

God and Churchill
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Discussion Guide
Prologue

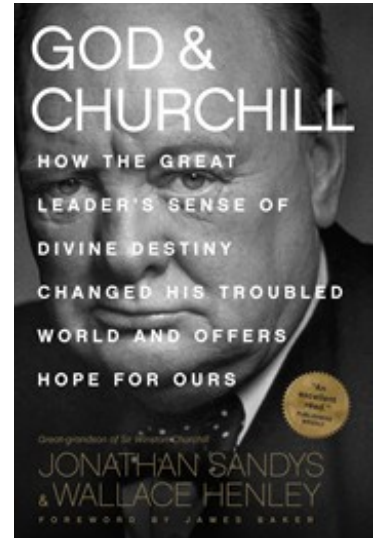
1. What is your primary motivation for reading *God and Churchill*?
2. Based on what you already know about Winston Churchill, what made him “the image of hope” for his day and age?
3. Describe your understanding or belief about “divine destiny.” Does God intervene in human history, and if so, how?
4. Looking back on your life, how would you say past events have prepared you for where you are today?

Chapter 1: A Vision of Destiny

1. If you had been with Winston Churchill and Murland de Grasse Evans at Harrow in 1891, how would you have responded to Churchill’s vision of one day saving London and the British Empire?
2. How did Churchill’s relationship with his parents help to shape him into the person he became?
3. Winston Churchill had an especially close relationship with Mrs. Elizabeth Everest, his childhood nanny. Who in your life has had the greatest impact on the person you’ve become? How did that person (or those people) shape your understanding of God?
4. Have you ever had a sense of your own divine destiny? How did that come about, and how would you describe it to someone else?
5. What can we learn from Churchill’s early life about overcoming adversity and disappointment?

Chapter 2: Surviving Destiny’s Perilous Paths

1. How would you characterize Churchill’s survival in the battle of Omdurman as a result of having injured his shoulder in India: luck or divine providence? Explain.
2. Describe a circumstance in your own life in which what seemed to be a hardship or a setback had a beneficial outcome later on.
3. Though, as Churchill once said, “wars are not won by evacuations,” there is something to be said for living to fight another day. In our day-to-day lives, how do we determine when to choose resistance over surrender, or vice versa?
4. In the story of “Wilson’s Death Trap,” would you say that Winston Churchill was heroically brave or dangerously foolish? Explain your answer. What is the difference between true courage and mere hubris?



5. After Churchill escaped from the Boer prisoner-of-war camp, he traveled on foot and by rail for more than two days before happening upon “the only house for twenty miles where [he] would not have been handed over” to the enemy. To what do you attribute this happy outcome? Can you describe a circumstance in your own life in which your steps seemed almost miraculously guided?

Chapter 3: From the Admiralty to the Trenches

1. While in his twenties, Churchill seemed drawn to the opportunity to go to war, either as a correspondent or as a soldier. But by his mid-thirties, as the events leading to the outbreak of the First World War were coming to a head, he “could not think of anything else but the peril of war.” What do you suppose changed his perspective of war—from grand adventure to perilous threat—during those years?

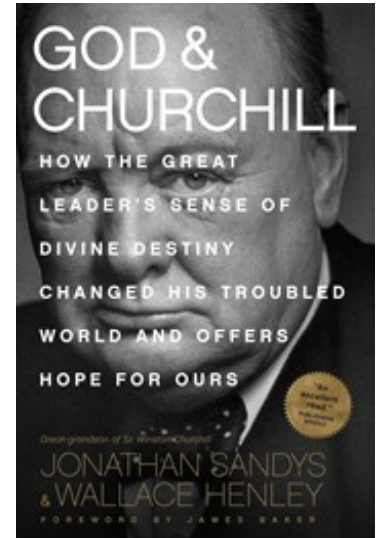
2. When Prime Minister Asquith asked Churchill to become first lord of the Admiralty, “the danger facing his nation” became Churchill’s principal personal concern. How did his reading of Deuteronomy 9:1-5 serve to reassure him and give him courage?

3. What daunting responsibilities, “giants,” or “dangers” do you face in your own life? What lessons can you learn from Deuteronomy 9:1-5?

4. In 1915, in an effort to break the stalemate of trench warfare in Europe, “Churchill conceived a bold plan . . . using a combined navy and army attack to break through the Straits [of Gallipoli] and march on Constantinople. . . . On paper, the strategy seemed inventive and the best shortcut to victory,” but in practice, the plan was a catastrophe that resulted in half a million casualties, cost Churchill his job as first lord of the Admiralty, and made the name Gallipoli synonymous with military disaster. What lessons can we learn from the failure of the Dardanelles operation?

