screwtape letters discussion questions

Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions: Deepening Your Understanding of C.S. Lewis's Classic

screwtape letters discussion questions often serve as a gateway to exploring the profound themes and unique narrative style found in C.S. Lewis's timeless work, *The Screwtape Letters*. Whether you're leading a book club, participating in a study group, or simply reflecting on the text for personal enrichment, well-crafted questions can unlock new perspectives and spark meaningful conversations. This article dives into thoughtful, engaging discussion questions that help readers grapple with the spiritual, moral, and philosophical insights embedded in Lewis's epistolary novel.

Why Use Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions?

The Screwtape Letters is not your typical novel. Written as a series of letters from a senior demon, Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood, the book explores human nature, temptation, and faith through a satirical lens. Its distinctive format and rich subtext can make it challenging to unpack on the first read. Discussion questions encourage readers to slow down and reflect on the text's deeper meaning, helping illuminate Lewis's views on good versus evil, the nature of temptation, and the human condition.

Moreover, these questions foster interaction and debate, enhancing comprehension and retention. They also provide a platform for readers to relate the book's themes to their own experiences or current societal issues, making the story more relevant and impactful.

Key Themes to Explore with Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions

Before diving into specific questions, it's helpful to understand the main themes that discussion prompts typically revolve around. Recognizing these themes can guide your exploration and enrich the conversation.

The Nature of Temptation and Evil

Lewis offers a unique perspective on how evil operates—not as some grand, overt force, but often through subtle manipulation and distraction. Discussion questions often probe how Screwtape advises Wormwood to exploit human weaknesses and the implications of this portrayal.

Human Free Will and Spiritual Growth

Despite the demonic perspective, the book highlights human free will and the possibility of redemption. Readers are invited to reflect on how characters respond to temptation and the role of

The Role of the Ordinary in Spiritual Life

Lewis emphasizes the spiritual significance of mundane, everyday experiences. This theme prompts questions about how ordinary moments can be battlegrounds for spiritual warfare.

Sample Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions

Here are some thoughtfully crafted questions designed to spark insightful dialogue and deepen your understanding of the book's core messages.

Character and Perspective

- How does the choice to tell the story from a demon's point of view affect your understanding of good and evil? Consider how this unusual narrative influences the reader's engagement with the moral lessons.
- What does Screwtape's advice reveal about his own character and priorities? Think about what his letters say about the nature of evil and its goals.
- In what ways does Wormwood's behavior reflect common human struggles with temptation? Relate his tactics to everyday experiences.

Spiritual and Moral Themes

- How does Lewis portray the subtlety of temptation? Can you identify examples where small, seemingly insignificant actions lead to spiritual downfall?
- The letters indicate that distractions and busyness can be tools for evil. How do you see this playing out in modern life?
- What role does humility play in resisting temptation according to the book? Discuss how humility contrasts with pride in the context of spiritual warfare.

Relevance and Application

- How can the insights from *The Screwtape Letters* be applied in contemporary challenges faced by individuals or communities?
- Do you think the book offers a hopeful or pessimistic view of human nature? Why?
- In what ways does the book encourage readers to be more self-aware of their own vulnerabilities?

Tips for Leading a Screwtape Letters Discussion

If you're facilitating a group discussion, here are some practical tips to make the experience enriching and enjoyable:

Create a Safe and Open Environment

Because the book touches on spiritual beliefs and moral questions, it's important to foster an atmosphere where participants feel comfortable sharing diverse perspectives without judgment.

Encourage Personal Reflection

Ask participants to relate the themes to their own lives. Personal connections often make discussions more meaningful and memorable.

Use Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions invite more expansive answers and promote dialogue rather than simple yes/no responses.

Balance Between Textual Analysis and Real-Life Application

Encourage participants to focus both on the literary elements—like Lewis's use of satire and narrative voice—and on how the ideas resonate with their everyday experiences.

