

College Christian Study -Sunday, April 3rd, 2005 -- **Mere Christianity – by C.S. Lewis**
Book III: Christian Behavior (*chapters 9-12*)

Book III contains twelve chapters which consider questions related to Christian morals.
-The last four chapters address charity (9), hope (10), and two on faith (11-12).

Chapter 9: Charity

Charity is one of the theological virtues. In the Christian sense, charity means “love.” Although distinct from it, Charity does lead to affection, and it is something we do because God loves everyone as He loves us.

Lewis wanted to add a broader meaning to Charity, which he had treated partly in regard to forgiveness in chapter 7. Love (“charity”) is not an emotion he explained; but rather a state of the will. I believe this just implies that in a deeper sense, charity is about much more than “affectionate feelings.” Therefore, Lewis encourages us to not worry about our love for one another, but rather to act upon it. “The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of.” The difference between a “worldly man” and a Christian is that the first treats people he likes kindly, whereas the Christian treats everyone kindly - and ends up liking more people. On top of all this, what we must remember is that, though our feelings come and go, God’s love for us is steadfast. He is not “wearied” by our sin and wants us to be “cured” at any cost to us or to Him.

Chapter 10: Hope

Hope is the continual looking forward to heavenly bliss. There are many reasons we have difficulty wanting heaven. Much of our education teaches us to zero in on this world; therefore, we often do not recognize our real desire for heaven.

Hope is the second of the theological virtues Lewis treated. Looking forward to eternity in heaven is not escapism but something Christians are meant to do. In history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for our present world are the ones who thought most about the next. Lewis gave several examples: the Apostles, the great Christians of the Middle Ages, and English Evangelicals who helped stop the slave trade. Are there any Biblical or historical figures that have made an impact of hope on you?

Chapter 11 and 12: Faith

The word “Faith” is used by Christians on two levels. The first is simply belief - accepting Christians doctrines as true. The other aspect cannot be understood from an outsider’s perspective, but rather is one of experience (those who have tried hard to practice Christian virtues, but have failed). We realize that only God can do what we need to be completed, and though we must “leave it to God,” we must also act on our faith. The Bible puts faith and action together in one amazing sentence in Philippians 2:12-13. In our better moments, we get a glimpse of the fact that Christianity is far more than morality, duty, rules, etc. It is about being in His presence.

Faith is the third of the Christian virtues. The mind is not completely ruled by reason and good evidence, but also imagination and emotion. So, a battle between faith and reason makes this an important virtue to be a sound Christian. Real perfection in Christianity (only completed in Jesus) blows to bits the idea that we can simply “perform” and be good Christians. God gives us everything we need to please Him, and we when we realize this then God can really begin to work in us. [The word *faith* only appears 2 times in the Old Testament (Deut. 32:20 and Hab.2:4). It appears 307 times in the New Testament. Furthermore, the Greek definition of *faith* is comprised of two essential aspects that penetrate to the heart of the Biblical teaching: (1) trust or acceptance; belief that Jesus is Lord, with acknowledgment of His resurrection, and (2) intellectual content, the revealed truth that is firmly believed and is reflected in the life of the believer.]