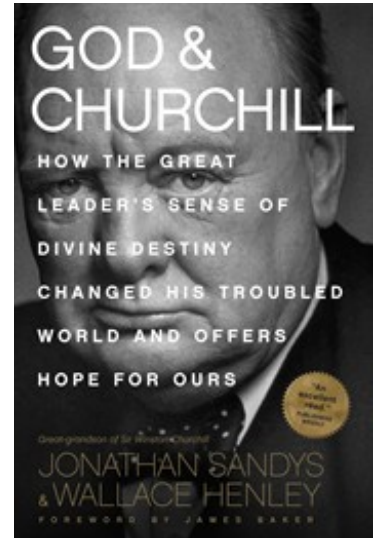
5. When Churchill was sacked as first lord of the Admiralty, he found himself suddenly with “long hours of utterly unwanted leisure,” forced to “watch the unhappy casting-away of great opportunities.” Describe a time in your life when—either through financial reversal, loss of a job, or other adverse circumstances—your day-to-day life went through tremendous upheaval. What did you do to cope during that time? What would you do differently today in similar circumstances?

6. In his resignation speech in the House of Commons, Churchill showed resilience and optimism when he said, “There is no reason to be disheartened about the progress of the war. We are passing through a bad time now and it will probably be worse before it is better, but that it will be better, if we only endure and persevere, I have no doubt whatever.” To what do you attribute Churchill’s ability to “endure adversity, to put up with disappointment and mismanagement, to recreate and renew . . . strength, to toil on with boundless obstinacy through boundless suffering to the achievement of the greatest cause for which men have fought”? How do his words apply to our current circumstances in the twenty-first century?



Chapter 4: Hitler's Vision

1. Both Churchill and Hitler had visions of their future roles in history while they were still teenagers. What does this suggest about the importance of touching the lives of teenagers and teaching them ethical, moral, and biblical values while they are still young? What is the most effective way to teach these values?
2. What, if anything, do you believe about the role of demonic forces in people's lives? To what do you attribute Hitler's vision of world domination? To what do you attribute his conviction that what he was doing was good and right and necessary?
3. How did Hitler's relationship with his father help to shape him into the person he became? How was his story similar to or different from Churchill's? How do you explain the differing paths they took?
4. What similarities and differences do you find between Hitler's and Churchill's perspectives on war?
5. In what ways was Hitler a product of his times? How did his "times" differ from Churchill's? What factors in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s contributed to Hitler's rise to power?



Chapter 5: Prime Minister at Last

1. It's easy, in retrospect, to criticize Neville Chamberlain for claiming "peace for our time" even as he was giving license to German expansionism and paving the road to war. What lessons can we learn for our own day and time from Chamberlain's failures?
2. After Churchill criticized the Munich accord in a speech in the House of Commons, one of his constituents complained: "I cannot help thinking it was rather a pity that he broke up the harmony of the House by the speech he made. . . . I think it would have been a great deal better if he had kept quiet and not made a speech at all." Are there times when preserving harmony is more important than speaking the truth, or is truth the ultimate trump card? How can we be certain that we're speaking the truth? What does it mean to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)?
3. How had Churchill's experiences between the two world wars prepared him for his role as prime minister?
4. What can we learn from Churchill's commitment to speak the truth, even when the truth meant "nothing but disaster for quite a long time"? How did Churchill's commitment to speak the truth affect the British people during the war?
5. After Churchill became prime minister, how did he deal with his political enemies and those who doubted him? What can we learn from his example about overcoming opposition?
6. What does it mean to be people of valor in our day and age? What character traits, attitudes, and values exemplify people of valor?

