

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE STUDY GUIDE

The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis A Spiritual Warfare Training Handbook

Stephen Eyre, Joe Kohm,
Tom Tarrants & Joel Woodruff



**A C.S. Lewis Institute Study Guide
to The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis**

©2022

A CSLI Press Publication



C.S. Lewis Institute
8001 Braddock Road, Suite 301
Springfield, VA 22151
All rights reserved

The Screwtape Letters,
Copyright ©1942, C.S. Lewis Pt. Ltd.
Copyright restored ©1996, C.S. Lewis Pte. Ltd.

All rights reserved.
Harper Collins Publishers
195 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.
ESV® Text Edition: 2016.

Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles,
a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
Used by permission.
All rights reserved.



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| How to Use This CSLI Study Guide | 8 |
| The Devil and Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Perspectives | 11 |
| Introduction to <i>The Screwtape Letters</i> | 23 |
| Letter 1 : Pre-Conversion | 28 |
| Letter 2 : Church | 30 |
| Letter 3 : Family | 32 |
| Letter 4 : Prayer | 34 |
| Letter 5 : War | 36 |
| Letter 6 : War (Continued) | 38 |
| Letter 7 : Devils, Patriots, and Pacifists | 40 |
| Letter 8 : Dry and Desert Experiences | 42 |
| Letter 9 : Life Phases | 44 |
| Letter 10 : Cliques | 46 |
| Letter 11 : Humor | 48 |
| Letter 12 : Sloth | 50 |
| Letter 13 : Pain and Pleasure | 52 |
| Letter 14 : Humility | 54 |

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Letter 15: Time and Eternity | 56 |
| Letter 16: Church Hopping | 58 |
| Letter 17: Gluttony | 60 |
| Letter 18: Sex | 62 |
| Letter 19: Love | 64 |
| Letter 20: Sex, Love, and Marriage | 66 |
| Letter 21: Pride and Peevishness | 68 |
| Letter 22: Love | 70 |
| Letter 23: Jesus | 72 |
| Letter 24: Godly Influence | 74 |
| Letter 25: Pleasure and the Same Old Thing | 76 |
| Letter 26: Unselfishness | 78 |
| Letter 27: Prayer and Time | 80 |
| Letter 28: The Corruption of Aging | 82 |
| Letter 29: Twisted Virtues | 84 |
| Letter 30: Confusing What Is False and Real | 86 |
| Letter 31: Deliverance | 88 |
| Appendix: Overview Chart of Themes, Diabolical Strategies, & Divine Strategies | 90 |



Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

—Ephesians 6:11-12

STEPHEN EYRE, M.Div.

CSLI City Director Cincinnati – Stephen is a retired Presbyterian pastor and the Executive for Ministry Support for the 40 Day Prayer Covenant. He is a graduate of Covenant Seminary in St. Louis. He is the author of several books and Bible study guides, including *Christian Beliefs* (InterVarsity Press), *Drawing Close to God: The Essentials of a Dynamic Quiet Time*, (InterVarsity Press), and *Spiritual Disciplines* (Zondervan).

JOSEPH A. KOHM, JR., M.Div.

CSLI Vice President for Development and City Director for Virginia Beach – Joe is an attorney and formerly worked as a Certified Major League Baseball Player Agent. He earned his Master's in Management Science from the State University of New York at Oswego and both his J.D. and M.Div. from Regent University. Joe is the author of *The Unknown Garden of Another's Heart: The Surprising Friendship between C.S. Lewis and Arthur Greeves* (Wipf & Stock, 2022).

THOMAS A. TARRANTS, D.Min.

President Emeritus of CSLI – Tom holds an M.Div., as well as a D.Min. in Christian Spirituality. He is an ordained minister in the Evangelical Church Alliance and a member of the Evangelical Theological Society. Tom is the author of several books, including his autobiography titled *Consumed by Hate, Redeemed by Love*, published by Thomas Nelson.

JOEL S. WOODRUFF, Ed.D.

President of CSLI – Joel has worked in higher education, “tent-making,” nonprofit administration, and pastoral ministries in Alaska, Israel, Hungary, France, and Northern Virginia. Prior to joining the Institute, he was on the leadership team of European Bible Institute and Oakwood Services International. He is a graduate of Wheaton College, earned his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and has a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. As a Parish-Pulpit Fellow, he studied Biblical Backgrounds & Archaeology in Israel for a year. He is the author of *Discipleship with C.S. Lewis: A Guide to Mere Christianity for Small Groups and Mentoring Relationships*.

HOW TO USE THIS CSLI STUDY GUIDE

The Screwtape Letters study guide is designed for those new to the book as well as those who have read it multiple times. It highlights the central themes and underlying issues addressed by Lewis, leading to a deeper grasp of his insights into how the forces of evil work against human beings. It may be used both for personal study and for use in a small group in a church, neighborhood, or campus ministry.

