

# Simply Put, What is a Christian?

## What if We Paid More of Our Attention to Faith, Hope and Love?

February 4, 2024

### 1 Thessalonians 5v1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> you do not need to have anything written to you. **2** For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! **4** But you, beloved,<sup>[b]</sup> are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; **5** for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. **6** So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; **7** for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9** For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Observation: Notice 1 Thessalonians assumes an environment hostile to the life you intend to live and sees faith, hope and love as the means of getting the job done.

What if you used Lent to do a bit of an "Attention" fast?

Back to our original questions...

#### Suggested Mere Christianity Reading:

Week 1 (January 14-20): Preface, Book I (3-32)  
 Week 2 (January 21-27): Book II (35-68)  
 Week 3 (January 28-Feb 3): Book III: Chapter 1 & 2 (pgs 69-81)  
 Week 4 (February 4-10): Book III: Chapters 9-12 (pgs 129-152)  
 Week 5 (February 11-17): Book IV: Chapters 8-11 (pgs 195-227)

What if we paid more of our attention to faith, hope and love?

What would have to change?

What would be the benefits? For "me"? For those we love? For our community?

What did you pay your attention to yesterday?

How do you nuance that from what you did, your rote habits?

What did you really think about or ruminate on?

More than a trope?

"Attention is the ignition key of the mind. It turns everyone on and everything that we do is a function of what we are turning our attention to....How well are you paying attention to what you're paying attention to?" \_ Dr. Curt Thompson (see podcast reference below)

### Faith

"Now Faith...is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods....That is why Faith is such a necessary virtue: unless you teach your moods 'where they get off', you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestions. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith." \_ Mere Christianity, pgs 14-141

### Hope

"If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next....Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in': aim at earth and you will get neither." \_ Mere Christianity, pg 134

### Love

#### Philippians 2v3-4

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

**Books:** *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis; *Digital Minimalism* by Cal Newport  
**Songs:** Good Good Father, Move, Hosanna, Today if You Hear Him, Wasteland, Come Alive  
**Podcast:** Word & Table: The Cardinal Virtues (12/01/2020); Veritas Forum: Mental Health Take a Village (01/25/24)  
**Looking to Connect?:** One of the staff would love to meet for a walk, on the phone, or for a beverage. To schedule a time please visit our website and click on the "Meet with Staff" button on the home page.