

Dear fellow pilgrims,

As we make our way through Book 3 of *Mere Christianity* on the topic of Christian Behavior, we are covering some very important material that is deeply relevant to what we see going on in the world around us. Last week's chapter, in which Lewis takes on Freud, is no exception. In this chapter, Lewis explores the nature of psychoanalysis, rejects Freudian worldview assumptions, and reflects on the true nature of moral choice.

Here is an outline of some of the key points we covered last week:

Book 3, Chapter 4. Morality and Psychoanalysis I have said that we should never get a Christian society unless most of us became Christian individuals. That does not mean, of course, that we can put off doing anything about society until some imaginary date in the far future. It means that we must begin both jobs at once—(1) the job of seeing how "Do as you would be done by" can be applied in detail to modern society, and (2) the job of becoming the sort of people who really would apply it if we saw how. I now want to begin considering what the Christian idea of a good man is—the Christian specification for the human machine.

Freud's Worldview—the philosophy of Freud—is in direct contradiction to Christianity When Freud is talking about how to cure neurotics he is speaking as a specialist on his own subject, but when he goes on to talk general philosophy he is speaking as an amateur.

The Role of Psychoanalysis When a man makes a moral choice two things are involved. One is the act of choosing. The other is the various feelings, impulses and so on which his psychological outfit presents him with, and which are the raw material of his choice. What psychoanalysis undertakes to do is to remove the abnormal feelings, that is, to give the man better raw material for his acts of choice: morality is concerned with the acts of choice themselves.

Moral Choice However much you improve the man's raw material, you have still got something else: the real, free choice of the man, on the material presented to him, either to put his own advantage first or to put it last And this free choice is the only thing that morality is concerned with. The bad psychological material is not a sin but a disease. It does not need to be repented of, but to be cured

Why Judging Others Is Wrong Human beings judge one another by their external actions. God judges them by their moral choices. We see only the results which a man's choices make out of his raw material. But God does not judge him on the raw material at all, but on what he has done with it.

The Bargain View of Morality v. the Power of Choices People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, "If you keep a lot of rules I'll reward you, and if you don't I'll do the other thing." I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before.

Eternal Perspective What they are always thinking of is the mark which the action leaves on that tiny central self which no one sees in this life but which each of us will have to endure—or enjoy—for ever.

Consciousness of Sin When a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse, he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good: a thoroughly bad man thinks he is all right. "*The mature Christian knows that he is always living in Romans 7 apart from the Holy Spirit. Moreover, he knows that dependence on the Holy Spirit is not something that he has attained once for all but that it is the result of a daily struggle and a constantly renewed commitment. What is sanctification? Is it an awareness of how good we are becoming? Or is it a growing sense of how sinful we really are, so we will constantly turn to and depend on Jesus Christ? If we are mature in Christ, we know it is the latter.*" (James Montgomery Boice)

IMPLICATIONS

1. Learn what is wrong with the Freudian worldview so as to present the Christian worldview as a better alternative (Resource: *The Question of God* book and PBS Program)
2. Remember "the freedom of self-forgetfulness" and shun judgment and pride, keeping in mind Lewis's idea of differing starting points
3. Consider the power of Choice and its profound implications for our eternal life

Here is the link for class tomorrow, Wednesday, March 24, at 7:15 p.m. EDT--please feel free to share the link with any friends who may be interested:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99307536525>

I look forward to "seeing" you tomorrow in class on Zoom!

Further up and further in,
Brian+

Music link: : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5Hin4swdKg>

Link to teaching on Romans 7:

<https://www.stphilipchurchsc.org/sermons/sermon/2021-03-07/the-believers-struggles>

Article link:

<https://www.independent.org/publications/article.asp?id=1668#:~:text=Now%2C%20on%20to%20the%20question,basis%20of%20one%20overriding%20hypothesis.%22>

Question of God resources:

Attachments area

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/program/complete.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymjuxVPBZYc&list=PLB414557DE700A462>

To purchase program on DVD: <https://www.amazon.com/Question-God-Sigmund-Freud-Lewis/dp/B00078XGQU>