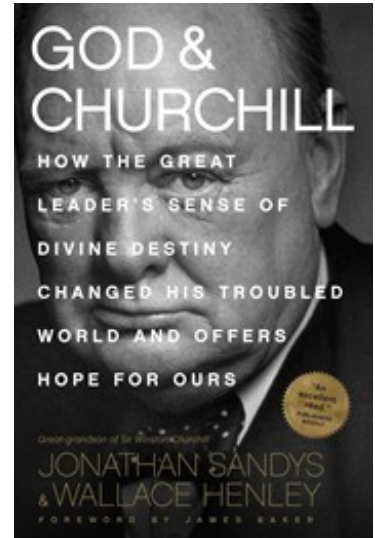


Chapter 6: Churchill and the Sermon on the Mount

1. What did Churchill see in “Christian civilization” that made its survival worth the immense sacrifices necessary to preserve it?
2. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? How is this a strength?
3. What is meekness, rightly understood? How can we demonstrate meekness in our current culture?
4. Most people think they are right most of the time (or else they would change their views, right?). This perspective is often displayed as self-righteousness. What does the Bible mean by the word righteousness?
5. What is the role of mercy in confronting evil in our world?
6. What can we do to become peacemakers and reconcilers in a world filled with unresolved (and perhaps unresolvable) conflict?
7. What does it mean to be salt and light in the world? How much control do we have over our own “saltiness” and “light”?
8. What is the difference between morality and moralism? How does morality apply to the arena of warfare? What is the proper role of retaliation in warfare? Is there ever a time in war for turning the other cheek?

Chapter 7: Preserving “A Certain Way of Life”

1. Governments in what Churchill would have regarded as Christian civilization have largely been democratic, parliamentary, or monarchic—not theocratic (that is, not ruled by God directly through his chosen leaders). How has Christianity put its mark on Western societies during this time?
2. What is the key to God’s way of government?
3. What are the principal characteristics of Christian civilization?
4. How did the Bible affect Churchill’s approach to government?
5. How would you define classical Christian humanism? How does this differ from secular humanism?
6. Expansionism and imperialism are widely regarded as negative in our day and age. How did the common view of British overseas expansion differ in Churchill’s time? What were some of the consequences (positive or negative) of British imperialism?
7. What are the foundational elements of human liberty? What is the proper role of government in preserving these elements in society?
8. How do reason and spirituality interact in a free society?
9. How did Christian principles affect the postwar Nuremberg trials?

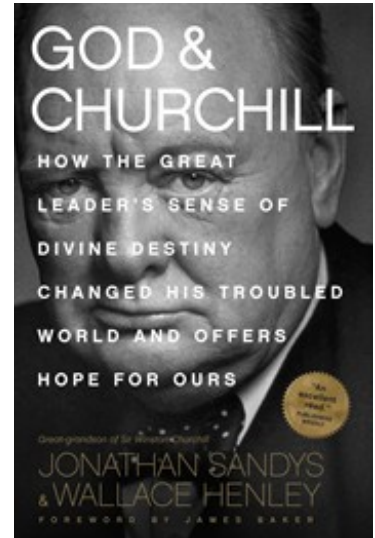


Chapter 8: Hitler and “Perverted Science”

1. How did the rise of nationalism affect the balance of world power prior to the Second World War?
2. What did Churchill mean by the phrase “perverted science”?
3. What are the primary differences between social Darwinism and a Christian view of society?
4. How did Darwinism shatter the link between revelation and reason?
5. What are the differences between utility and morality? How do these differences affect human society?
6. How does a mechanistic view of humanity differ from a biblical view? How do these differences affect human society?
7. How does the loss of transcendent accountability and wonder affect our culture? How does a biblical perspective support a sense of transcendence?
8. How has scientism led to human “overreaching”?

Chapter 9: Hitler and the Corruption of the Church

1. If you had lived in Germany during the 1930s, how do you think you would have responded to Hitler’s rise to power?
2. What could the church in Germany have done differently to preserve its role as a pastoral and prophetic influence in society?
3. How did anti-Semitism within the church affect the rise of Nazism in Germany?
4. German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer was arrested and executed for taking part in a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. Do you think such actions by a Christian could be considered justified? Why or why not?
5. The Nazis pursued a five-point plan to silence the church’s prophetic voice: caricature → marginalize → vilify → criminalize → eliminate. How, if at all, are these same factors at play in our current society? How should the church respond?
6. How do opponents of Christianity try to use the Bible itself to silence the voices of Christians in our culture?
7. How does authority differ from authoritarianism? How can true authority be used to resist authoritarianism?



Chapter 10: Nazism and the German Disaster

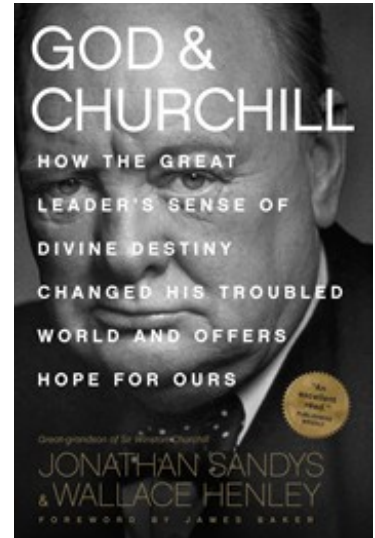
1. How did Germany, a nation with such a rich theological and cultural heritage, come to such disastrous ruin? What lessons for our own day, and our own society, can we learn from their example?
2. How should the church respond to emerging anti-Christian trends in society?
3. What can the church do to nurture the roots of Christian civilization in our day and age?
4. What are some of the “windbreaks” that protect our current Christian civilization, and how are they in danger of being knocked down?
5. What were the most formative or important influences on Adolf Hitler from Wagner, Nietzsche, Darwin, and Spencer?

