

# THE GREAT DIVORCE



THE GREAT DIVORCE PODCAST | Week 7

## Connect (5 to 10 minutes)

- Spend some time discussing your weeks so far. What have been some exciting moments? What did you think of church this past week?

## Context (30 to 40 minutes)

*Discuss the podcast and the chapters for this week. What particularly stood out to you from either the book or the recording?*

### CHAPTER 12

- The narrator comes across a woman who is flocked by an angelic procession. What seems to make her so special?
- Frank appears as both a Dwarf and the Tragedian, and they seem to be two sides of the same person. The tragedian side appears to have been created by Frank to find meaning and pleasure from the drama he creates in his relationship with others. What do you think Frank needs to give up to rid himself of the tragedian persona?
- The tragedian ghost and the dwarf seem shocked that Sarah Smith has found happiness in Heaven (particularly without him). What does this say about the love they shared on Earth? How do you relate this to love you feel in your own relationships?
- Sarah Smith claims that in Heaven, there is no such thing as “need” and as a result, she and Frank can truly love each other. What do you make of this idea?
- In James 1:2-12, there is a passage about what it means to have faith, joy, hope, and love in the midst of trying circumstances. We see Sarah Smith continuing to be joy-filled despite this difficult conversation with her husband. In the same way, there are many we have all known in our lives who are joyful in the face of tragedy, loss, and even death. What does it mean to be joyful in those moments?

## CHAPTER 13

- In the end, Frank chooses Hell over life in Heaven with Sarah. Sarah maintains singing and joyousness in the face of this turn of events. The narrator questions how this can be, how can she not be negatively affected by this happening, and MacDonald claims that this is preferable to the idea that Hell ought to be able to infect Heaven. What do you make of the idea that it is acceptable to continue finding joy even if someone in your life is not?
- When asked why the spirits do not go down into Hell and rescue the damned there, MacDonald points to a tiny crack, saying that all of Hell exists in that infinitesimal space. Put simply, the spirits are too big and solid to enter Hell. What do you think of the idea that Heaven is this grand place, while Hell is tiny and insignificant?
- MacDonald says that only one can make himself so small, reduce himself so much, to enter into Hell. This person is the bus driver, who we now understand to be Jesus, and provided a way out of it. What does this mean for your understanding of Jesus?
- What are your thoughts on MacDonald's explanation of free will over universalism (that everyone is saved regardless) and predestination (that our choices mean nothing)? Do you agree with his sentiments?

## CHAPTER 14

- In this final chapter, the narrator sees a vision like a chessboard, and asks if this is all simply a vision. MacDonald claims that it is better not to claim it is false or even just a prediction. Instead, it is a lens through which we can see what our choices mean a bit clearer. What have you learned from this "vision" of a book/podcast about your own choices?
- Why is it important to see this book not as a full prediction of the after-life, but a parable of sorts?
- The perpetual setting of the dawn just before sunrise shifts as the sun comes up over the landscape, and things become very intense. How do you interpret this moment?
- What are your final thoughts on the ending of this book?

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## Closing (5 minutes)

***God calls us into community by sharing our joys and concerns together in prayer and supporting one another in our walks with Christ. As we share testimony and stories of our lives, let us listen to where God is working within our community and how we can build each other up in Christian love.***

- Share joys and concerns with one another.
- Close in prayer, either by inviting a group member to pray or by using the prayer provided below.

### Closing Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, power, and glory forever. Amen.