

Mere Christianity

Preface, Foreword, Book 1: Chapters 1 & 2

- **Opening Prayer**

Lord God, as we begin our study of Mere Christianity, let C.S. Lewis's words from the past spawn new inspiration to your purposes for our lives today. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

- **Background Info**

- What do you know about C.S. Lewis?
- Review the following biographical highlights:
 - Clive Staples Lewis - 1898-1963
 - British writer
 - Studied at Oxford
 - Fought in WWI (that coupled with his mother's death and school unhappiness led to atheism)
 - He made a pledge to a war comrade who died, taking care of his mother, Jane Moore, until the late 1940s
 - There is speculation that they might have been lovers
 - When Moore suffered from dementia, Lewis visited her every day until her death in 1951
 - Layman of the Church of England
 - Faculty at Oxford (1925-1954) and Cambridge (1954-1963)
 - Wrote several books: [fiction] *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Screwtape Letters*, *The Space Trilogy* [non-fiction] *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, *The Problem of Pain*
 - Which books have you read? What were your impressions?
 - J.R.R. Tolkien influenced his Christian path
 - Received worldwide acclaim for his 1941-1943 wartime radio broadcasts, which were the source for *Mere Christianity*
 - 1956 – entered a civil marriage with American writer Joy Davidman who died of cancer four years later (portrayed in the *Shadowlands* movie starring Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger)... Lewis wrote *A Grief Observed* in response to this experience.

- **Scripture –Romans 7:15-22** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- **Preface**

- *The book is intentionally ecumenical / non-denominational*
- *Lewis focused on the part of "mere" Christianity that was "thinnest" (i.e., not covered by others)*
 - *His silence on disputed points is not because he doesn't have opinions, but rather that they don't factor into "mere"*
- *Avoids talking about temptations to which he is not exposed (gambling)*
- [xiii] Lewis instructs that we need to avoid allowing the meaning of the word "Christian" to drift in the same way the meaning of "gentleman" has drifted. Lewis points out that the latter word has been "spoiled" as a "useless word."
 - In what ways do you think the word "Christian" has been similarly spoiled in modern-day use?
- [xvi] "...the question should never be: 'Do I like that kind of service?' but 'Are these doctrines true: Is holiness here? Does my conscience move me towards this? Is my reluctance to knock at this door due to my pride, or my mere taste, or my personal dislike of this particular door-keeper?'"

- When do you see yourself falling into this trap of judging a religious “door” by its “paint and panelling” rather than by whether it is “true”?
- **Foreword**
 - Written by Kathleen Norris (1947-), an American poet and essayist
 - Any reflections?
- **YouTube Video - ['Right & Wrong' - A Clue to the Meaning of the Universe by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 1, Chapter 1\)](#) [11:04]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Chapter 1 – The Law of Human Nature**
 - *Many of Lewis’s colleagues at Oxford were moral relativists, thinking society made up the standards for right and wrong*
 - [3] Quarreling = trying to show someone else they are wrong
 - Do you agree that this is evidence for a higher authority which defines good behavior?
 - [4] “Each man is at every moment subjected to several different sets of law but there is only one of these which he is free to disobey.”
 - The law of human nature, unshared with animals or vegetables, is the one he can disobey.
 - Do you agree? What are the laws you cannot disobey?
 - [5] Can you imagine a country with a different morality? Does one exist or has one ever existed?
 - [6] Is the idea of “not putting yourself first” truly universally held?
 - First point – Humans have the idea that they ought to behave in a certain way
Second point – None of us are really keeping this Law of Nature
 - “We have failed to practice ourselves the kind of behavior we expect from other people.”
 - Why is this?
 - Why would Lewis claim that these two points are the foundation of all clear thinking?
 - Do you agree that there is an innate human sense of right and wrong?
 - How does/doesn’t this equate to our sense of sin?
 - Other reflections?
- **YouTube Video - [Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 5, Chapter 2 - Some Objections\)](#) [13:52]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Chapter 2**
 - [9] Moral Law vs. Herd Instinct
 - Lewis discusses the sense that you *ought to help whether you like it or not* versus *the desire to help* (he uses the example of our response to a man’s cry for help)
 - Moral Law usually tells us to side with the weaker of the two impulses (i.e., helping instead of playing it safe)
 - Does this make sense to you?
 - [11] *Most dangerous – setting up one of the impulses of your own nature as a thing to follow at all costs (e.g., love of humanity without justice)*
 - *Just because parents/teachers instruct us on the Rule of Decent Behavior, doesn’t mean it isn’t an absolute truth vs. a human convention (e.g., mathematics vs. drive on the right)*
 - [12] Recognizing people who tried to change moral ideas (Reformers/Pioneers) for the better indicates there is a higher standard of morals we all recognize and to which we aspire.
 - Can you think of such moral Reformers?
 - Other reflections?

- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**
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References for material:

- [Mere Christianity](#)
- [CSLewisDoodle illustrated retellings of Mere Christianity chapters](#)

(page numbers from the text are noted in brackets [#] preceding quotes or relevant passages; note that e-book page numbers can differ from hardcopy books, but should be close)

Italics imply important points or example answers the leader can convey

Book 1: Chapters 3 & 4

- **Opening Prayer**
Heavenly Father, you have created us as part of a complicated creation. Help us to understand, or at least acknowledge our part in your creation and to recognize the good you intend for us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.
- **YouTube Video - [The Reality of the Moral Law by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 2, Mere Christianity Chapter 3\) \[10:45\]](#)** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Chapter 3 – The Reality of the Law**
 - [17] Law of Human Nature tells you what humans ought to do but do not
 - How is this different from the Law of Nature?
 - Decent behavior is neither:
 - What happens to be useful to us (e.g., a traitor is behaving in a useful way to himself, but is by no means decent)
 - The behavior that pays
 - How would you define decent behavior?
 - Other reflections?
- **YouTube Video - [What Lies Behind the Moral Law by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 3, Mere Christianity Chapter 4\) \[13:02\]](#)** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Chapter 4 – What Lies Behind the Law**
 - [21] 3 views:
 1. Materialist view: Matter and space just happen to exist. No one knows why.
 2. Religious view: what is behind the universe is more like a mind than anything else we know
 3. [described later in chapter] Life-Force Philosophy/Creative Evolution: evolved due to striving of a Life-Force
 - Emotional comfort of believing in God
 - Riding the wave of the mysterious force when things are going well
 - No worries about an objecting God when you want to do something really shabby
 - [23] Would observing what we do give “the slightest evidence that we had moral law”?
 - [24] “The only way in which we could expect it [power outside the universe] to show itself would be inside ourselves as an influence or a command trying to get us to behave in a certain way.”
 - Does this ring true for you?
 - Other reflections?
- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

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Book 1: Chapter 5 | Book 2: Chapters 1 & 2

- **Opening Prayer**
Dear Lord, help us to better understand Christianity as it relates to other religions. In the end, we are all trying to better understand you as Creator, and your purpose for us. Help us on this path. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- **Scripture – Psalm 19** (have a volunteer read aloud)
- **YouTube Video - [We Have Cause to be Uneasy by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 4, Mere Christianity Chapter 5\)](#) [10:34]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Chapter 5 – We Have Cause to Be Uneasy**
 - “progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer.”
 - Has humanity headed down the wrong road?
 - Lewis discusses the question of whether the universe is governed by an absolute goodness
 - [31] “Goodness is either the great safety or the great danger”
 - What does he mean by this?
 - *Christianity’s message of repentance and forgiveness makes no sense if you don’t have a sense of good/evil*
 - G.K. Chesterton wrote, “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.”
 - Do you know people who are willing to talk about philosophy, but not Christianity – because they think it has failed them?
 - Other reflections?
- **YouTube Video - [The Rival Conceptions of God by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 6, Mere Christianity, Bk 2, Chapter 1\)](#) [8:43]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 2: Chapter 1 – The Rival Conceptions of God**
 - Do you think it’s an advantage to Lewis or to us that he was a former atheist?
 - If you are Christian, you don’t have to believe that all other religions are wrong. As an atheist, you must believe that all religions are wrong
 - Do you agree?
 - Conceptions of God
 - Pantheism (Hindus) – God is beyond good and evil; God animates everything; all is part of God
 - Christian/Jew/Islam – Creator God
 - If God made the world, why has it gone wrong?
 - Sense of justice (“A man feels wet when he falls into water, because man is not a water animal”)
 - If the universe has no meaning, we should never have found out it has no meaning
 - What does he mean here?
 - Other reflections?
- **YouTube Video - [The Invasion by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 7, Mere Christianity, Bk 2, Chapter 2\)](#) [15:26]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 2: Chapter 2 – The Invasion**
 - “Christianity-and-water” view: “there is a good God in Heaven and everything is all right”
 - Have you experienced this view?

