

## **Letter 22 – The Christian Life**

In this letter, Screwtape is obviously annoyed. Wormwood has reported Screwtape to the Secret Police about some “unguarded expressions” in one of his last letters. Screwtape has since smoothed it over but assures Wormwood that he will be dealt with. Even worse, the patient has fallen in love with a Christian woman that Wormwood has failed to mention in communication with Screwtape.

1. ¶ 2 (p.117) How does Screwtape describe the patient’s newfound love? Provide as many descriptors as you can find. Why is he so frustrated by her?
2. Screwtape is horrified by what he finds in this girl’s dossier (a collection of documents about a particular person). If Hell kept a dossier on you, what would Screwtape find? Would he be as upset and frustrated as he is with this girl?
3. ¶ 3 (p.118) Why does Screwtape refer to God as a “hedonist at heart” (one who believes the pursuit of pleasure is the most important thing in life)? What does Screwtape mean by “Everything has to be twisted before it’s any use to us”?
4. ¶ 3 (p.118-9) What pleasures does Screwtape mention that humans can do “all day long without His minding in the least”? In today’s culture, how do tempters twist pleasures?
5. ¶ 4 (p.119) Why does Screwtape describe the woman’s family and home as having an infectious stink? Why does Screwtape say that this is the type of house that “the [the patient] ought to have never entered”? Describe in your own words the experience of being around someone who is so transformed by Christ that their presence makes you feel different?
6. ¶ 5 (p.119-20) Why do you think that Screwtape hates both music and silence? Read Psalm 46:10. What does this passage say about the importance of silence?
7. ¶ 5 (p.120) Why does Screwtape prefer noise? Think about the noise in your life. How can a noisy environment dull our senses and hinder our abilities to make moral decisions?
8. ¶ 5 (p.120) Screwtape vows, “We will make the whole universe noise in the end.” Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. How does Peter’s illustration of Satan as a roaring lion and his goal of devouring you keep you aware of the noise and distractions in your life?
9. ¶ 6 (p.120-1) At the end of the letter, Screwtape becomes so upset that he turns into a centipede. He tries to explain away his temporary transformation as a glorious manifestation. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. How is the Christian’s transformation into a “new creation” different?

## **Letter 23 – The Historical Jesus**

Wormwood's patient has not only been assimilated into the girl's family, but he has also found a new set of Christian friends. In this letter, Screwtape says that if they cannot remove spirituality from the patient's life, then they must corrupt it. After surveying the patient's new friends, he instructs Wormwood to attack along the two topics we typically like to avoid—politics and religion. He is to create disagreements and confusion.

1. ¶ 1 (p.123) What types of attacks have Screwtape and Wormwood used up to this point? How is the new strategy different? Why could this be the most dangerous?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 11:12-15. What does Paul mean by "masquerading as an angel of light"? Read Psalm 119:130. How can we discern which light is from God and which is from Satan?
3. ¶ 3 (p.123-4) The "historical Jesus" that Screwtape refers to is an attempt by each generation to reinvent Jesus according to the scholarly ideas or theories of that generation. As a result, it changes every 30 years or so. In the prior generation it was promoted along "liberal and humanitarian lines", in the patient's generation, it was being promoted on "Marxian, catastrophic, and revolutionary lines." What is the fashionable teaching about Jesus in our culture today?
4. ¶ 3 (p.124) Screwtape identifies four opportunities where tempters can be successful using the "historical Jesus" theories. What is the first opportunity, and how does it help Screwtape? (Hint: it begins "In the first place ")
5. ¶ 3 (p.124) What is the second opportunity, and how does it help Screwtape? What is wrong with considering Jesus to be nothing more than a great moral teacher?
6. ¶ 3 (p.125) What is the third opportunity, and how does it help Screwtape.
7. ¶ 3 (p.125) What is the fourth opportunity and how does it help Screwtape?
8. ¶ 4 (p.126-7) It is good for a Christian to be aware of social responsibilities, but why should we also be careful in using Christianity as a means to obtain social justice?

## **Letter 24 – Ignorance and Arrogance**

In this letter, humility is once again set forth as a major Christian virtue. Having found a small fault in the young woman's worldview (she believes that any belief different from hers is absurd), Screwtape lays plans to set a trap for the man due in part because of his love for the girl. Although this flaw is minor within the girl, Screwtape believes Wormwood may be able to exploit it within the man by causing him to develop real spiritual pride. This is made somewhat easier by the fact that a group of very mature Christians have graciously included him in their inner circle of faith. The patient receives this invitation because of his association with the girl and her family—not because he has earned the right.

1. ¶ 1 (p.129) Through correspondence with Slumtrimpet, the tempter in charge of the girl, what fault did Screwtape find in the girl's character? How did he suggest Wormwood take this minor flaw in the girl and use it against the man?
2. What are some stereotypes that Christians might believe to be true based on what they've been taught? (For example: Christians are happier than people who are not Christians.) At what point in our Christian walk might we be more prone to think of ourselves as superior to non-Christians?
3. Read Philippians 2:3. What is Paul's direction about pride in the presence of others especially non-Christians?
4. ¶ 2 (p.130) In addition to the man being in love with the girl, why else does Screwtape believe he is susceptible to spiritual pride?
5. ¶ 2 (p.130) Why does Screwtape consider spiritual pride to be "the strongest and most beautiful of the vices"? Read Luke 18:9-14. How did Jesus confront such pride in this parable?
6. How does someone who has been raised in a good Christian home and has been soundly indoctrinated with spiritual disciplines such as daily Bible study and prayer avoid spiritual pride?
7. ¶ 3 (p.130-1) In your own words, describe the Christian circle the man finds himself in? Are you more like the man or the people surrounding him?
8. Screwtape says. "The idea of belonging to an inner ring, of being in a secret, is very sweet to him." Many churches today invest in women's retreats, men's groups, softball leagues, music productions and facilities while spending only a small percentage of their budget on benevolence, missions, and outreach. Read James 2:14. What would James' warning be to these churches?