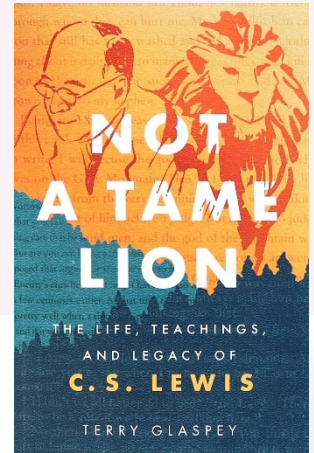




LEADER'S GUIDE

NOT A TAME LION BY TERRY GLASPEY



"By his words and his life, Lewis demonstrated the power of a life touched by a deep intellectual commitment to the truth of the gospel, and of an imagination energised by the glory of the Christian vision of reality."

TERRY GLASPEY

THEMES

Imagination

Theology

Biographical

Faith

Mythology

Grief

Storytelling

STORYLINE

"The legacy Lewis left behind is a rich one indeed - a long list of books, which not only show evidence of a firm commitment to orthodoxy, but also a scintillating wit, a logical mind, and an ever-fresh imagination. He was a man who surrendered to God, was in love with life, and was ready to share all that he could with others. His was a wonderful example of the Christian life lived with fullness and passion".

This book is such a friendly invitation into the brilliant mind and life of C. S. Lewis. It is split into two parts: His Life and His Thought. This works very well and creates such an interesting and thought-provoking flow, and I loved the bite-size chapters which made it so easy to pick up and put down.

Part One, His Life: Jack's life-altering and profound moments often collide with some form of book. From the rejection of his family's faith as a young man to the reigniting of a desire for faith to battling with grief at the death of his beloved Joy, his life's timeline can almost be told, through a booklist of stories - whether his own or something which moved him.

Part Two, His Thought: This is a brief and insightful summary of Lewis' ideas and orthodoxy.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. What is one of your favourite books, essays or writings from C. S. Lewis? Why is it your favourite?

TALKING POINTS

C. S. Lewis wrote over 30 books, and many more essays across a wide variety of genres (see pages 255-257 for a complete list)

- Apologetics and Theology
- Fiction
- Poetry
- Literary Criticism
- Autobiographical

2

Q. Lewis lived a story-formed life and was significantly impacted by many books, including those by George Macdonald and tales of Norse Mythology. Which stories aided in your formation?

TALKING POINTS

We're all formed by stories. Whether it's the stories spoken over us, the stories we surround ourselves with, or the greatest story ever told of God and His great love for us. Each of us has a story to tell, and (hopefully) books that have been fundamental in our formation, spiritual growth, and worldview.

"The reading of good books will make us wiser, broaden our horizons, challenge our thinking, give flight to our imagination, and provide us hours of enjoyment." (p157).

3

Q. How did Lewis' childhood cultivate creativity and imagination?

TALKING POINTS

As Lewis was often a sickly child, he was kept indoors with books and his imaginary world to occupy his time.

- Lewis's father had an extensive library where no book was out of bounds – he was free to read anything and everything his heart desired. Lewis consumed books such as Gulliver's Travels, Paradise Lost and many E. Nesbit stories at this early age.
- Lewis and Warnie had created a world together up in the attic, but when Warren was sent to school, Lewis increased his reading time and continued to create the Boxen world himself.
- Boxen was an imagined land with chivalrous animals, and a King Bunny, complete with maps, chronologies and lists of rulers.

4

Q. Lewis' conversion to Christianity was not a sudden or dramatic moment, but a slow and steady gradual shift. What were some of the integral moments of his conversion?

TALKING POINTS

While Lewis was raised in a Christian home, the legalism and formalities only deterred him;

- Firstly, Lewis had to acknowledge the powerful influence Christianity had played in shaping the culture he loved.

