

Letter 16 – Churches

In this letter Screwtape questions why Wormwood has not encouraged his patient to church hop. Unless the patient is indifferent, Wormwood should help him become critical and dissatisfied with his church. Screwtape has identified two churches in the area that are full of factions and hatred, and both would be perfect for helping to damage the patient's faith.

1. ¶ 1 (p.81) – Screwtape suggests sending the patient all over the neighborhood becoming a "taster or connoisseur of churches". "Church hopping" is as alive today as when Lewis wrote this book. Do you think churches today cater to the consumer mentality of the church hopper and if so, in what way?
2. What is it about church hopping that can be destructive to a person's faith? What does 2 Timothy 4:3-5 say about the importance of finding a biblically-based church?
3. ¶ 2 (p.81-2) – Identify and describe the two reasons why Screwtape says it is important to encourage the patient to church hop.
4. If you were looking for a church, what aspects of church would tempt you to be a critic when God wants you to be a student?
5. ¶ 3 (p.82-3) – At the first of the two churches that Screwtape advises Wormwood to introduce to the man, the Vicar serves up a blend of diluted Christianity so watered down that he (the Vicar) "shocks his parishioners with his own unbelief". Why would this be dangerous for the patient?
6. ¶ 4 (p.83) – The second of the two churches is led by a man "who cannot bring himself to preach anything which is not calculated to shock, grieve, puzzle, or humiliate." Why would this be dangerous to the patient?
7. ¶ 5 (p.84) – What is Screwtape's definition of a "party church"?
8. ¶ 5 (p.84) – According to Screwtape, what is the "real fun" in creating factions between churches? How do you see this playing out in denominations today, and what is the real danger?
9. ¶ 5 (p.84) – In an effort to avoid factions, what is Paul's counsel to us in Romans 14:19-21 regarding "the human without scruples" always giving in "to the human with scruples"?

Letter 17 – Gluttony

In this letter, Screwtape helps Wormwood understand that the sin of gluttony is just as alive today as it always was—but with a new modern twist. This mutated form of gluttony is not necessarily about how much a person eats, but rather about being controlled by what one eats. This control often manifests itself in the form of inconvenient demands of others.

1. ¶ 1 (p.87-8) – Screwtape says that we seldom think of gluttony as sin anymore, and it is very rarely preached about. This is due in large part to the successful strategy of demons to focus efforts on the Gluttony of Delicacy and not on the Gluttony of Excess. What is the difference between the two?
 - a. Gluttony of Excess —
 - b. Gluttony of Delicacy —
2. ¶ 1 (p.87-8) – What behaviors and characteristics of the patient's mother identify her as a good example of Gluttony of Delicacy?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. The word "discipline" literally means "to beat black and blue." Using the analogy of an athlete, what is Paul telling us in this passage about how to maintain self-control and not becoming a slave to our bodies?
4. ¶ 2 (p.88-9) – Screwtape's representation of the inner operation of demons is described as "quiet, unobtrusive work". Why is this disturbing? What is the danger in a demon rushing the process with the patient's mother?
5. ¶ 2 (p.88-9) – What is the "All-I-want" state of mind that Screwtape describes about the patient's mother? How does this mentality shape her life and affect those around her?
6. ¶ 2 (p.88-9) – How does Glucose counteract the Spirit's promptings on the mother when he suggests that perhaps "she is too interested in food"?
7. ¶ 3 (p.89-90) – Why do you think Screwtape believes males are more inclined to an expression of gluttony that reveals itself in the form of vanity? What does he hope the vanity turns into?
8. ¶ 4 (p.90) – What do gluttony and sexual immorality have in common as far as self-control? How is it a deception that "physical exercise in excess and consequent fatigue are specially favorable to" the virtue of chastity?

Letter 18 – Love and Marriage

In this letter, Screwtape helps Wormwood understand that God's standard regarding sexual activity is either abstinence or monogamy within marriage. Screwtape then explains the drastically different perspectives between God and Satan on the designs of sexual union between a man and a woman.

1. ¶ 2 (p.93) – According to Screwtape, what dilemma has God placed on the human race in regards to His demands on sexuality and why is this a dilemma?
2. ¶ 2 (p.93) – Screwtape says he wants people to think that "being in love is the only respectable grounds for marriage" and when those feelings fade, the marriage is "no longer binding." If a marriage should not be based on feelings of being in love, on what should it be based?
3. Hell finds very useful the idea of "falling in love". What problems do you think can arise when a couple gives in to the transient emotions or feelings of "being in love"?
4. If God also gave us feelings and emotions, how can these feelings of "being in love" be wrong? How does Paul define love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?
5. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What does this passage tell us about the quality of love that husbands and wives are to have for each other?
6. ¶ 3 (p.94) – Why does Screwtape compare the philosophy of Hell to that of a competition?
7. ¶ 4 (p.94) – Screwtape says that God's philosophy contradicts that of Satan's. In what way(s)?
8. ¶ 6 (p.95-6) – In Ephesians 5:28-33, how does Paul define "one flesh"? What is the purpose of this transcendental and eternal state of being that happens when a couple unites as one flesh?