

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE - BASIC APOLOGETICS COURSE

RECAP

Set I: Reasons for Faith	Set II: Objections to Faith	Set III: Responding to Atheism	Set IV: New Age & Cults
☒ 1. Cosmological Argument	☐ 6. Gospels: Can They Be Trusted?	☐ 11. Reason & Imagination	☐ 16. Responding to New Age
☒ 2. Argument from Desire	☐ 7. Problem of Evil	☐ 12. Faith & Reason	☐ 17. Neopaganism
☐ 3. Who Is the Real Jesus?	☐ 8. Is Christ the Only Way?	☐ 13. Postmodernism	☐ 18. What Is a Cult?
☐ 4. Prophecy about Christ	☐ 9. Atheism: Wish-Fulfillment?	☐ 14. Relativism	☐ 19. Dealing with Cults
☐ 5. Case for the Resurrection	☐ 10. Apologetics & the Ascension	☐ 15. Abolition of Man	☐ 20. Argument from Agape

"This is a journey of faith and reason — learning to know why we believe, defend truth, and share Christ with grace."

I. Session 2 Recap – The Argument from Desire

A. Key Points from Session 2

- Human longings (for love, joy, justice, belonging) point beyond this world.
- C.S. Lewis described this longing as Sehnsucht, a bittersweet desire that nothing in this world satisfies.
- Every natural desire corresponds to something real (hunger → food, thirst → water). The longing for 'something more' points to God.
- Substitutes (money, relationships, pleasure) never fully satisfy; only God does.
- Longings can become a bridge in conversations with unbelievers.

B. Building Our Knowledge (Ongoing Through 20 Sessions)

This section will grow as we move through the course. Each week we'll add new "faith anchors" — truths to remember, share, and build confidence on.

1. Session 1: Cosmological Argument

- Something exists now → something must have always existed.
- The universe had a beginning (Big Bang, 2nd Law of Thermodynamics).
- The best explanation is a necessary, eternal Creator.

2. Session 2: Argument from Desire

- Our deepest longings are signposts pointing us to God.
- Sehnsucht (longing) is not an accident; it is evidence of heaven.
- Without God, humans are the most miserable of creatures — longing with no fulfillment.

C. Questions for Reflection This Week

1. What desire in your life reminds you that you're made for God?
2. Which substitutes do you need to set aside to pursue Him more fully?
3. How can you use a book, film, or song to start a conversation about spiritual longing with someone this week?

Next week I'll expand this recap with Session 3 (Who is the Real Jesus?) so that by the end of the course, our group will have a living, growing summary of the key truths from all 20 sessions.

II. My notes:

A. Introduction

The Argument from Desire explores one of the most powerful evidences for God in human experience—our deep longings. From Kafka's despair to C.S. Lewis's joy, these yearnings point beyond this world to a greater fulfillment. This session builds confidence that unmet desires are not meaningless but signposts pointing us toward God.

B. Synopsis

This session looks at the argument from desire as developed by C.S. Lewis. Every natural desire corresponds to a real object (hunger–food, thirst–water). Humans also experience a desire nothing in this world can satisfy. Therefore, something beyond the world—God—must exist to fulfill it. Lewis described this longing with the word 'Sehnsucht,' a bittersweet joy pointing toward heaven. Through this lens, life's deepest yearnings—love, beauty, justice, belonging—are not cruel jokes but invitations to God. This helps believers recognize their longings as part of their testimony and equips them to show unbelievers that desire itself argues for God's reality.

C. Study Questions with Suggested Answers

1. Why is Kafka viewed by some as the representative atheist of the twentieth century?

Answer: Kafka's stories show deep human desires—love, justice, community—without fulfillment. His phrase, 'There is a goal, but no way,' captures atheism's despair. He felt guilt but found no way to be acquitted.

Follow-up Discussion: How do you see this despair reflected in modern culture?