- Why would he call it this?
 - Christianity is more complicated – it is something you couldn't have guessed
 - Why do reality and Christianity have to be complicated?
 - *Two views:*
 - *Christian – good world that has gone wrong*
 - *Dualism – two equal and independent powers at the back of everything – one good and one bad*
 - *Problem with this is that it requires a third party – the standard of justice which distinguishes the two*
 - Christianity believes the universe is at war, but it is a civil war, rather than a war between independent powers
 - Does this make sense to you?
 - Other reflections?
-
- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

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Book 2: Chapters 3-5

- **Opening Prayer**

Lord God, we thank you for entering our hearts, and we pray that you continue to help us shine the love of Christ to all we meet. In Your Son's most precious name we pray. Amen.

- **Scripture – John 10:24-30** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- **YouTube Video - [The Shocking Alternative by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 8, Mere Christianity Bk 2, Chapter 3\)](#) [13:31]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 2: Chapter 3 – The Shocking Alternative**

- *Humans are more likely to go very right and very wrong vs. cows*
- How much of the desire to “be like gods” is still in our psyche?
- *God is the fuel our spirits are designed to run on*
- *Even Jesus' enemies do not get the feeling that he is silly or conceited*
- *If Jesus was not the son of God, his claims would suggest he was either crazy or the devil*
- Reflections?

- **YouTube Video - [The Perfect Penitent by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 9, Mere Christianity, Bk 2, Chapter 4\)](#) [15:43]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 2: Chapter 4 – The Perfect Penitent**

- Do Christians (or you) think the main thing Jesus came to do was to suffer and be killed?
 - *Lewis says the important thing is not **how** it happened, but that it happened and put us right with God, giving us a fresh start*
- We needed God's help in doing something which is against His nature – surrender/suffer/submit
- Some complain that if Jesus was God, his suffering would have been easy for him
 - How would you respond to this?
- Other reflections?

- **YouTube Video - [The Practical Conclusion by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 10, Mere Christianity, Bk 2, Chapter 5\)](#) [13:10]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 2: Chapter 5 – The Practical Conclusion**

- In what ways can you view Christ as the next step in evolution?
- 3 things spread the “Christ-life” to us: baptism, belief, communion
 - This is the “Mere Christian” non-denominational perspective
 - Why does he call these three out?
 - Is he missing anything important?
- 99% of the things you believe are on authority
 - Do you agree?
- “the Christian thinks any good he does comes from the Christ-life inside him. He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us”
 - How do you interpret this?
 - This resonates with the age-old grace vs. works debate.
- *Lewis discusses the worry over people who have not heard of Christ. In the meantime, if you are worried about those people, the worst thing you can do is to remain on the outside yourself*
- Today is our chance to choose sides. God is holding back to give us that chance. It won't last forever.

- How long do you think God is willing to wait?
 - Other reflections?
-
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Book 3: Chapters 1-8

- **Opening Prayer**
Heavenly Father, we thank you for creating us as your children, and ask that you continue to point out our errors when we go astray. In a prideful world, help us to remain humble as we seek to share your love. Amen.
- **Scripture – Proverbs 11:2** (have a volunteer read aloud)
- **YouTube Video - [The Three Parts of Morality by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 8, Mere Christianity Bk 3, Chapter 1\)](#) [13:46]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 3: Chapter 1 – The Three Parts of Morality**
 - Do you ever have the vision of God being a “snooper”?
 - In what ways are moral rules meant to help us rather than hinder us?
 - Is the concept of “idealism” aligned with Wesley’s concept of seeking perfection?
 - *Morality*
 - *Fair play / interactions*
 - *Tidying up within an individual*
 - *General purpose of human life as a whole*
 - Besides being kind, honest and helpful to others, what else does Christian morality require from us?
 - “You cannot make men good by law”
 - Agree/disagree?
 - Do you think of yourself as being a “landlord” or a “tenant” of your own body?
 - Do you feel extra responsibility because you believe you’ll live forever?
 - Other reflections?
- **YouTube Video - [The Great Sin by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 16, Mere Christianity, Bk 3, Chapter 8\)](#) [21:07]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 3: Chapter 8 – The Great Sin**
 - Lewis doesn’t think he’s ever heard a non-Christian accuse himself of pride/self-conceit?
 - Reactions?
 - “Pride is the complete anti-God state”
 - In what ways? *Lewis talks about the competitive nature of pride*
 - Other vices (drunkenness and unchastity) can bring people together, but pride can’t.
 - Do you agree?
 - Do you see pride, as Lewis does, as the foundation of all sin?
 - Can pride ever be a good thing?
 - What’s the difference between “feeling good about oneself” and “pride”?
 - “Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good – above all, that we are better than someone else – I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil.”
 - Does your religious life ever make you feel better than others?
 - How is this counter-productive?
 - Misunderstandings
 - *“Pleasure in being praised is not Pride.”*
 - *Trouble is when you pass from “I have pleased him” to “What a fine person I must be”*
 - *Being “proud of” something/someone as a “warm-hearted admiration for” is far from a sin*

