“Many Christians have so emphasized the need for conversion, for the opening act of faith and commitment, for the initial statement of that faith (‘believing that Jesus died for me’ or whatever), that they have a big gap in their vision of what being a Christian is all about” (3).

- What is a Christian supposed to do after he/she believes?
- How do many churches typically answer this question?

“In the last analysis, what matters after you believe is neither rules nor spontaneous self-discovery, but character” (7).

- What would it look like to live the Christian life by rules?
- What would it look like to live the Christian life by self-discovery?
- What is character?

“Virtue, in this strict sense, is what happens when someone has made a thousand small choices, requiring effort and concentration, to do something which is good and right but which doesn’t ‘come naturally’—and then, on the thousand and first time, when it really matters, they find that they do what’s required ‘automatically,’ as we say” (20).

- This sounds like practice. Why do we need to practice?
- If virtue requires effort and concentration, as well as practice, what aspects of our character might this employ (e.g. mind, emotion, will, character traits) and how?

“And the larger truth, in which the Sermon on the Mount makes the excellent sense it does, is this: God’s future is arriving in the present, in the person and work of Jesus, and you can practice, right now, the habits of life which will find their goal in that coming future” (103).

- What will the habits of life look like in the new kingdom?
- How can we practice those habits now?

“Part of the problem in contemporary Christianity, I believe, is that talk about the freedom of the Spirit, about the grace which sweeps us off our feet and heals and transforms our lives, has been taken over surreptitiously by a kind of low-grade romanticism, colluding with an anti-intellectual streak in our culture, generating the assumption that the more spiritual you are, the less you need to think” (158).

- Why do we need to think to grow in the Christian life?
- What is the danger of this anti-intellectualism that Wright warns about?

“All the varieties of fruit Paul mentions here are comparatively easy to counterfeit, especially in young, healthy, happy people—except for self-control. If that isn’t there, it’s always worth asking whether the appearance of the other sorts of fruit is just that, an appearance, rather than a real sign of the Spirit’s work” (196).

- Why is self-control so hard to counterfeit?
- How might we go about determining if we have self-control? Or any of the other fruits of the Spirit?