Exploring Deeper Layers with Advanced Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions

For groups or readers looking to dive deeper, here are some more nuanced questions that challenge assumptions and invite critical thinking:

- How does Lewis use irony throughout the letters to critique human behavior and societal norms?
- Discuss the portrayal of "the Enemy" (God) from the perspective of Screwtape. How
 does this inverted viewpoint influence the reader's perception of divinity and
 morality?
- What does the book suggest about the relationship between suffering and spiritual growth? Analyze how Screwtape's plans are often thwarted by moments of human resilience.
- Consider the role of love in the book. How is divine love contrasted with the manipulative tactics of evil?
- How might the lessons from *The Screwtape Letters* be relevant in discussions about mental health, especially concerning guilt, temptation, and forgiveness?

Using Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions for Educational and Faith-Based Groups

The book's rich theological and philosophical content makes it a favorite for both academic settings and faith communities. Here's how discussion questions can enhance learning and spiritual growth in different contexts:

In Academic Settings

Professors and teachers can use discussion questions to help students analyze the literary style, explore historical context, and examine philosophical arguments. Questions that encourage critical thinking about narrative technique and thematic symbolism deepen students' appreciation for Lewis's craft.

In Church or Small Groups

Faith groups often use *The Screwtape Letters* as a springboard for conversations about temptation, grace, and Christian living. Thoughtful questions can guide participants to reflect on

personal faith journeys, challenges in living ethically, and the nature of spiritual warfare.

In Personal Study

Individuals reading the book alone can benefit from journaling responses to discussion questions. This practice can foster introspection and help readers apply spiritual lessons in practical ways.

Conclusion: Engaging with The Screwtape Letters Through Thoughtful Questions

While *The Screwtape Letters* offers a witty and sometimes unsettling glimpse into the battle between good and evil, discussion questions are vital tools that unlock its depth and complexity. By thoughtfully engaging with these prompts, readers can gain fresh insights, challenge their assumptions, and appreciate the enduring relevance of Lewis's work. Whether you're discussing the book in a group or reflecting alone, these questions serve as a compass, guiding you through the rich moral and spiritual terrain of one of literature's most provocative epistolary novels.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of 'The Screwtape Letters'?

'The Screwtape Letters' by C.S. Lewis centers on the theme of spiritual warfare, exploring the struggle between good and evil through the correspondence of a senior demon advising his nephew on how to tempt a human soul.

How does C.S. Lewis use irony in 'The Screwtape Letters'?

Lewis employs irony by presenting the letters from the perspective of demons who consider evil as good and virtue as weakness, which challenges readers to see Christian truths from a reversed viewpoint.

What role does human free will play in 'The Screwtape Letters'?

Human free will is crucial as it allows individuals to choose between good and evil, making the spiritual battle dynamic and meaningful, with demons attempting to manipulate but never fully controlling human decisions.

How can 'The Screwtape Letters' be relevant to modern readers?

The book remains relevant by addressing timeless issues such as temptation, pride, and distractions,

encouraging readers to reflect on their own spiritual lives and moral choices in today's context.

What is the significance of the patient in the letters?

The 'patient' is the human soul being tempted, representing every individual's spiritual journey and the personal nature of temptation and moral struggle.

How does the relationship between Screwtape and Wormwood deepen the narrative?

Their mentor-mentee dynamic adds humor and insight into the strategies of temptation, while also illustrating the complexity and hierarchy within the demonic world.

What literary techniques does Lewis use to convey moral lessons in the book?

Lewis uses satire, epistolary format, vivid imagery, and paradox to engage readers and subtly teach moral and theological lessons through the demons' flawed perspectives.

How does 'The Screwtape Letters' challenge readers' understanding of temptation?

It challenges readers to recognize that temptation can be subtle and psychological, often involving distractions and distortions of truth rather than overt sin.

In what ways does the book explore the concept of humility versus pride?

'The Screwtape Letters' contrasts pride as a primary tool of the demons to corrupt humans, while humility is portrayed as a key virtue that protects the soul from demonic influence.

What discussion questions can help deepen understanding of the book's spiritual messages?

Questions such as 'How do the letters reveal the nature of evil?', 'What can we learn about human nature from the demons' perspective?', and 'How does Lewis portray the subtlety of spiritual battles?' can facilitate deeper discussions.

