



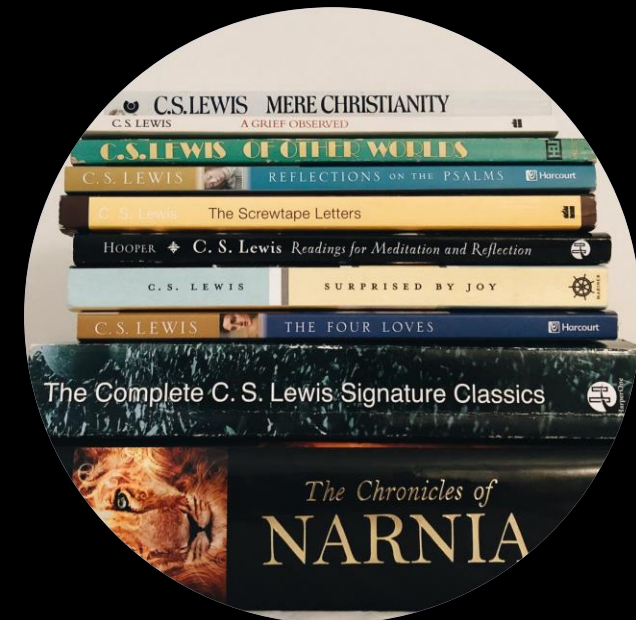
Mere Christianity

Pastor Michael Cranford

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Schedule

- Oct 22 Worldview; Book 1
- Oct 29 Book 2: What Christians Believe
- Nov 5 BREAK (Mission Sunday)
- Nov 12 Book 3
- Nov 19 BREAK (Thanksgiving, In-N-Out)
- Nov 26 Book 4(a)
- Dec 3 Book 4(b)



Mere Christianity: Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe

I think if you look at the present state of the world, it is pretty plain that humanity has been making some big mistake. (*Mere Christianity*, p. 29)

Mere Christianity

Delivered as a series of radio broadcasts between 1942 and 1944



What is a worldview?

Big questions:

What is real? What is true? What is good?

Small questions:

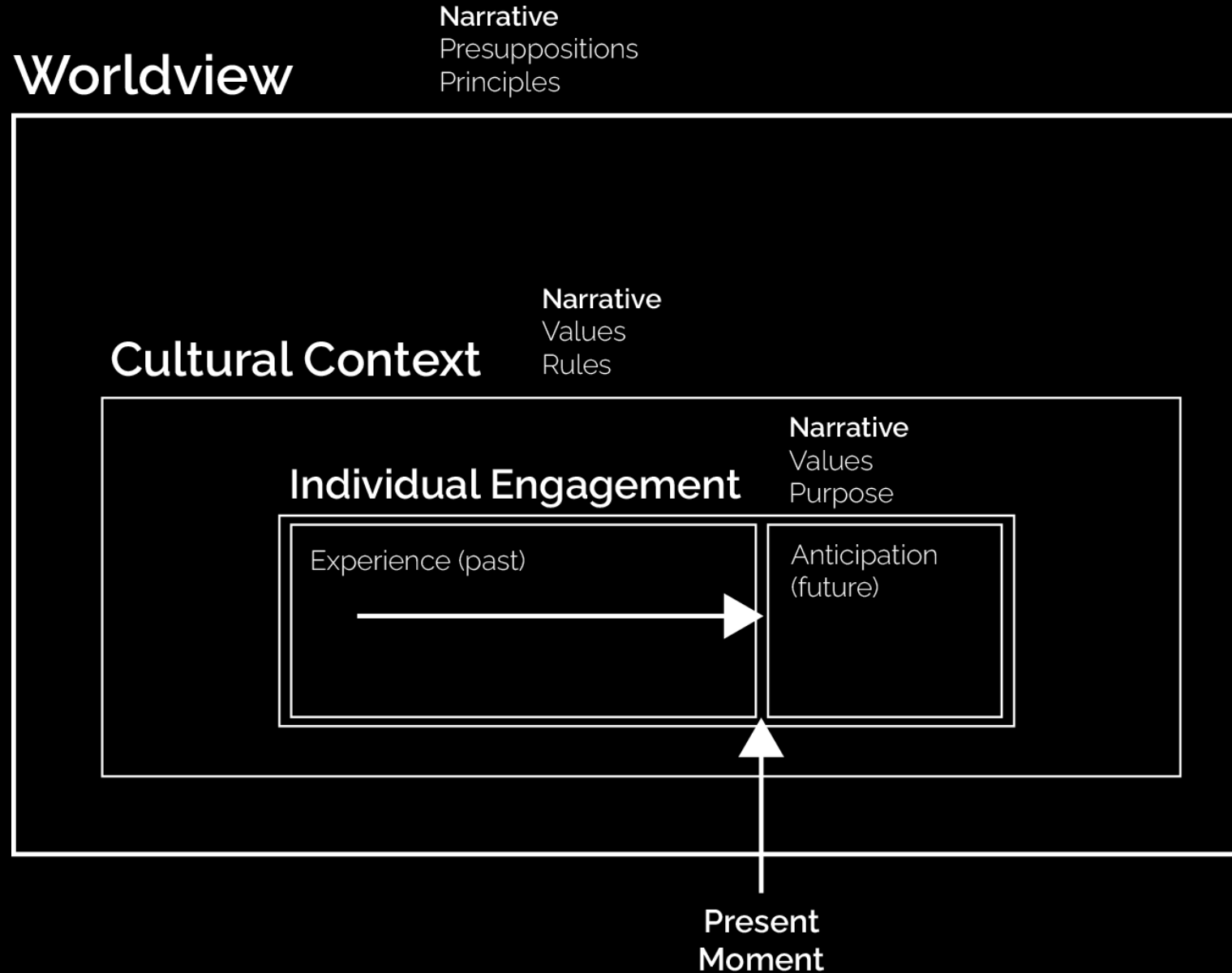
- How can I be happy?
- Why do bad things happen to me and other people?
- Does anyone love me?
- Does what I do matter?
- Am I (can I be) a good person?
- What's going to happen next in my life?

