



## Mere Christianity

Week 8: July 8, 2018

“Counting the Cost”

### Nothing Less Than Transformation

In Book 4, Chapter 9, Lewis reminds readers that Christ warned His followers to count the cost, an allusion to the declaration from Jesus, “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:27-28).

Lewis continues his focus on God’s intention to not merely start our transformation but to complete it, not merely to fix a leaky roof but to rebuild the entire building. The moment we put ourselves in Christ’s hands, Lewis reminds us, this is what we are in for — “nothing less, or other” (202). Lewis ended Book 1 of *Mere Christianity* by noting that while Christianity promises unspeakable comfort for those who see it through the end, it does not begin in comfort. Here we get a sense of the initial discomfort that may be in store for us.

After presenting our monumental call to perfection in the first part of chapter 9, Lewis brings hope and good news in the second half. As Walter Hooper explains in his seminal work, *C. S. Lewis: A Companion Guide*, “Lewis emphasizes that these seemingly impossible demands are put upon us because, with Christ’s help, they are possible.” We might add that with Christ’s help not only is it *possible* for us to become perfect, unless we push Him away it is *inevitable*. As Lewis points out, there is no power in the universe, except we ourselves, that can prevent God from taking us to the goal of absolute perfection. God knows that our own efforts are never going to bring us anywhere close to perfection, and every time we fall, He will be there to help us.<sup>1</sup>

### Further Study

**QUESTION 1:** Christianity is always just one generation away from extinction. How have you “changed” by becoming Christian? How will you ensure that the next generation knows about Jesus Christ?

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<sup>1</sup> From *Discussing Mere Christianity: Exploring the History, Meaning, and Relevance of C. S. Lewis’ Greatest Book* by Devin Brown (Zondervan, 2015)

**QUESTION 2:** Lewis ends *Mere Christianity* with good news: “Give up yourself and you will find your real self” (226). How have you experienced this finding your real self? What are the voices that urge you to hold on to yourself? What has helped encourage you to give yourself up?

**QUESTION 3:** Jesus said, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Lewis writes that the moment we put ourselves in God’s hands, this is what we are in for — nothing less or other than being made perfect. How is this both an incredibly terrifying and at the same time an incredibly exciting prospect for you personally?

## **A Look Ahead**

**July 15, 2018**

A Life Changing Response (Q & A)

*Mere Christianity* chapter

- Book 4, Chapter 11: “The New Men”

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