The first edition of the CSLI's Study Guide to *The Screwtape Letters* was prepared in 2010 by Stephen Eyre. Many of the questions and the overview chart that summarizes the themes, diabolical (devilish) strategies, and divine strategies described in the book were written by him.

With an opportunity in 2022 to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the publishing of the book *The Screwtape Letters*, Joe Kohm and Joel Woodruff have expanded upon the earlier guide by adding a fuller introduction, appropriate Scripture citations, and some suggested “Divine Strategies” for practical application in one’s spiritual life in doing spiritual warfare, along with a plan for small group study.

An introductory article, “The Devil and Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Perspectives,” by Tom Tarrants, provides a biblical framework for the study of *The Screwtape Letters*. C.S. Lewis based his understanding of the devil and the battle for the souls of men, women, and children from the biblical texts summarized in the article.

STEP 1: PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING

This study guide is designed to be used alongside the reading of the corresponding chapters or “letters” in Lewis’s book *The Screwtape Letters*. While its brevity makes it easily read, *The Screwtape Letters* is not easily digested. Note that the title for each chapter in this study guide reflects a major theme of the corresponding letter; while the letters in Lewis’s book are numbered, they are not otherwise titled.

It is recommended that you read the chapters aloud to increase your reading comprehension. Another alternative would be to use one of the audio recordings of *The Screwtape Letters*, of which several are available and can be found by a search on the internet.

For each of the thirty-one letters, you'll find a key quote to look for within the letter and some questions to consider or discuss with others. It's recommended that you work through the study questions for each section of the letters before moving on to the next Letter. To best utilize the study questions, you will find it helpful to number the paragraphs in each letter as the study questions will sometimes refer to the paragraph number in the letter using the following symbol: ¶.

One approach would be to study one letter per day to give you time to reflect upon what you've learned rather than rushing through the book. In this way, you could complete the study in thirty-one days or one month.

In response to the diabolical strategies presented in each letter by Screwtape and Wormwood, we've included two divine strategies that we encourage you to implement in your personal life as you do spiritual warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. These include a Scripture verse to pray and meditate on and a suggested godly action or step to complete as a preemptive strike against the schemes of the enemy.

At the end of the study guide, you'll find a chart to give you the big picture of *The Screwtape Letters*. For each letter this includes the Themes, Diabolical Strategies and Divine Strategies in an easy-to-see format.

STEP 2: DISCUSSING *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS* IN A SMALL GROUP

Having gained a detailed understanding of *The Screwtape Letters* through your personal reading and use of the study guide, you can go even deeper by studying in community. Thus, we encourage you to go through this study guide with a small group.

When your group meets to discuss the book, you can use the study questions you've previously, personally worked through to facilitate

discussion. You might also share what the Lord has taught you personally through the study and ways that you are praying, living, and sharing your faith differently because of the study.

At the beginning of each study, we encourage you to pray through the full armor of God as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 6:1–10, asking the Lord to place His armor upon you as you examine the devil’s playbook for temptation. At the end of each session, take time to pray for one another as you go out into the world to love and serve the Lord.

One approach for organizing your small group study would be to divide it into seven weekly sessions.

- 1) **Introductory Meeting:** Hand out books and study guides or arrange for participants to obtain these items in advance of the introductory meeting. Have each of you share a 5-minute testimony of your faith journey. Then share what your experience has been in the past in regard to your understanding or experience of spiritual warfare. Pray for one another and agree to do your homework prior to the next meeting of reading and answering the study questions and the Divine Strategies to Practice in the study guide for Letters 1–5.
- 2) **Meeting 2:** Discussion on Letters 1–5 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.
- 3) **Meeting 3:** Discussion on Letters 6–10 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.
- 4) **Meeting 4:** Discussion on Letters 11–15 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.
- 5) **Meeting 5:** Discussion on Letters 16–20 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.
- 6) **Meeting 6:** Discussion on Letters 20–25 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.
- 7) **Final Meeting:** Discussion on Letters 26–31 by using the study questions, Sharing and Prayer.

Each session would include:

- Discussion of some of the letters using the study questions.
- Sharing what you have learned or been struck by from the study and ways that you've made or would like to make changes in your thinking or life due to the study of those letters.
- Prayer for one another.



**THE DEVIL AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE:
BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES**

by Tom Tarrants, D.Min. *President Emeritus*,
C.S. Lewis Institute

(This article was originally published in a series of articles titled, “Hindrances to Discipleship,” in the CSLI journal *Knowing and Doing*. The series can be found at www.cslewisinstitute.org).

There are three major hindrances to following Jesus Christ: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3). In this article, we will briefly look at the devil and how he works to hinder our progress in the life of grace and how to recognize his schemes and resist him.