- He also realised that many of his favourite authors, who had beautiful and sensible views of the world, were profoundly influenced by Christian worldviews.
- Owen Barfield convinced Lewis of the errors of Kirkpatrick's philosophical realism and how this was at odds with his romantic longings.
- At this stage, Lewis' beliefs shifted from naturalism to theism, and on a bus ride travelling up Headington Hill, Lewis realised he could no longer ignore what he had begun to see as the truth.
- Finally, a conversation with Tolkien and Hugo Dyson on myths solidified Lewis' new beliefs and 12 days afterwards, he confessed to being a Christian.

Lewis enjoyed reading tales, folk stories and myths from cultures and places all around the world.

- When Lewis was a student studying under atheist William Kirkpatrick, he said, "All religions, that is mythologies to give them their proper name are merely man's own invention."
- It was years later, that Lewis, heavily influenced by George Macdonald's otherworldly tales, called Christianity the True Myth and described his conversation as first a baptism of the imagination (p38).
- Lewis's discussion with Tolkien and Hugo Dyson helped him arrive at a new understanding of what a myth was and how it relates to truth.

5

Q. The Inklings gathered to discuss theology, and literature, and enjoy a good conversation. What impact did the Inklings have on one another? How did the death Of Inking Charles William strengthen Lewis' faith?

TALKING POINTS

Talk at the Inklings gatherings was described by Warren as, "an outpouring of wit, nonsense, whimsy, dialectical swordplay, and pungent judgement" (p75).

- As the Inklings gathered, they strengthened one another in their faith through pondering and speculation of theology and theories. They discussed one another's work, and sometimes very harshly. Tolkien was known to dislike *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, however, other members encouraged Lewis in this endeavour.
- When Charles died suddenly in 1945 it was a deep loss for Lewis. His passing, however, strengthened Lewis' faith by changing the way he thought about death. "It has made the next world much more real and palpable." (79).

6

Q. In *Surprised by Joy* and the following chapters, we read of Jack and Joy's romance, health struggles, miracles, Joy's death and Lewis' *Grief Observed*. What part of their story moved you the most?

TALKING POINTS

Jack and Joy's romance was a lovely second chance for them both;

- Lewis said, "I never expected to have, in my sixties, the happiness that passed me by in my twenties." (p108)
- Joy, after a devastating divorce, was given a second chance at love and happiness with Lewis.
- *A Grief Observed* is Lewis' painfully honest record of his conviction which moved him from despair to faith.

7

Q. Which chapter from *Part Two, C. S. Lewis: His Thought*, enlightened you, gave you something new to think about, changed your mind, or simply stood out to you the most?

TALKING POINTS

Even in his works of fiction, Lewis puts forward a compelling and reasonable case for Christianity. Part Two covers commentary on a wide variety of Lewis's quotes on topics from faith and intellect, miracles, pain, friendship, books, humour, sin, hell and the devil, and so much more.

8

Q. Discuss the very famous C. S. Lewis quote, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts to us in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (p137).

TALKING POINTS

Lewis was a man who was acquainted with pain:

- Lewis lost his mother at an early age.
- He was then sent to an awful boarding school with a villainous headmaster.
- Lewis fought in the war.
- After a brief marriage to Joy, became a widower.

9

Q. *The Problem of Pain*, *Mere Christianity*, and *Miracles* are Lewis' great trilogy of apologetic works. Why do you think these books are considered to be classics that every Christian should read? Why does Lewis have a lasting legacy today?

TALKING POINTS

The apologetic trilogy:

- *The Problem With Pain* tackles the difficult problem of theodicy: the existence of evil and suffering in light of an omnipotent God.
- *Miracles* addresses the issue of whether miracles are incompatible with natural law or science.
- *Mere Christianity* makes for the overall rationality of the Christian faith.

In the chapter *A Lasting Legacy*, Glaspey says there are three reasons why Lewis' writings are still relevant today. He calls it the "Lewis phenomenon" (p245).

- Reason (p246)
- Imagination (p248)
- Holiness (p249)

10

Q. In the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lucy asks, "Is He [Aslan] safe?", to which the animals reply, "Course he isn't safe, but he is good... He is not a tame lion." How might this quote summarise Lewis' faith and life experience with God?

TALKING POINTS

To Lewis, faith was a commitment to and trust in God and Christian teachings in the face of daily distractions, grief and doubts.



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