What is a worldview?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **Do not conform to the pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:1-2)



What is a worldview?



How do we choose a worldview?

1. Internally consistent

- Life is an accident but I have purpose?
- God is good but there is evil in the world?

2. Experientially sound

Does my experience of the world and rational, common sense line up with my beliefs?

E.g., does my experience of the world include the existence of good and evil?



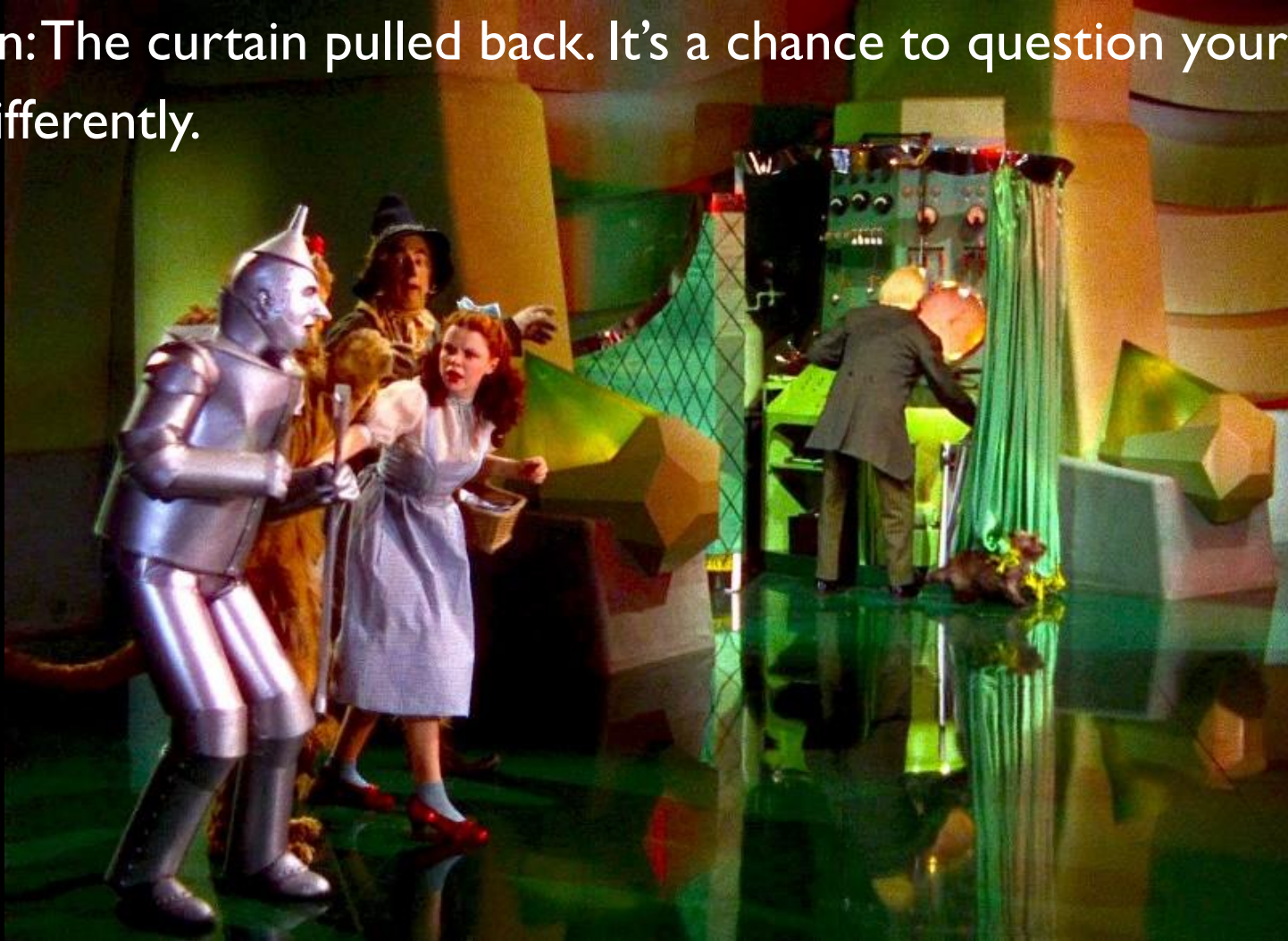
Why is it important to understand and question our worldview?

