

It is difficult for me to try to wrap my head around the idea of God: the idea is that there is a Supreme Being that rules over everything, created everything, and knows everything. It is scary and disheartening to think that this all-powerful being looks down on us from His perfect kingdom, watches us suffer, and seems to do nothing. At least, that is what I used to think. For most of my life, I accepted that there is some supernatural being, but never looked beyond it. I never questioned *why* there must be a God and *why* He does the things He does. I chose to ignore these questions and like many other teenagers, I wanted to “live in the moment.” In hindsight, I can see that I lived with no intentional purpose or meaning. During my time at John Adams Academy, my perspective began to change. By reading great literature, I took my first steps toward understanding something on a much larger magnitude. Nothing has impacted my life more than understanding that God is loving and just, and I came to understand this truth deeply because of my education at John Adams Academy.

The first memory I have about discussing the existence of God was in my sophomore year. In humanities class, we read Thomas Aquinas's five proofs for God's existence and after reading his arguments my perspective flipped. Although I understood that there is a God, I never delved deeper into understanding why there is a God. Reading and discussing this in class enabled me to see that God's existence is reasonable, and that there is a logical train of thought when we think about a Supreme Being. If everything is in motion and something must put another into motion, then you must have a first mover that dictates the beginning of all motion. If it is true that there is a first mover, then it also must be true that this first mover cannot be something that can be moved. For in order to be first, it must remain in its place and have an infinite existence. Accepting these proofs has helped me significantly in my faith in God and helped me think more deeply on this topic.

During my sophomore year, I felt a door had opened and I was able to ponder on ideas greater than what I might be doing over the weekend. Life, to me, became more interesting and strangely colorful. I was more optimistic and hopeful. My actions were more deliberate, and I found that every day was more joyful than the last. My final step through that door was a year later during the summer. I

attended a program at the college, Thomas Aquinas, where we held mock classes to try to experience what a day in the life of an attending college student would be like. We were given material such as Euripides, Flannery O'Connor, the Bible, and my favorite, Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*. In one chapter of Boethius' book, he handles the question of evil and how it affects virtuous men. He claims that evil men have no sway over the virtuous and will forever be miserable because they can never attain their goal of what is good. I was struck by what he said, and it helped me to realize that God does not allow evil without purpose.

Going into senior year, I kept this in the back pocket of my mind as something I wanted to go back and look into more and the thesis assignment gave me the perfect opportunity to delve in deeper. So I wrote my thesis about God and Evil, specifically that evil proves the existence of God. In my thesis, I state that God must exist for the following reason: if evil is dependent on good and good is dependent on God, then evil proves God's existence. Evil, being the absence of good, is like a parasite. In order for evil to live, it must feed on what is good. And if good is the product of God because He is the source of all goodness, then evil must also be dependent on God. Therefore, evil proves God's existence.

After writing and defending my thesis, my faith has become more concrete. I can now say with confidence that God exists, and that He is a loving and just God because He does not allow evil without a purpose. Because of John Adam Academy's classical approach to education, I do not believe I could be as firm in my faith as I am today. Learning from the great thinkers has helped me in a way that no matter where I go, I have the tools to be happy. Realizing that God is good and just has helped me to see that suffering is not a meaningless happenstance with effects that will linger forever. All things have a purpose and although we as humans might not see them, God in Heaven has a plan for all His creations. Everything happens for a reason and that is a comfort to me and to all people who have struggled.

I am grateful to have been able to attend John Adams Academy and to the many wonderful teachers I had during my nine years at both the Roseville and El Dorado Hills campuses.