2. How can the argument from desire be put into a logical form?

Answer: Every natural desire has a real fulfillment (hunger–food, thirst–water). Humans have a desire no earthly thing satisfies. Therefore, something beyond this world—God—must exist to fulfill it.

Follow-up Discussion: How could you explain this syllogism simply to a friend?

3. What does C.S. Lewis mean by 'Sehnsucht'?

Answer: It is a German word for deep, bittersweet longing that nothing in this world can satisfy. Lewis described it as a 'signpost' pointing us to eternal joy in God.

Follow-up Discussion: Have you experienced such longings in your own life?

4. How was the argument from desire central in Lewis's conversion?

Answer: Lewis recognized lifelong longings in nature, literature, and imagination. They never satisfied fully, but pointed beyond. Ultimately, they led him to Christ.

Follow-up Discussion: Which desires in your own life have drawn you closer to Christ?

5. How does Lewis develop this theme in his writings?

Answer: In **Surprised by Joy**, **The Silver Chair**, and sermons, Lewis wrote of longing as evidence pointing to God. Story and imagination made truth vivid.

Follow-up Discussion: Why are stories often powerful tools for truth?

6. What are Lewis's three ways of dealing with aspirations?

Answer: Fool's Way: blaming things themselves, always disappointed. Cynic's Way: suppressing desires. Christian Way: seeing desires as pointers to God.

Follow-up Discussion: Which of these ways do you see in people around you?

7. Why does the atheist/materialist view of desires make humans the most miserable of creatures?

Answer: If desires have no fulfillment, humans—who can reflect deeply—are condemned to unending frustration. Animals lack this awareness; humans would be uniquely tragic.

Follow-up Discussion: How might you show a friend that their longings could be clues pointing them to God?

D. Building Faith Conversations

1. Which of your longings do you recognize as a pointer toward God?

Answer: Our longings for love, belonging, or beauty point beyond earthly life to God as their source.

Follow-up Discussion: How does this perspective change how you see your desires?

2. What are some common substitutes people turn to instead of seeking God?

Answer: Money, relationships, addictions, or entertainment promise fulfillment but cannot satisfy eternal hunger.

Follow-up Discussion: Which substitutes do you see most around you?

3. How does practicing gratitude help reshape your perspective on unmet desires?

Answer: Gratitude shifts focus from what is missing to God's gifts today, helping us find joy in Him.

Follow-up Discussion: How might daily gratitude change your week?

4. Can you recall a moment of Sehnsucht in your life? How did it affect your faith?

Answer: Longings stirred by beauty, music, or memories remind us that we are made for eternity.

Follow-up Discussion: Share one such experience with the group.

5. What rhythms of joy or celebration could you add to your life that honor God as the giver of joy?

Answer: Practices like Sabbath meals, worship, or thanksgiving prayers keep joy alive in God.

Follow-up Discussion: What joyful rhythm could you add this month?

6. What desires in your life might need to be purified and redirected toward God?

Answer: Good desires can become idols when they take God's place. Prayer and Scripture realign them.

Follow-up Discussion: What desire do you need to surrender this week?

7. How might you use a movie, book, or song to start a conversation about spiritual longing with a friend?

Answer: Art stirs deep desires that can lead into Gospel conversations—for example, films about longing for home or meaning.

E. Follow-up Discussion: What story could you use as a bridge?

8. How does the hope of heaven encourage you in the face of present dissatisfaction?

Answer: It gives endurance and comfort knowing every unmet desire will be fulfilled in Christ forever.

Follow-up Discussion: How does this give you strength today?

9. What does it look like for you personally to live expectantly in light of God's promises?

Answer: Living with eternity in mind shapes priorities—relationships, service, and hope.

Follow-up Discussion: What habit would help you live more expectantly?

10. How has God used your story of longing and fulfillment in Christ to encourage others?

Answer: Personal testimonies of God meeting our deepest needs are compelling and relatable.

Follow-up Discussion: Who could you share your story with this week?

I'll update this webpage with Study Guides and Recaps. <https://srmattthews.com/tsg>