- *God is not offended by pride nor demanding of humility as a consequence of His high station. He's not worried about His own dignity.*
 - A truly humble man will not be reminding you of it constantly. "If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed."
 - What is Lewis driving at here?
 - Other reflections?
-
- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

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Book 3: Chapters 9-12

- **Opening Prayer**

Lord God, we cherish the hope that you seed in our hearts. Let it always spring eternal as a consequence of our faith in you. Through Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

- **Scripture – Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:24-25** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- Do you consider yourself a hopeful person?
- What are your largest hopes?
- How are faith and hope the same thing?
 - *Hebrews 11:1 – “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen.”*

- **YouTube Video - [Hope by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 16B, Mere Christianity Bk 3, Chapter 10\) \[9:34\]](#) –**

verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 3: Chapter 10 – Hope**

- “...the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next” and “It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”
 - Were successful Christians of the past those who thought most of heaven?
 - Have we ceased to think of the other world?
 - What are the pitfalls to this?
- “Most of us find it very difficult to want ‘Heaven’ at all”
 - When we think hard about it, do we indeed want something that cannot be had on Earth?
 - What things cannot be had here?
 - When you experience a wonderful work of art (book, painting, sculpture), what might the experience prompt you to do? How is this the same for your earthly experiences?
- 3 ways in dealing with longings which this world can't satisfy:
 - The Fool's Way – blaming the things of the world
 - In what ways have you found yourself adopting this approach?
 - Puts us in a vicious cycle of craving and disappointment. Is this a function of capitalism? Democracy? Something else?
 - St. Augustine wrote “Our hearts are restless until they rest in [God].” Where do people look to futilely fill the God-shaped hole in their hearts?
 - The Way of the Disillusioned ‘Sensible Man’ – “give up on chasing the rainbow's end”
 - Have you ever adopted this approach?
 - The Christian Way – “Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists.”
 - Do you agree?
 - *Lewis proposes that we are seeded with desires that are echoes or scents of what can only truly come in Heaven*
- Lewis closes the chapter with a retort to people who ridicule Heaven by saying they don't want to spend eternity playing harps and wearing crowns. This is imagery.
 - How can you describe the nature of Heaven to a non-believer to convey the hope you have in it?
- Other reflections?

- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

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Book 4: Chapters 1-4

- **Opening Prayer**

Lord Heavenly Father, we marvel in your begetting Jesus to take form in our presence, and your gift of the Holy Spirit to sustain us in our journey. Help us to be more in tune to your holy presence in our lives this day. We pray this in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

- **Scripture – Genesis 1:26-27; John 3:16** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- **YouTube Video - [Making and Begetting by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 19, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 1\)](#) [19:00]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 4: Chapter 1 – Making and Begetting**

- In what ways might you agree with the man who said that “theology” was pedantic and unreal?
- Do you think of theology as a map or something else?
- Must you listen to theology in order to have good ideas about God?
- Are people/Christians today less interested in discussing theology? Why or why not?
- In what ways is Christianity “difficult” to grasp, like physics?
- In what ways is man like God?
- *Biological life = Bios*
- *Spiritual life = Zoe*
- What do you think about Lewis’s portrayal of the promise of Christianity where we move from Bios to Zoe?
- Other reflections?

