

# Discussion Guide for The Shortest Way Home: Mere Christianity and C.S. Lewis

*The film can be viewed in its entirety or in four shorter segments, perfect for small groups or in a classroom setting. The following discussions are grouped to correspond with each of the four individual segments.*

## Segment One

1. According to Lewis scholar Dr. Devin Brown, “Lewis, from the very start, wanted to focus on Mere Christianity, this core set of belief that has been common to all Christians at all times. And doing this rather than focusing on the edges, focusing on the disputed points, focusing on what all Christians share instead of what they quarrel about...makes Mere Christianity the great book it is.” What do you believe are those common beliefs shared by all Christians at all times?
2. Why do you think Lewis is sometimes referred to as a modern apostle?
3. Are humans born with a sense of right and wrong? Why or why not?
4. As Dr. Devin Brown asks, “If a person does not believe in God, where does he develop his ideas of right and wrong?” Share your thoughts with the group.
5. Do you agree with Melanie’s statement that you can be an atheist and still be a moral person? Why or why not?
6. If we don’t keep it, what proof is there that the Moral Law really exists?
7. In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis states that, “People who have never been to Narnia don’t understand that a thing can be good and terrible at the same time.” Do you believe that God can be both of these things? Explain.

## Segment Two

1. The narrator states in the film, “In thinking about the Power behind the Law, Lewis refers to a concept called Dualism, in which two equal but independent powers, one good and one evil, are locked in an eternal battle for control of the universe. Some people would call the good force God and the evil force Satan or the Devil.” Do you share Lewis’s belief of good and evil as a civil war in which a fallen power rebels against his Creator? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think God gave humans free will? Is love and joy possible without free will?
3. As Melanie asked in the coffee shop, “If God knows all and loves all, then why is there injustice in the world? Why do people suffer?” What do you believe is the answer to these questions?
4. Why do you think God gives humans free will even when it means they can choose not to love Him in return?
5. What would you say to someone who sees Jesus as a good moral teacher but not as Lord?
6. If you feel comfortable, share a time when pride caused you difficulty in a relationship with others...or God.
7. Is it possible to “love the sinner and hate the sin”? Why or why not?
8. Have you ever been called a hypocrite? Or have you ever thought of someone else as a hypocrite? Tell the group about your experience.
9. As Joy asked, do we expect more from Christians than non-Christians? If so, why?

### Segment Three

1. About our inward reflection on faith, Lewis writes that the “longest way round is the shortest way home.” What do you think he means by that statement?
2. Lewis defines faith as “the art of holding on to things your reason has accepted, in spite of your changing moods.” How do you define faith?
3. Why is theology important in everyday life?
4. Can you believe that God exists without believing in Him personally? How is this possible?
5. Lewis uses the example of the three dimensions in describing the concept of the Trinity. What other examples can you think of that illustrate this idea of a Three Personed God?
6. The narrator states in the film that Lewis believed that people become like mirrors, reflecting Christ to the world. “And just as a dirty telescope obscures our view of the stars, so an unclean life muddies the reflection of Christ that others see through us.” How do your actions encourage others to follow Christ...or lead them away from following Christ?
7. Lewis believed that Christianity is easy in that Christ wants every part of our lives - our good thoughts and kind deeds but also our pride and temptations and sins. As you feel comfortable, share with the group what things have been difficult to turn over to Christ to be made new?

#### Segment Four

1. We are advised in *Mere Christianity* to “count the cost” before becoming a Christian. What do you think Lewis meant by this statement? If you count yourself as a Christian, has this life come at a personal cost to you?
2. What do you think it means to be “perfect” in Christ?
3. Do you believe life should become easier once a person becomes a Christian? Why or why not?
4. According to Lewis scholar Dr. Christopher Mitchell, Christians “should be making progress and eventually become nicer people than non-Christian people...in fact, as he says we will eventually become perfect, absolutely good, extremely nice, but that’s not the case in the beginning, and we need, in a sense, to take that into account as we are looking. We’re all in process.” In what areas have you made the most progress toward “becoming perfect” in Christ?
5. What was your favorite part of the film and why? If you have read the book, what is your favorite passage from *Mere Christianity* and why?
6. What is something you have learned from watching this film or reading Lewis’s book?