. James in four verses tells us plainly. Satan tempts, God offers us freedom to get away from those desires, and we sometimes chose the path to destruction.

God is not to blame. People are to blame for their abuse of freedom. Love God because he loves you. God hates bad people just as much as you do. We don't really know where or how God is working in our lives and the lives of bad people. Many many people I know are wearing masks. We see very little that is truly going on in this world. Nothing is exactly as it seems on earth.

Let me end with a Proverb. This is Old Testament stuff but it still applies today. Let it be a reminder that for thousands of years the war of deception for your soul has been raging. Don't give in to Satan and hate God for no fault of Gods.

Proverbs 5: 1-6

My child, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding,

2 so that you may hold on to prudence, and your lips may guard knowledge.

3 For the lips of a loose woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol. 6 She does not keep straight to the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.