

# Mere Christianity

by C. S. Lewis

## Discussion Guide

*Mere Christianity* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001) provides a powerful case for the Christian faith. It challenges the reader to explore all aspects of religion and to be open to new possibilities. The book tackles some of the tough questions that believers and nonbelievers ask, while bringing together spiritual truths. This is an excellent resource for building a stronger faith and a closer relationship with God.

This discussion guide covers the four books presented in *Mere Christianity* and provides two questions (a and b) for each of the chapters within the four books.

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### Book 1

#### Right and Wrong As a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe

*This book explores the law of human nature, the reality of the law, common objections, and what lies behind the law.*

- 1a. Why do people often fail to practice the behavior they expect from other people?
  - b. In your own words, explain the law of human nature and how it is relevant to you.
- 2a. What is moral law, and how does it differ from instinct?
  - b. List and discuss some of the factors that govern your behavior and beliefs.
- 3a. What are your expectations for decent behavior by others?
  - b. What are some differences between laws of nature and the law of human nature?
- 4a. Discuss the religious view and the materialist view of how the universe was created and why it exists.
  - b. According to Lewis, what lies behind the law of human nature? How do you respond to his views?

5a. In your own words, explain why people “have cause to be uneasy.” Do you agree?

b. What two bits of evidence point to the existence of a Somebody? What conclusions do you draw from that evidence?

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## Book 2

### What Christians Believe

*This book looks at the faith of Christians—what they believe and why they believe it.*

1a. Compare and contrast minority and majority opinions about God.

b. Where did your conception of God come from? How has it changed over the years?

2a. What is wrong with “simple” religion?

b. In your own words, explain the meaning of dualism. What is the “catch” to it, according to Lewis?

3a. Explain your understanding of free will.

b. List and discuss the claims made by Jesus. Why does Lewis feel that it’s foolish for people to believe that Jesus was a great moral teacher but that God isn’t?

4a. In your own words, explain the meaning of Christ’s death.

b. Do you believe that, in the person of Jesus, God became man? Why or why not?

5a. Name some things that you believe to be based on God’s authority.

b. What makes us “in Christ” or closer to God?

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## Book 3

### Christian Behavior

*This book explores how Christians live, including the three parts of morality, as well as faith, hope, charity, forgiveness, and related topics.*

1a. Name some moral rules that govern your life.

b. Discuss the three parts of morality and what they mean to you.

2a. How does one go about building the internal quality or character known as a virtue?

- b. Discuss the four “cardinal virtues” and how they fit into the life of a Christian.
- 3a. List and discuss the various aspects of Christian morality.
- b. Imagine and discuss what a fully Christian society would be like.
- 4a. What is involved in a moral choice? What factors govern thinking during moral decision-making?
- b. What are some differences between how humans judge each other and how God judges us?
- 5a. Why is chastity the most unpopular of the Christian virtues?
- b. Discuss reasons why it is difficult to achieve complete chastity.
- 6a. List and discuss the issues involved in the Christian doctrine of the permanence of marriage.
- b. According to Lewis, why should the man be the head of a Christian marriage? How do you respond to his view?
- 7a. Why is forgiveness more easily said than done?
- b. What does it mean to hate the sin but not the sinner? Give some examples.
- 8a. Why is pride called the great sin? List some causes of pride.
- b. List some of the subtle ways in which pride can be destructive. What is the difference between having pride and being proud?
- 9a. In your own words, explain the meaning of charity.
- b. List some acts of Christian charity and motivations to perform them.
- 10a. Explain differences between Christian hope and escapism.
- b. What is hope, and what does it have to do with natural human longings?
- 11a. Explain how a person develops the habit of faith.
- b. How does Lewis define faith? Compare it with your own ideas about faith.
- 12a. What is the importance of Christian faith? Give some examples of how faith helps you in daily life.
- b. What does Lewis say about faith versus good actions? How do you respond to his views?

## Book 4

### **Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity**

*This book explores the theology of the three persons of God and examines common beliefs and ideas about the nature of God.*

- 1a. Define *theology*, and discuss ways in which it relates to your spiritual life.
  - b. In your opinion, do people resemble God? If so, how?
- 2a. Explain what Lewis means when he writes that God is a three-person being.
  - b. How is God revealed to us and for what purposes?
- 3a. Explain what Lewis means when he writes that God is not in time.
  - b. What new insights did you receive from reading “Time and Beyond Time”?
- 4a. Explain what Lewis means by “good infection.”
  - b. Discuss what you believe about the three persons of God and why you believe it.
- 5a. How did Christ’s coming make a difference to people who lived before Christ as well as to people who lived after him?
  - b. What does Lewis mean when he writes that humans are not separate from God or from one another?
- 6a. In what ways is the whole human race like one huge organism?
  - b. According to Lewis, why did God have only one son? What is your opinion?
- 7a. What do the first words of the Lord’s Prayer (Our Father ...) mean to you?
  - b. In what ways do people “put on Christ,” and how do they benefit from it?
- 8a. What does Christ expect from us as Christians?
  - b. What is the hardest thing about being a Christian? the easiest thing?
- 9a. Why did Christ warn people to count the costs?
  - b. What are some of the costs of being a Christian?
- 10a. Why is it unreasonable to expect that Christians will be nicer than non-Christians?

- b. Explain why the only things we can keep are the things we freely give to God.
- 11a. What does it mean to give up your old self?
- b. What new insights did you gain from reading *Mere Christianity*?

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