- **YouTube Video - [The Three Personal God C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 20, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 2\)](#) [13:36]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 4: Chapter 2 – The Three-Personal God**

- *“A good many people nowadays say, ‘I believe in a God, but not in a personal God.’”*
“...Christians are the only people who offer any idea of what a being that is beyond personality could be like.”
 - *Lewis claims that Christians are the only ones who offer a “super-personal” image of God, where others offer something less than personal*
- In what ways do you think of God as personal? In what ways might he be considered super-personal?
- Lewis discusses belief in the persistence of the human soul after life, rather than simple absorption like a drop of water
 - How does this align with your thoughts of the afterlife?
- *Lewis describes praying as being a demonstration of interacting with the 3-personal God (goal/motivating force/bridge)*
- “Theology is...an experimental science”
 - How do you interpret this?
- Lewis claims that the best way to come to know God is in practicing Christian community
“He shows much more of Himself to some people than to others...because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition.”
 - Does God show Himself best when we are in the right condition?
- Does Lewis’s description of the Trinity help? Do you prefer other analogies?
- Other reflections?

- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**
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Book 4: Chapters 5-8

- **Opening Prayer**
Dear Lord, give us new understanding as to the nature of being a Christian, and its impact on our lives, during both the hard and easy times. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.
- **YouTube Video - [Obstinate Toy Soldiers by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 22, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 5\)](#) [11:03]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 4: Chapter 5 – The Obstinate Toy Soldiers**
 - Two kinds of life:
 - Bios: Natural – self-centered; wants to be petted and admired; keeps away from anything stronger/higher that would make it feel small
 - Zoe: Spiritual – in God from and for eternity; the “man” instead of the “statue”
 - When do you feel more of the Bios life? When do you taste Zoe?
 - Turning a tin soldier into a man is like turning a Bios life into a Zoe life
 - Why might a person resist such a change?
 - God responded with the reverse – by turning Himself into a man, and *then* turning the man into Zoe through His resurrection
 - Tin soldiers are separate, not interconnected; therefore, Lewis says his analogy breaks down since humans are all connected through their bloodlines
 - God sees us all connected, spread out across time with our ancestors and descendants
 - How does this impact your view of His sacrifice?
 - Other reflections?
- **Scripture – 1 Corinthians 12:14-20** (have a volunteer read aloud)
- **Book 4: Chapter 6 – Two Notes**
 - Why not beget sons and daughters rather than making tin soldiers and transforming them to new life?
 - Lewis: the process of turning tin soldiers into sons and daughters would have been easy/painless if we hadn't turned from Him
 - Lewis: it “couldn't have been different” because it is what it is (predestination)
 - Lewis: if they were begotten, they wouldn't have been as different from each other
 - What do you think?
 - Thinking of humanity as “one thing” doesn't preclude individual differences. We are alike, yet different. God means it to be that way.
 - How does being joined to a common organism change your perspective on dealing with other people? Nations?
 - Do we err too far on either side of totalitarianism vs. individualism?
 - Other reflections?
- **Scripture – 1 Corinthians 12:14-20** (have a volunteer read aloud)
- **YouTube Video - [Let's Pretend by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 23, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 7\)](#) [20:07]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
- **Book 4: Chapter 7 – Let's Pretend**
 - Saying “Our Father” is like *dressing up as Christ*.
 - Do you ever feel self-conscious about calling God your father?

- 2 kinds of pretending
 - Bad – pretense is there instead of the real thing (say you'll do something and you don't)
 - Good – pretense leads up to the real thing (put on a show of being friendly, until you really are friendly)
 - What is your reaction to this?
 - What are examples where you find yourself pretending, in the interest of improving?
 - Does it work?
 - John Wesley questioned his own faith. He discussed this with Peter Bohler, a Moravian pastor. Wesley said he was going to quit preaching because he “had no faith.” Bohler responded “Preach faith until you have it. Then you will preach faith because you do have it.”
 - Have you experienced this in your faith journey?
 - People can be “carriers” of Christ to others, “infecting” them without being Christian.
 - Can you think of any non-Christians who reinforce your Christianity? *Ghandi, charitable volunteers*
 - Synergy of two Christians having 16 times as much Christianity between them when they're together as opposed to just 2.
 - If this is the case, why?
 - Other reflections?
- **Scripture – Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 9:23** (have a volunteer read aloud)
 - **YouTube Video - [Is Christianity Hard or Easy? by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 24, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 8\)](#) [16:08]** – verbatim reading of the chapter
 - **Book 4: Chapter 8 – Is Christianity Hard or Easy?**
 - Christ doesn't want what we do, he wants “us”
 - What does this mean to you? *His will becomes our will*
 - In what ways is turning ourselves over to Christ hard? Easy?
 - Other reflections?
 - **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

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Book 4: Chapters 9-12

- **Opening Prayer**

Heavenly Father, as we come to the end of our study of Mere Christianity, we thank you for the insights and epiphanies we've experienced along the way, and we thank you for witnesses like C.S. Lewis. May we find ways to emulate their behavior in reflecting and spreading your Word. In Christ's holy name we pray. Amen.