Additional Resources

Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions: An Analytical Exploration

screwtape letters discussion questions serve as a critical tool for readers and study groups seeking to delve deeper into C.S. Lewis's renowned work, *The Screwtape Letters*. This epistolary novel, framed as letters from a senior demon, Screwtape, to his nephew, Wormwood, offers profound insights into human nature, temptation, and morality. Engaging with targeted discussion questions

not only enhances comprehension but also encourages reflective and analytical thinking about the text's themes, characters, and underlying philosophical inquiries.

In this article, we investigate the most effective screwtape letters discussion questions, examining their capacity to unlock the nuanced layers of the narrative. We also explore how these questions facilitate meaningful dialogue, whether in academic settings, book clubs, or theological study groups. By integrating relevant keywords and concepts naturally, this article aims to provide a comprehensive resource for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of Lewis's work.

Understanding the Role of Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions

Discussion questions centered on *The Screwtape Letters* serve multiple purposes. Primarily, they act as a guide to dissect the complex themes embedded in the text. The narrative's unique perspective—from the viewpoint of demons discussing strategies to undermine human virtue—invites readers to consider moral and spiritual issues from a fresh angle. Well-crafted discussion questions help readers navigate this complexity, prompting critical analysis of the characters' motivations and the broader allegorical meanings.

Moreover, these questions encourage participants to reflect on personal beliefs and ethical dilemmas. Since the book addresses universal themes such as temptation, faith, and free will, discussion prompts often bridge the gap between the fictional world and real-life experiences. This dual impact—literary analysis coupled with introspective reflection—makes screwtape letters discussion questions indispensable in educational and religious contexts.

Key Themes Explored Through Discussion Questions

When preparing for a study or discussion session on *The Screwtape Letters*, focusing on thematic questions can provide a structured approach. Several major themes emerge as focal points:

- **Temptation and Sin:** How does Screwtape's advice illustrate the subtlety of temptation in everyday life? What strategies are most effective in corrupting human behavior?
- **Human Nature and Morality:** What does the book suggest about the nature of good and evil? How are human weaknesses portrayed, and what commentary does Lewis offer on human free will?
- Faith and Spiritual Growth: In what ways does the correspondence between Screwtape and Wormwood reveal the challenges and rewards of maintaining faith?
- The Role of Doubt: How is doubt employed as a tool for spiritual downfall according to the letters? Can doubt ever be constructive?

Each of these themes can be unpacked through targeted screwtape letters discussion questions that prompt participants to analyze specific passages, character decisions, and the broader philosophical implications.

Effective Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions for Deeper Analysis

To stimulate thoughtful dialogue and critical engagement, discussion questions must be both openended and specific enough to guide interpretation. Below are examples of effective questions categorized by the depth of analysis they encourage.

Surface-Level Comprehension Questions

These questions focus on understanding the plot and basic character dynamics:

- 1. What is the primary goal of Screwtape in his letters to Wormwood?
- 2. How does the epistolary format affect the reader's perception of the story?
- 3. Who is the "patient," and why is he significant to the narrative?

Such questions are ideal for introductory discussions or readers new to the book, providing a solid foundation for more complex analysis.

Analytical and Interpretative Questions

These prompts encourage deeper examination of themes, symbolism, and authorial intent:

- 1. In what ways does Screwtape's perspective reveal the nature of evil differently than traditional narratives?
- 2. How does Lewis use irony and satire to critique human behavior and religious institutions?
- 3. What role does pride play in the patient's spiritual struggle, and how is it portrayed through Screwtape's advice?
- 4. Compare the approaches of Screwtape and Wormwood. What differences highlight the complexities of temptation?

By addressing these questions, readers can explore the layered meanings and literary techniques that contribute to the book's enduring relevance.

Personal Reflection and Application Questions

These questions prompt readers to connect the text with their own experiences and beliefs:

- 1. Have you ever recognized any of Screwtape's described temptations in your own life? How did you respond?
- 2. What lessons about faith and perseverance can be drawn from the patient's journey?
- 3. How does the book challenge or reinforce your understanding of good versus evil?
- 4. In what ways can the insights from *The Screwtape Letters* be applied in modern ethical or spiritual contexts?

Such reflective questions make the reading experience more personal and impactful, fostering meaningful conversations beyond the text itself.

