

Mere Christianity Discussion Questions

Preface

Where does the title come from?

Book I: Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe

Chapter 1. The Law of Human Nature

What is the difference between quarrelling and fighting?

Why is it called “the Law of Nature”?

What are the two basic concepts of chapter one?

Chapter 2. Some Objections

Is the Moral Law social convention or instinct? Why or why not?

Chapter 3. The Reality of the Law

Why is the Moral Law not “what human beings, in fact, do”?

How do the laws of nature contrast with this idea?

Is a violation of the Moral Law the fact that what a person did is inconvenient to you?

Is morality what is useful?

Chapter 4. What Lies Behind the Law

What are the two major views held about the universe and what are their implications?

Chapter 5. We Have Cause to be Uneasy

What is the first bit of evidence about the Somebody?

What is the other bit of evidence we have about the Somebody besides the Moral Law?

What does Lewis conclude from the second bit of evidence?

What facts must one face in order for Christianity to make sense? Why?

Book II: What Christians Believe

Chapter 1. The Rival Conceptions of God

What one thing do Christians not have to believe?

What is the first big division?

What is the next big division?

Chapter 2. The Invasion

What two things are too simple?

Comment on the sentence, “It is a religion you could not have guessed.”

What two views face all the facts?

What is the catch in dualism?

Comment: “Badness is only spoiled goodness.”

P. 44. Can you think of any evil that’s not goodness gone bad?

Chapter 3. The Shocking Alternative

What is the point of Lewis’s discussion of free will?

What especially remarkable claim (shocking thing) did Jesus make?

What is “The Shocking Alternative”?

What are good dreams?

What are the three alternatives about Jesus?

Chapter 4. The Perfect Penitent

Is it necessary to believe a particular theory of atonement?

What is the only way out of a “hole”?

What is the catch about repentance?

How can God die?

Chapter 5. The Practical Conclusion

When does the next step in evolution occur?

What is “the practical conclusion”?
 What three things spread the Christ life to us?
 How much of what you believe is believed on authority?
 Can you lose the Christ-life?
 Does the Christian think God will love us because we are good?
 What does “in Christ” mean?

Book III: Christian Behavior

Chapter 1. The Three Parts of Morality

Why are there moral rules?
 What are the two ways in which the human machine goes wrong?
 What are the three parts of morality?
 Which is mostly emphasized?
 So what? Does morality hinder or free?
 Does it matter what a public person does in his private life?
 Does it matter whether or not I am the landlord of my own mind and body?

Chapter 2. The “Cardinal Virtues”

What are the Cardinal Virtues?
 What are the Theological virtues?
 How do you define them?
 What is an example of a child’s heart and a grown-up’s head?
 Does it matter how or why you do something?

Chapter 3. Social Morality

What is Lewis’s summary of the Golden Rule?
 Who believes the Golden Rule?
 Does the New Testament give us a detailed political program?
 Instead, what does it give us?
 What is Lewis’s rule for giving?
 What is the great obstacle to charity?
 How are most of us approaching the subject of social morality?

Chapter 4. Morality and Psychoanalysis (V.C. = Victoria Cross, the highest British award for bravery)

When should we listen to Freud and when not?
 What is Lewis’s view of homosexuality?
 In what realm does psychoanalysis help us and in what realm does it not?
 What are you doing with the central part of you when you make a choice?
 Comment: “When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less.”

Chapter 5. Sexual Morality

What is the difference between “offending against chastity,” “bad manners,” and “being uncharitable”?
 What assumptions should old and young not make?
 Is sexual starvation necessarily the explanation for such things as the strip-tease act?
 What is almost the only religion to approve thoroughly of the body?
 Comment: “Before we can be cured we must want to be cured.”
 Is repression of sex our problem?
 Is the center of Christian morality here?

Chapter 6. Christian Marriage

What is the problem with sexual intercourse outside of marriage?
 How does Lewis incorporate the idea of justice in this chapter?
 Is “being in love” the only reason for getting married or remaining married? So what?
 What is the role of the promise in marriage?
 What is the difference between “being in love” and “loving”?

What of obedience and headship?

Chapter 7. Forgiveness

Does loving my enemies mean that I must think them nice?

What is the problem with wanting to think our enemies as bad as possible?

What is Lewis's view of capital punishment and the waging of war?

Chapter 8. The Great Sin

What is the center of Christian morality?

Why?

What makes a person proud?

Do you agree? Do these things have to make one proud?

What does Pride really enjoy?

What are the four misunderstandings (or the corrections of those misunderstandings)?

What is the first step to humility?

Chapter 9. Charity

What are the three theological virtues?

What is charity?

What is charity not?

What should we do if we are having trouble loving our neighbor?

How important are the little decisions we make every day?

Chapter 10. Hope

What is hope?

What is it not?

What does an unsatisfiable "desire" suggest?

Chapter 11. Faith

Comment: "The battle is between faith and reason on one side and emotion and imagination on the other."

How does Lewis recommend balancing reason and emotion?

What are the two senses of faith?

Why do bad people know very little about badness?

Chapter 12. Faith

What is the essence of faith in this chapter?

What are two mistakes in the faith and works equation?

Book IV: Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity

Chapter 1. Making and Begetting

In what two ways is theology like a map?

How are the acts of begetting and creating different?

What is the difference between *Bios* and *Zoe*?

Chapter 2. The Three-Personal God

How does Lewis apply the idea of "beyond personality"?

What is the point of Lewis's illustration of a square and a cube?

What is God also besides being "the thing to which he is praying"?

Where does the initiative lie for knowing God?

Chapter 3. Time and Beyond Time

How can God attend to several hundred million human beings at the same moment?

Is God in time?

If you picture Time as a straight line, how should you picture God?

Does God have history?

Chapter 4. Good Infection

So what if "God knows how to describe Himself much better than we know how to describe Him"?

What implication about persons do the words "God is love" carry?

Is the Christian conception of God static or dynamic?

What is the good infection?

Chapter 5. The Obstinate Toy Soldiers

Why did the Son of God become a man?

What did the Son really become?

How does Christ becoming a man affect the human race?

Chapter 6. Two Notes

Should a Christian be a Totalitarian or an Individualist?

Chapter 7. Let's Pretend

What does *Our Father* mean?

What are the two kinds of pretending?

What if I don't feel like it?

What is often the only way to get a quality?

Is catching the good infection more like painting a portrait or obeying a set of rules?

What is one's behavior when one is off guard the best evidence for?

Can I, by direct moral effort, give myself new motives?

In one sense, who really does the pretending (the second discovery)?

Chapter 8. Is Christianity Hard or Easy?

What is "the whole of Christianity"?

How is Christianity hard?

For what does the Church exist?

Chapter 9. Counting the Cost

How is God like a dentist?

How does George MacDonald's influence show up in this chapter?

Comment: "God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy."

What is God's goal?

Chapter 10. Nice People or New Men

What is an important part of the treatment?

Should all Christians be obviously nicer than non-Christians?

What are the only things we can keep?

The change to niceness is not like teaching a horse to jump better, but like what?

Chapter 11. The New Men

Christ's work of making "New Men" is not mere improvement. What is it?

What is the next step in evolution?

How do we truly become ourselves?

How does one become original?

What do you have to do in order for something to be really yours?