- **Scripture – Luke 14:25-33** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- **YouTube Video - [Counting the Cost by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 24A, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 9\)](#) [13:03]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 4: Chapter 9 – Counting the Cost**

- Lewis talks about people going to God to be cured of one particular sin, but that God doesn't just stop there but gives you the "full treatment" – the "cost" of Christianity
 - What do you perceive as the costs of Christianity?
- God's desire for perfection – "God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy."
 - What does that mean to you?
- Never imagine that your own unaided efforts can carry you through 24 hours without some gross sin.
 - Do you fall into the trap of thinking you don't need to bother God about most things?
- Other reflections?

- **Scripture – Ephesians 4:31-32** (have a volunteer read aloud)

- **YouTube Video - [Nice People or New Men by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 24B, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 10\)](#) [25:59]** – verbatim reading of the chapter

- **Book 4: Chapter 10 – Nice People or New Men**

- Why aren't all Christians "nicer" than non-Christians?
 - Lewis has 2 answers:
 - They were only Christians by name, but not by behavior
 - The world can't be divided neatly into Christian and non-Christian camps
 - How do you agree/disagree with this?
 - *100% Christians vs. 100% non-Christians is unreasonable*
 - *Different people start at varying degrees of "niceness" and Christianity improves upon that*
 - *Everyone needs the same salvation, and "niceness" hardly comes into the picture*
 - *Niceness is God's gift to us as part of our personalities*
 - *God is not looking for us to be nice. He's looking for us to turn to Him.*
- [212] "It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things: but to convert rebellious wills cost His crucifixion."
 - Reactions?
- Speculation that nasty people might turn to Christ more frequently than nice ones.
 - How do you see this to be true? *They more readily see the need for God*

- Other reflections?
- **Scripture – 2 Corinthians 3:18** (have a volunteer read aloud)
- **YouTube Video - [The New Man by C.S. Lewis Doodle \(BBC Talk 25, Mere Christianity Bk 4, Chapter 3 & 11\)](#) [17:03] – actual C.S. Lewis radio recording reading from these chapters**
- **Book 4: Chapter 7 – The New Men**
 - Not mere improvement but “transformation”
 - How do you react to the concept of God wanting to transform you into something perfect and holy?
 - Don’t think in minor incremental evolutionary terms. The next step may be radically different than our current state – just as we are from the dinosaurs.
 - In what ways could Christ’s sacrifice be compared to the meteor that extinguished the dinosaurs?
 - Do you think we have other radical events in humankind’s future which will produce a major Next Step?
 - Ways in which the New Step differs from previous ones:
 - Not carried on by sexual reproduction
 - It is voluntary
 - It is carried by Christ – the *new man*; it is passed to you when you come in personal contact
 - Taken at a different speed – much faster
 - In what ways could you consider our present time as “early Christians”?
 - The stakes are higher – we can be taken out of nature as sons of God
 - Identifying “New People”
 - Not “religious” people
 - Do not draw attention to themselves
 - Love you more than others do, but need you less
 - “We must get over being needed”
 - Do you see this as important?
 - Not all alike
 - “The more we get what we now call ‘ourselves’ out of the way and let Him take us over, the more truly ourselves we become.”
 - In what ways are you in the way of God taking over?
 - There is a true “you” that will surface if you let God take over.
 - When have you found that you’re most in touch with the “true you”?
 - Reflections?
 - In what ways are Christians more different than “natural” people?
 - Other reflections?
- **Closing Prayer (ask a volunteer to offer this)**

References for material:

- [Mere Christianity](#)
- [CSLewisDoodle illustrated retellings of Mere Christianity chapters](#)

(page numbers from the text are noted in brackets [#] preceding quotes or relevant passages; note that e-book page numbers can differ from hardcopy books, but should be close)

Italics imply important points or example answers the leader can convey