



The Big Questions Club, Week 12 What Is the Good Life?

Philosopher of the Week: Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910)

Leo Tolstoy was a famous Russian writer and thinker who lived over 100 years ago. He is best known for his big books *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, but later in life he became deeply interested in the teachings of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount.

He believed that Jesus' teachings were not just good ideas, but real instructions for how we should live. He thought we should live simply, love our enemies, forgive often, and avoid violence. He even gave away his wealth and tried to live like a peasant to follow Jesus more closely.

“To understand the true meaning of life, one must live a life of love, humility, and peace.”

- Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (1894)

“Love is the only way to rescue humanity from all ills.”

- Leo Tolstoy

In other words:

Tolstoy thought the Beatitudes were a map for how to live a meaningful life. He believed that the people the world often ignores — the poor, the gentle, the peaceful — are actually the ones showing us what real goodness looks like.

** Let's Talk About It****Can love really change the world?**

Jesus taught that being gentle, merciful, and pure in heart is powerful. Tolstoy believed that choosing love, even when it's hard, is the most powerful force in the world. What do you think?

Who deserves to lead?

Jesus said the poor, the sad, and the overlooked are blessed. He said they will “inherit the earth.” Why do you think Jesus said that? Should leadership be about power, or something else?

Is it brave to be peaceful?

Peacemakers and people who are treated badly for doing right are called “blessed.” Is peace harder or braver than fighting back? Can being kind in conflict make a real difference?

** A Final Word**

Jesus taught a way of being that seems upside down, like loving enemies or giving when it hurts. Tolstoy believed this kind of life is what brings real joy and real peace. It takes courage to live this way. But it may be the truest path there is.

So keep asking questions. Keep looking for truth. Keep trying to live with love.

You are in good company.

** Watch It Again**

Scan the QR code below to rewatch this week's video and reflect on what stuck with you.

