

Social Morality: A Study Guide on the Views of C.S. Lewis and John MacArthur

This guide is designed to review the core concepts presented in the "SOCIAL MORALITY 10/15/2025" lecture. It covers the comparative analysis of C.S. Lewis and John MacArthur on topics including the Golden Rule, the church's role in politics, Christian charity, and the nature of a Christian society.

Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

Answer the following questions in 2-3 complete sentences, based entirely on the provided source material.

1. According to C.S. Lewis, what is the primary job of a great moral teacher, and how does this relate to the Golden Rule?
2. How does John MacArthur define the separate jurisdictions of church authority and government authority?
3. What is John MacArthur's view on "Christian Nationalism," and what theological perspective does he believe it is tied to?
4. List three specific characteristics that C.S. Lewis uses to describe what a "fully Christian society" would be like.
5. What does John MacArthur warn is the danger of "selective Christianity" or cherry-picking beliefs?
6. What shared view did C.S. Lewis note that "ancient heathen Greeks," "the Jews in the Old Testament," and "great Christian teachers of the Middle Ages" held regarding lending money at interest?
7. According to MacArthur, under what specific circumstances is charging interest on a loan biblically forbidden?
8. What rule does C.S. Lewis offer for determining how much a person ought to give to charity?
9. Does John MacArthur teach that New Testament Christians are required to tithe 10 percent? Explain his view on the matter.
10. According to C.S. Lewis, what is the ultimate prerequisite for a Christian society to be realized?

Answer Key

1. C.S. Lewis states that the real job of a moral teacher is not to introduce new moralities but to constantly bring people back to "old simple principles" they are anxious to avoid. He connects this to the Golden Rule ("Do as you would be done"), which he argues is not a new morality from Christ but a summation of what everyone has always known to be right.
2. MacArthur believes in two distinct kingdoms. He asserts that the government has jurisdiction over law, civil order, and justice, while the church's authority is over worship, doctrine, and internal practice. He argues that civil authority should not dictate how the church governs itself internally.
3. John MacArthur is critical of Christian Nationalism, which he defines as the blending of faith with political agendas to establish a Christian-dominated state. He sees this as a misreading of scripture tied to postmillennial eschatology, which expects the church to bring in the kingdom through cultural and political means.
4. C.S. Lewis describes a "fully Christian society" as one with no "passengers or parasites," where everyone works to produce something good, and there is no manufacturing of silly luxuries. He also states it would be a cheerful society full of singing and rejoicing, and one that insists on obedience to properly appointed magistrates and from children to parents.
5. MacArthur warns that selective Christianity can lead to a false assurance of salvation. He argues that if someone ignores or denies that repentance and obedience are essential parts of following Christ, their faith may be superficial and not genuine, even if they believe they are right with God.
6. C.S. Lewis points out that these three great civilizations agreed in condemning the practice of lending money at interest, which they called "usury." He notes that this is the very thing upon which the modern economic system has based its whole life.
7. MacArthur teaches that charging interest is forbidden when lending to someone who is poor, in desperate need, or a fellow believer in poverty. In these situations of basic necessity, the Old Testament law forbids charging interest, emphasizing compassion and community responsibility.
8. C.S. Lewis suggests the "only safe rule is to give more than we can spare." He elaborates that if one's charitable giving does not pinch or hamper their lifestyle, and if there aren't things they would like to do but cannot because of their giving, the amount is likely too small.

9. No, MacArthur teaches that tithing 10 percent was part of the Mosaic Law and is not a command for the New Testament church. He believes that giving in the church age is to be voluntary, generous, sacrificial, and joyful, rather than being bound to a set percentage.

10. Lewis concludes that a Christian society will not arrive until most people "really want it." He states that people will not truly want it until they become fully Christian, which requires learning to love their neighbor as themselves by first learning to obey and love God.

Essay Questions

The following questions are for deeper reflection. Use the source material to construct a detailed, evidence-based response.

1. Compare and contrast the views of C.S. Lewis and John MacArthur on the church's proper role in politics and social reform. How do their arguments about the clergy, laity, and government authority align or diverge?
2. The lecture covers various aspects of Christian economic ethics, including work, luxury, debt, interest (usury), and charity. Synthesize the perspectives of both Lewis and MacArthur on how a Christian should approach financial and material matters.
3. Analyze the concept of "selective Christianity." How does John MacArthur's critique of this practice relate to C.S. Lewis's observation that people are attracted to "bits" of Christianity and want to "pick out those bits and leave the rest"?
4. C.S. Lewis argues that Christianity was never intended to "replace or supersede the ordinary human arts and sciences" but is rather a "director which will set them all to the right jobs." Using examples from the text, explain what Lewis means and how this principle applies to politics, economics, and other social issues.
5. Explain C.S. Lewis's concluding argument that social matters ultimately drive one "inward" to religious matters and that "the longest way around is the shortest way home." How does this final point serve as a capstone to the entire discussion on social morality?

Glossary of Key Terms

Term / Person / Work Definition Based on Source Context

C.S. Lewis	A British author (died 1963) who wrote <i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> and <i>Mere Christianity</i> . His views on social morality, discussed in the lecture, were originally presented as radio broadcasts during World War II.
John MacArthur	A preacher (died 2025) whose grandfather and father were also preachers. He authored or had his name on approximately 150 books, often derived from his preaching.
Golden Rule	The principle summarized as "Do as you would be done" or "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." C.S. Lewis presents it not as a new morality but as a summation of what people have always known to be right.
Social Morality	The subject of the lecture, concerning Christian morality between people, including topics like politics, economics, giving, and the characteristics of a Christian society.
Christian Nationalism	A concept John MacArthur is critical of, defined as the blending of faith with political agendas to establish a Christian-dominated culture or state.
Postmillennial Eschatology	A theological viewpoint MacArthur associates with Christian Nationalism. It expects the church to bring in the kingdom of God through cultural and political action before Christ's return.
Premillennial Eschatology	John MacArthur's stated theological viewpoint, which expects spiritual and moral conditions in the world to worsen until Christ returns.
The Great Commission	Mentioned as the church's true mission, in contrast to partisan politics. It is about reconciliation with God and the transformation of hearts.
Usury	The ancient term for lending money at interest. C.S. Lewis notes that three great civilizations (ancient Greeks, Old Testament Jews, and medieval Christians) agreed in condemning this practice.

Tithing

The practice of giving 10 percent. John MacArthur teaches that this was part of the Old Testament Mosaic Law and is not a command for the New Testament church, which should practice free-will, generous giving instead.

Prosperity Gospel

A teaching that John MacArthur strongly rejects. He clarifies that while God blesses generous giving, it does not guarantee financial gain but rather brings spiritual joy and eternal reward.

Mere Christianity

A book by C.S. Lewis mentioned as a favorite of the speaker. The chapter on social morality discussed in the lecture is from this work.

**Selective
Christianity**

The practice of picking and choosing which parts of Christian teaching to accept, often selecting comfortable parts while ignoring difficult ones like sin, judgment, and repentance. MacArthur warns this leads to a superficial faith and false assurance of salvation.