

College Christian Study -Sunday, April 24th, 2005 -- **Mere Christianity – by C.S. Lewis**
Book IV: Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity (*chapters 9-11*)

Book IV contains eleven chapters which consider questions “Beyond Personality”. These chapters are a discussion of the first steps in understanding the doctrine of the Trinity.
-Chapter 9 is about “Counting the Cost” involved when we accept Christ and allow Him to start the massive rebuilding process in us.
-Chapter 10 tells us that He intends for us to be new men and women, not just nice people.
-Chapter 11 discusses this new man/woman.

Chapter 9: Counting the Cost

The process of being transformed into what God intended us to be when He created us is a long and painful one. It is not about just “improving” but about being perfected. Jesus warned us to count the costs before becoming Christians. He is interested in nothing less than helping us be perfect if we allow Him to work in us, and Jesus will give us nothing less than that level of help. Yet the other side is that, even though Christ’s goal is to help us reach perfection, He will be pleased with the “first feeble, stumbling effort” we make. The command to be perfect is neither idealistic nor unrealizable – the process is long and sometimes painful, but in the end God is going to build us into a “bright stainless mirror” which reflects back to God His goodness. (What kind of mirror are you? How do your life and actions reflect God?)

Though grace is the free gift of God, there is a cost to becoming a Christian, or should we say there are expectations? You simply cannot become a mature Christian by accident. In order to grow you must discipline your life in study, prayer, worship, and fellowship.

Chapter 10: Nice People, or New Men and Women

Christians are works in progress, and this progress depends on our natural selves and our willingness to submit to God. While “niceness” is good and desirable, it is not really what the whole is about. In the whole universe there is only one soul we really know and only one whose fate is truly in our hands. We cannot justifiably put God off because of conjectures about our neighbors. None of this nonsense matters one whit in the real “Presence” in which we now stand, nor will it when we stand face-to-face and He cannot be denied.

We are not called to be nice people but new people. And yet we should expect Christians to be improving. Often the problem with the church, or individuals, is not that they do not witness. Fortunately or unfortunately, we are always witnessing – to what we are and to what we are not, to what we should be and are not, or to what we should be and are. And people outside the church clearly see this witness, positive or negative. Public proclamation, whether from a pulpit or in personal witnessing, is never convincing unless it is perceived as true of the life lived.

Chapter 11: The New Men/Women

In the Christian view, the “New Man” appeared two thousand years ago. Jesus means to help Christians by transforming us, not just improving us. The transformation into new creations of God will be a new kind of difference – not just change, but a new way of producing change. In the Christian view this ‘Next Step’ has already come into view, and is not from nature but from outside nature. The change is from being creatures God created to being His children. Again, we are called to remember that the issue is transformation. This “new kind” of creation is actually the original kind – reality as it was originally and as it was meant to be.