Utilizing Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions in Various Settings

The adaptability of screwtape letters discussion questions is a notable advantage. Educators often incorporate these prompts into literature or religious studies curricula to encourage critical thinking and moral reasoning. In academic contexts, questions focusing on literary devices, narrative structure, and historical context deepen students' appreciation of Lewis's craftsmanship and the book's place in 20th-century Christian literature.

Book clubs and informal reading groups benefit from open-ended questions that invite diverse perspectives. The provocative nature of Screwtape's letters stimulates debate, particularly around topics such as the nature of evil, the psychology of temptation, and the role of faith in daily life. Facilitators often find that balancing factual and reflective questions maintains engagement and enriches discussions.

Church study groups frequently use these questions to explore theological concepts in an accessible format. Discussion questions that address doctrinal themes—such as sin, grace, and spiritual warfare—help participants articulate and examine their beliefs within a supportive community.

Pros and Cons of Different Question Types

While the variety of screwtape letters discussion questions offers flexibility, certain challenges arise

depending on the question type:

- **Pros of Comprehension Questions:** They ensure that all participants understand the basic plot and terminology, which is essential for inclusive discussion.
- **Cons:** May be too simplistic for advanced readers, potentially limiting deeper engagement.
- **Pros of Analytical Questions:** Encourage critical thinking and promote a nuanced understanding of themes and literary techniques.
- **Cons:** Can be intimidating for readers less familiar with literary analysis or theological concepts.
- **Pros of Reflective Questions:** Foster personal connection and emotional investment in the material.
- Cons: Risk of discussions becoming overly subjective or diverging from textual analysis.

Balancing question types according to the audience and objectives of the discussion ensures a productive and enriching experience.

Enhancing Discussions with Digital and Interactive Tools

In contemporary study environments, integrating screwtape letters discussion questions with digital platforms can amplify engagement. Online forums, video conferencing, and social media groups provide spaces for asynchronous and synchronous dialogue. Interactive tools such as polls, quizzes, and collaborative documents allow participants to contribute insights and track thematic threads.

Furthermore, annotated editions of *The Screwtape Letters* and supplementary study guides often include curated discussion questions, facilitating structured exploration. These resources can be invaluable for educators and group leaders aiming to create a cohesive learning journey.

In summary, screwtape letters discussion questions are indispensable for unpacking the rich thematic tapestry of C.S. Lewis's novel. Whether employed in classrooms, study groups, or personal reflection, these questions open pathways to understanding the human condition, the dynamics of temptation, and the enduring battle between good and evil. Through thoughtful inquiry and dialogue, readers gain deeper appreciation not only of the text but also of the spiritual and philosophical questions it raises.

Screwtape Letters Discussion Questions

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screwtape letters discussion questions: The Screwtape Letters Study Guide Alan Vermilye, 2015-07-01 The most trusted study guide to learning The Screwtape Letters! Reading The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis can be a little difficult and confusing at times. Not so with The Screwtape Letters Study Guide! This comprehensive Bible study workbook breaks down each of the thirty one letters into easy-to-understand segments helping you understand and be able to confidently share with others. The Screwtape Letters is a brilliant and satirical look at spiritual warfare and the dynamics of temptation. Screwtape, a senior demon in the bureaucracy of Hell, writes letters to his incompetent nephew Wormwood, a junior devil. The younger demon's assignment is to corrupt a young man living in London during the tumultuous days of World War II. Using Scripture references, discussion questions, and related commentary, The Screwtape Letters Study Guide examines each letter through a Christian lens of morality, temptation, and good and evil. This complete Bible study experience is perfect for book clubs, church groups, and independent study. Detailed character sketches and an easy-to-read book summary provide deep insights into each character and letter of the book. To help with those more difficult discussion questions, a complete Answer Guide and Scripture Reference Guide is available for free online. The Screwtape Letters Study Guide includes: \cdot Twelve sessions of study with multi-week options included \cdot Comprehensive Bible study workbook with studies for each week · Complete character sketches and summaries to go deeper · Bible study questions that are ideal for group discussion · Answer Guide for all questions and Scripture Reference Guide available for free online · Perfect for book clubs, small groups, or individual Bible study · Available in print or e-book formats Explore every shocking and amusing detail of this iconic classic to better understand Christianity and the foolish war raging against it. There's no better tool for making that happen than with The Screwtape Letters Study Guide! Endorsement Vermilye walks the reader through each Screwtape letter and wisely asks questions to bring out turns and twists in the thoughts and emotions that we each experience and that Lewis wanted us to recognize. Steven Urban PhD, Author of Mere Christianity Study Guide