Chapter 11: Churchill’s Urgent Concern—and Ours

1. How does the doctrine of equivalency affect our culture and Christian civilization?
2. Given how Churchill responded to the Nazi threat, what do you think he would say about the current emergence of terrorism in our world, and how to fight it?
3. What is the role of intellectual “thought leaders” in determining the direction of our culture? What is a biblical response to these opinion leaders?
4. In Matthew 10:16, Jesus tells us to be “as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves” as we go out into the world. What does this mean in practical terms?
5. What can we do to counteract the rising level of historical illiteracy in our culture? How does the current trend toward revisionism affect our understanding of history, and how can we find reliable sources for our histories?
6. In what ways are our current American and European leaders “repeating the mistakes of their 1930s predecessors” as Victor David Hanson warns?
7. How does a biblical perspective of life and history allow us to avoid internal decay and stand firm against external adversaries?

Chapter 12: How Churchill Kept Calm and Carried On

1. If the early twentieth century was a time of dashed utopian dreams and the early twenty-first century is a time of dystopian depression, how do we cultivate and preserve hope for the future of humanity? What is the basis of our hope?
2. How does having a larger vision of the future promote endurance in the face of difficult circumstances?



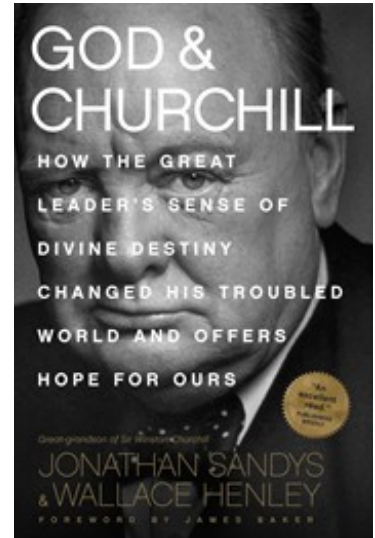
3. How does the life of Winston Churchill inspire you to try to make a difference in the world?
4. What is the role of faith in promoting confidence and vision?
5. Churchill encouraged us to “persevere towards those objectives which are lighted for us by all the wisdom and inspiration of the past.” What “lights” might we point to in order to draw inspiration from our history?
6. As unpredictable events unfold, how can we maintain and foster a biblical perspective?
7. Discuss the importance of rest in preserving our ability to “keep calm and carry on.”

Chapter 13: Churchill and the Character of Leadership

1. What lessons for today can we learn from Churchill’s leadership style?
2. How have you seen God use “incongruities” to accomplish his purposes?
3. This chapter tells us, “In the present multicultural fervor of Western society, emerging voices have begun to question whether Judeo-Christian civilization deserves to have a future.” How would you argue for the value of Judeo-Christian principles? How does history support your view?
4. What can be done to overcome our society’s tendency to focus on short-term desires and outcomes? How can we promote a sense of divine destiny and a long-range focus?
5. What character traits do you believe are the most important for effective leadership in our day and age? How are these similar to or different from the traits necessary at other times in history?
6. What lessons can we learn from the past that will inform our perspective of the future?
7. What sacrifices are you willing to make to ensure the preservation of Christian civilization?
8. How willing is our society to give those who have failed a second chance? How do honesty, humility, and forgiveness affect your perspective of leadership?

Chapter 14: Help and Hope for Our Times

1. What’s your verdict? Do you believe that God sovereignly chose Winston Churchill to preserve Christian civilization and stand against the forces of evil embodied in Adolf Hitler and the Nazis? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think would have happened during the Second World War if Churchill had not been prime minister of Great Britain?
3. What is the purpose of studying history? How has your reading of God and Churchill changed your perspective on history in general or on the events of the Second World War?



4. Though Churchill and the Allies ultimately prevailed against Nazi Germany, millions of lives were lost and much evil was perpetrated. How do you answer the question, "Where was God?"
5. Review the nine phases of the cycle of nations. Which phase do you believe we're in today? How can we restore God's Kingdom principles in our culture?
6. Summarize what you have learned from reading God and Churchill. Which lesson do you deem most important?

