I. What is the Problem of Evil?

A. The General Problem

C.S. Lewis: “If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.”

B. Dividing the Problem

1. Intellectual Problem
2. Emotional Problem

C. Distinguish between the two problems in your conversations

II. Negative Argument: Challenge the non-Christian Worldview

A. Challenge the Unbeliever’s Standard for Good/Evil: “To what standard do you appeal in order to distinguish good from evil?”

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of “just” and “unjust”?...What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?...Of course, I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies...Consequently, atheism turns out to be too simple.” --C.S. Lewis

1. It is not only that the atheist has no basis for morality, it’s that his own atheistic worldview destroys the possibility of their being an absolute basis for morality.
2. What if the non-Christian says there are no moral norms in the universe?

B. Challenge the Specific Argument based on the Problem of Evil

1. Traditional Formulation of the Problem

   P1. God is all-good
   P2. God is all-powerful
   P3. Such a God would prevent evil in every circumstance
   P4. Evil Exists
   C1. Therefore such a God cannot exist.
2. Free Will Defense?

3. A Better Solution: Challenge Premise 3
   a. Such a God would prevent evil in every circumstance ONLY if he did not have a morally sufficient reason for the evil that exists. But, the Christian claim is that God DOES have a morally sufficient reason.
   b. The non-Christian therefore must show that God could not have a morally sufficient reason for ordaining evil.
      - Atheist cannot prove a universal negative
      - Atheist not in an intellectual position to know something like this (he is finite, fallible, limited)

III. Positive Argument: Give a Christian Explanation for Evil in the World

A. Christianity has a basis for distinguishing good and evil in the first place

B. God owes man no explanation for his action
   1. Job
   2. Rom 9:14

C. Scriptures give some (but not all) reasons for suffering/evil
   1. To punish sin (John 5:14)
   2. Discipline of believers (Heb 12)
   3. For God to display his glory and mercy (Rom 9:17-23)

D. God has ordained evil for his good purposes throughout history
   1. Joseph
   2. Jesus

E. One day God will bring complete resolution and justice