screwtape letters discussion questions: The Screwtape Letters Study Guide & Commentary Mondo Gonzales, 2024-05 The Screwtape Letters: Study Guide and Commentary was many years in the making and will provide an unsurpassed resource to study C.S. Lewis' satirical masterpiece. It has been designed to be used in College or High School courses, small groups, Sunday School, Home Schooling or personal study. With almost 300 pages of content, you will not be left guessing as to the cunning temptation efforts of Screwtape. The author will guide you confidently through all the riches of this classic book. All thirty-one letters are examined thoroughly and include hundreds of correlations with Scripture, which give spiritual answers to counteract his diabolical advice and gain victory in the Christian life. You will grow in your walk with God like never before. All 31 Letters are treated extensively, containing reproducible handouts, thorough analysis and commentary, study questions and theological themes and more. This study guide is perfect for college or high school courses, Sunday School, small groups, home schooling, and personal study. A Bible answer key is included.

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never intended to create. In fact, he never imagined the original book would become a classic and that his readers would continue to enjoy it so many years later. Now almost 50 years later after the sequel's release, Screwtape Proposes a Toast Study Guide digs deep into Lewis' almost prophetic declaration of how the underworld seeks to corrupt education, democracy, social politics, and directly shift a cultural worldview. For those who have completed The Screwtape Letters Study Guide or The Screwtape Letters Study Guide for Teens, this study is the perfect follow up, but it can be done independent of the others. This flexible study can be used in one long setting or divided up over several sessions. Screwtape Proposes a Toast Study Guide includes: · Comprehensive Bible study workbook with flexible study sessions · Complete character sketches and summaries to go deeper · Bible study questions that are ideal for group discussion · Answer Guide for all questions and Scripture Reference Guide available for free online · Perfect for book clubs, small groups, or individual Bible study · Available in print or e-book formats Screwtape has a compelling yet subtle strategy for continuing to attack God's people. Understand those strategies and learn to fight back with the Screwtape Proposes a Toast Study Guide.

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C.S. Lewis's philosophical approach to why we experience pain can be confusing at times. The Problem of Pain Study Guide breaks down each chapter into easy-to-understand guestions and commentary to help you find meaning and hope amid the pain. The Problem of Pain Study Guide expands upon Lewis' elegant and thoughtful work where he seeks to understand how a loving, good, and powerful God can possibly coexist with the pain and suffering that is so pervasive in the world and in our lives. As Christ-followers we might expect the world to be just, fair, and less painful, but it is not. This is the problem of pain. In addition to Scripture references, discussion questions, and related commentary, The Problem of Pain Study Guide also provides easy-to-read chapter summaries highlighting overarching themes, definitions, and references. To help with those more difficult discussion guestions, a complete Answer Guide and Scripture Reference Guide is available for free online. This complete Bible study experience is perfect for book clubs, church groups, and independent study. The Problem of Pain Study Guide includes: - Eleven sessions of study with multi-week options included - Comprehensive Bible study workbook with studies for each week -Complete chapter summaries to go deeper - Bible study questions that are ideal for group discussion - Answer Guide for all questions and Scripture - Reference Guide available for free online - Perfect for book clubs, small groups, or individual Bible study - Available in print or e-book formats The problem of pain is inescapable and its effects profound. The Problem of Pain Study Guide combines the wisdom of C.S. Lewis with the authority of Scripture to help you battle the issues and difficulties that lie ahead.

