

College Christian Study -- Sunday, Jan. 23rd, 2005 -- **Mere Christianity** – by **C.S. Lewis**
Book I: Right and Wrong: Clue to the Meaning of the Universe (*chapters 1-3*)

Book I has five chapters, each treating some question regarding the “Law of Human Nature.” C.S. Lewis attempted to establish that we have an innate sense of law, of right and wrong, and that we need to have a belief in God for that sense to take on any real meaning.

- Chapter 1 is a direct discussion of the law.
- Chapter 2 treats some objections.
- Chapter 3 looks at what Lewis called the reality of the law.

Chapter 1: The Law of Human Nature

Chapter 1 contains an argument for a universal standard of behavior. Lewis made two points: (1) Humans everywhere have a “curious idea” that they should behave in a certain way. We cannot rid ourselves of it. (2) Yet, as humans, we do not, in fact, behave in the way we know we should. We know the law of nature but break it.

- These two facts are the foundations of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.

Chapter 2: Some Objections

After these points listed in chapter 1, Lewis received several letters objecting that what he was calling moral law, was really only instinct or social convention. Chapter 2 argues that the “Rule of Decent Behavior” is far more than human instinct.

- The first general objection was that moral law was simply human herd instinct. Lewis didn't deny that humans have herd instinct, but he vigorously denied that this is what he was calling moral law.
- The second general objection was that what Lewis was calling moral law is just social convention, something learned through education.

Chapter 3: The Reality of the Law

Chapter 3 argues that the laws of nature (for example: gravity) are not really laws at all but only an explanation of how physical things work. On the other hand, the law of human nature, or moral law, tells us what people ought to do but don't do. We begin to realize there is more than one kind of reality.

- Christians do not believe that we should do, or not do, a particular thing just because it is useful for us as individuals or for the human race to do so—for example, to be nice. This may be a factor in choosing an action, but the real question for the Christians with regard to a particular action is: Is it right according to the teachings of Jesus and the Scripture? The reality of moral law for the Christian is a matter of what God Himself has implanted in us and our further understanding of the ethical teaching of the Bible.
- Already by the end of this chapter, we have arrived at more than one kind of reality. In actuality, only Christians understand the nature of both kinds of reality. All of those “tugs on the heart” with which we were drawn to act against our selfish nature before becoming Christians, only begin to make sense after we have traveled down the road with Christ. Only then can we begin to understand both the reality of moral law, and its Source...God alone.