1. Your worldview (i.e., your personal philosophy) takes account of your common sense experiences and helps you face (not avoid) important questions.
2. Your worldview leads you to a life that gives you what you need (if not always what you want).
3. Your worldview offers freedom from lies (myths) contrived to control you and serve someone else's interests and not your own.



Being a Smart Christian Means Paying Attention!

Phenomenon: The curtain pulled back. It's a chance to question your assumptions and see things differently.



Being a Smart Christian Means Paying Attention!

Discipline of contextualization.



Being a Smart Christian Means Paying Attention!

Discipline of contextualization.

“Show me, LORD, my life’s end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.

⁵ You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
the span of my years is as nothing before you.

Everyone is but a breath,
even those who seem secure.

⁶ “Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth
without knowing whose it will finally be.

⁷ “But now, Lord, what do I look for?
My hope is in you.” (Ps 39:4-7)

Being a Smart Christian Means Paying Attention!

Discipline of “skepticism”: Ask questions about everything.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

- The masses are usually wrong.
- The system is rigged and exploitative; people are trying to sell you.
- There is an adversary (i.e., everything is not simply a coincidence).



Being a Smart Christian Means Paying Attention!

Phenomenon: Potholes in the road.

And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” (Heb 12:5-6)



Mere Christianity: Book 1

Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the
Universe

Mere Christianity: Book 1

I. The Law of Human Nature

What was the sense in saying the enemy were in the wrong unless Right is a real thing which the Nazis at bottom knew as well as we did and ought to have practiced?



Mere Christianity: Book 1

2. Some Objections

The moment you say that one set of moral ideas can be better than another, you are, in fact, measuring them both by a standard... You are, in fact, comparing them both with some Real Morality, admitting that there is such a thing as a real Right, independent of what people think, and that some people's ideas get nearer to that real Right than others.

Mere Christianity: Book 1

3. The Reality of the Law

Men ought to be unselfish, ought to be fair. Not that men are unselfish, not that they like being unselfish, but that they ought to be. The Moral law, or Law of Human Nature, is not simply a fact about human behavior...it is not a mere fancy...it is not simply a statement about we should like men to behave for our own convenience. ... Consequently, this Rule of Right and Wrong ... must somehow or other be a real thing.

Mere Christianity: Book 1

4. What Lies Behind the Law

If there is 'Something Behind,' then either it will have to remain altogether unknown to men or else make itself known in some different way [than scientific observation]. . . .

The only way we could expect it to show itself would be inside ourselves as an influence or a command trying to get us to behave in a certain way. And that is just what we do find inside ourselves.

Mere Christianity: Book 1

5. We Have Cause to Be Uneasy

If the universe is not governed by an absolute goodness, then all our efforts are in the long run hopeless. But if it is, then we are making ourselves enemies to the goodness every day, and are not in the least likely to do any better tomorrow, and so our case is hopeless again... God is the only comfort, He is also the supreme terror: the thing we most need and the thing we most want to hide from.