Screwtape letters discussion questions: Discuss Grief: A Discussion Guide for a Grief Observed by C.S. Lewis Tom Morris, 2010-03-12 Lewis' feelings and musings about his wife's death were first published in 1961. Since then it has helped thousands and thousands of people who have read it or have spoken of its contents. This study is to encourage you to read the book in its entirety. It is to help you grapple with issues of grief that Lewis and all mankind struggles with in grief. It is to help you grapple with issues of grief that everyone faces in loss. Each page is designed to be a discussion session for a group or 5-12 students. Discuss the passage of A Grief Observed prior to delving into the questions. Allow each student to respond to the first question before going on to the next. Allow for more time if some student has difficulty understanding or answering the question. It is my hope that these will assist you in helping young people make sense of death(s) in their lives. This book was written to help teens in grief support groups. It is my hope it can be a help to you and others.

screwtape letters discussion questions: Quicklet on C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters Luke Trayser, 2012-05-17 The Screwtape Letters, a satirical novel that focuses on the religious struggle of one unnamed man, is one of the most influential works of C.S. Lewis. The story unfolds through the eyes of Screwtape, a highly placed under-secretary to Lucifer, affectionately known as 'Our Father Below'. Through a series of letters addressed his nephew, Wormwood, a young demon tasked only with securing the hellish eternity of the anonymous man, Screwtape bestows knowledge on how to capture a soul. Throughout his letters to Wormwood, we learn that the religious peaks and valleys of Wormwood's patient are set against the backdrop of wartime England. Originally published in book form in early 1942, World War II plays a big part in the novel. Screwtape himself does not pay much heed to war and advises his nephew to do the same, but the human patient faces seemingly endless German bombing raids and the uncomfortable daily reminder that he is mortal and can die at just about any moment. The war, in fact, ultimately plays a pivotal role in sealing the patient's eternity.

screwtape letters discussion questions: Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal Bruce R. Johnson, 2019-01-11 Sehnsucht: The C. S. Lewis Journal, established by the Arizona C. S. Lewis Society in 2007, is the only peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of C. S. Lewis and his writings published anywhere in the world. It exists to promote literary, theological, historical, biographical, philosophical, bibliographical and cultural interest (broadly defined) in Lewis and his writings. The journal includes articles, review essays, book reviews, film reviews and play reviews, bibliographical material, poetry, interviews, editorials, and announcements of Lewis-related conferences, events and publications. Its readership is aimed at academic scholars from a wide

variety of disciplines, as well as learned non-scholars and Lewis enthusiasts. At this time, Sehnsucht is published once a year.

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screwtape letters discussion questions: Breakaway Study Guide Andy Stanley, 2012-06-20 Everywhere You Go, There You Are When you were young, you were told, "You are special!" and were encouraged to become anything you wanted. The future held unlimited options. But then life happened. And now you look around feeling, thinking, looking, and acting basically the same as the next guy. You can't help but feel trapped and hemmed in. Unfortunately, many try to break out of the suffocating sameness by making the same bad decisions over and over again. This Breakaway DVD and study guide are designed to renovate your thinking by illustrating four core beliefs that dictate the decisions shaping the outcome of your life. This study will help you break out of the crowd and away from bad patterns for good! Break out of the crowd. None of us sets out to be like everybody else, but it happens. Life begins to squeeze us into a mold until one day we wake up feeling trapped and hemmed in. Unfortunately many people think that the answer is to run away, but they only end up making the same bad decisions over and over again. So how do you break the cycle and break out of the crowd? In this six-session companion study guide to the Breakaway DVD, Andy Stanley will expose you to four core beliefs that have the power to renovate your thinking and change the trajectory of your life. Intended for use in a personal study or in small groups, Breakaway will illustrate how our core beliefs dictate our decisions which dictate the outcomes of our lives. This study guide is complete with a leader's guide and six lessons, including conversation-starting exercises, discussion guestions, and application steps. Story Behind the Book Andy Stanley is the senior pastor of three North Point Ministries campuses, with a cumulative congregation of more than twenty thousand. Much of the brokenness he sees in the lives of his congregants results from the herd mentality that makes them feel completely blah. He often hears comments like, "Life is just more of the same, only with more candles on my birthday cake," and, "Even my problems are the same as everyone else's—from dealing with debt to my marital problems. There's nothing unique about me." Culture has shaped and molded the zest out of life, and this DVD and study guide are designed to open the door to freedom!

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youth-group tested ideas.

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