

“The Most Reluctant Convert” starring Max McLean, Nicholas Ralph, Richard Harrington, 2021, NR, 77 minutes

Major themes:

- Atheism
- Prayer
- Words
- Materialism
- Poetry
- The Supernatural / Occult
- War
- Theism
- Faith
- God
- Christianity
- Joy

Major characters:

- Clive Staples “Jack” Lewis
- Albert & Flora Lewis
- Warnie Lewis
- J. R. R. “Tollers” Tolkien
- Hugo Dyson
- Owen Barfield
- W. T. “The Great Knock” Kirkpatrick

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- This film is about the journey to faith of Clive Staples Lewis (November 29th, 1898 – November 22nd, 1963). C. S. Lewis became one of the greatest authors of the 20th century and is honored with a memorial stone in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Lewis held academic positions in English literature at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He is best known as the author of "*The Chronicles of Narnia*," but he also wrote many other notable works, including fiction (e.g. "*The Screwtape Letters*" and "*The Space Trilogy*") and non-fiction Christian apologetics ("*Mere Christianity*", "*Miracles*", and "*The Problem of Pain*"). Lewis vigorously resisted conversion, noting in "*Surprised by Joy*" that he was brought into Christianity like a prodigal, "*kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance to escape.*"
- In churches that celebrate a rite of First Communion (as separate from Baptism or Confirmation), it is often a rite of passage, typically occurring between the ages of seven and thirteen.
- Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptized. As part of this sacrament, a local bishop lays their hands on the recipient and prays that the Holy Spirit would give them the strength and commitment to live God's way for the rest of their life.
- Materialism is the view that the universe consists only of organized matter and energy. Supernatural refers to phenomena or entities that are beyond the laws of nature. The occult refers to secret or hidden knowledge, usually of a mystical nature. Theism is broadly defined as the belief in the existence of a supreme being or deities.

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Scriptures:

Hebrews 11:1-3 (The Message) – *“The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It’s our handle on what we can’t see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd. By faith, we see the world called into existence by God’s word, what we see created by what we don’t see.”*

Matthew 6:22-23 (The Message) – *“Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a musty cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!”*

Galatians 3:2,5-6 (The Message) – *“Let me put this question to you: How did your new life begin? Was it by working your heads off to please God? Or was it by responding to God’s Message to you? . . . Answer this question: Does the God who lavishly provides you with his own presence, his Holy Spirit, working things in your lives you could never do for yourselves, does he do these things because of your strenuous moral striving or because you trust him to do them in you? Don’t these things happen among you just as they happened with Abraham? He believed God, and that act of belief was turned into a life that was right with God.”*

Matthew 6:7-14 – *“The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what’s best—as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You’re in charge! You can do anything you want! You’re ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes. In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do.”*

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Discussion points:

1. Lewis came to the realization that if materialism is true, then our minds cannot be trusted, as that would mean our thoughts are nothing more than the accidental collision of atoms in skulls. Why do you think he concluded that mind, reason, consciousness, imagination must be the result of something “*further up and further in*”?
2. Which part of Lewis’s conversion struggle (as the most reluctant convert) most resonated with you?
3. Discuss this quote: “*The story of Christ is a myth working on us in the same way as other myths, with one tremendous difference – it really happened.*”
4. What do you think of Lewis’s claim that if he found in himself a desire which no experience in this world could satisfy, then the most probable explanation is that he was made for another world.
5. Lewis describes joy as “*the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have not visited.*” Why do you think Lewis said that pleasure is in our power, but joy is not?
6. Which of Lewis’s major influences who were mentioned in this film are you most intrigued by, and why: W. T. “The Great Knock” Kirkpatrick, W. B. Yeats, George MacDonald (e.g. “*Phantastes*”), G. K. Chesterton, Owen Barfield, Hugo Dyson, J. R. R. Tolkien