WIDESPREAD BLINDNESS

Humanity in every era has had blind spots, and ours is no exception. A notable example in our day is the denial of the existence of the devil. Secularization, driven along by a naturalism that denies the existence of anything spiritual or metaphysical, has had a profound effect on Americans in general. And (sadly) on believers, too. In 2002 Barna Research reported that “Six out of ten Americans (59%) rejected the existence of Satan, indicating that the devil, or Satan, is merely a symbol of evil.”¹ In 2009 Barna reported that 59 percent of professing Christians

also rejected the existence of Satan.² Only 26 percent strongly agreed that they believe Satan is real.

Unlike our ancestors, we hear few sermons today about “things unseen,” such as heaven, angels, hell, or demons. And most believers give little thought to the reality of spiritual battle that surrounds them. Church historian Richard Lovelace says, “A study of this subject throughout the history of Christian experience reveals that leaders in most other periods of the church’s history have found conflict with fallen angels to be a regular feature of their daily existence and have sought to cope with it in biblical terms.”³ Commenting on this strange state of affairs, John Stott said,

It is unfashionable nowadays in the church (even while satanism flourishes outside it), to believe either in a personal devil or personal demonic intelligences under his command. But there is no obvious reason why church fashion should be the director of theology, whereas the plain teaching of Jesus and his apostles (not to mention the church of the subsequent centuries) endorsed their malevolent existence.⁴

TWO ERRORS TO AVOID

C.S. Lewis also commented on our tendency toward imbalance in this area. “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”⁵ Clearly, American society and the many professing Christians have swung strongly to the first error.

No doubt the devil is very pleased with this development. Just as spy rings can be more effective when their existence is unknown, so the devil and his angels are more effective when people are unaware of their existence and activities. As Lovelace notes, “Most of the devil’s advantage depends on the ability to move among human affairs undetected.”⁶

INSIGHTS FROM THE BIBLE

A careful study of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, gives us valuable and much-needed insights about the devil, his schemes, and

how to avoid being ensnared by him. And never has the need been greater. As J.I. Packer said concerning the devil and spiritual warfare, “The Christian’s life is not a bed of roses; it is a battlefield on which he has constantly to fight for his life. The first rule of success in war is know your enemy”.⁷ John Stott agreed and offered wise advice about knowing our enemy: “We need to rid our minds of the medieval caricature of Satan. Dispensing with the horns, the hooves, and the tail, we are left with the biblical portrait of a spiritual being, highly intelligent, immensely powerful, and utterly unscrupulous.”⁸

When we turn to the biblical portrait, we learn that Satan (Hebrew: adversary) or the devil (Greek: slanderer) is the archenemy of God and the cruel and malicious adversary of those created in God’s image. Names like adversary, slanderer, tempter, deceiver, liar, murderer, accuser, and evil one are applied to him in the Bible, and these give a sense of his character. He is an evil supernatural being, a fallen angel of such rank and power that even the archangel Michael, when disputing with him, “did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you’” (Jude 9).⁹ However, he is a created being, and is not eternal, self-existent, or equal to God in any respect. Thus he is not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. And he cannot read our thoughts and does not know the future. Rather, the devil is a creature subject to God’s sovereign restraint and can go no further than God permits (Job 1–2). He was decisively defeated by Jesus at the cross, but he is still at large and is a dangerous foe until Christ’s second coming (Matt. 25:41).

THE DEVIL’S ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

How Satan became evil is not explained in the Bible, though there are hints that ambitious pride prompted his revolt against God (1 Tim. 3:6). His pride and arrogance are certainly evident in his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1–5) and of Jesus (Luke 4:5–7). Some scholars have suggested that there might be poetic allusions to Satan’s fall in Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:11–19. These two passages depict the willfulness of the king of Babylon and the pride of the king of Tyre but seem to far transcend

what properly can be said of them. This raises the interesting but unanswerable question of whether there might also be a veiled reference to Satan energizing and working through them in the background.

Whatever the origin of Satan's fall, it is clear that other angels joined his rebellion and now form an organized hierarchy under his command (Eph. 6:10–12).¹⁰ They wage war against God and His people, seeking to advance their evil designs throughout the world and gain total control. As we have seen, the opening salvo in this war came when Satan, working through a serpent, deceived Eve and enticed her to disobey God, bringing about the fall of the human race (Gen. 3:1–7). This gave him great influence over fallen people and their societies. How much influence does he have in the world? When tempting Jesus, "The devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours" (Luke 4:5–7).

Interestingly, Jesus did not dispute the devil's claim to having significant authority over the kingdoms of this world (perhaps gained at the Fall). Jesus spoke of Satan's kingdom (Matt. 12:26) and referred to him as the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). John the apostle says that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). And the apostle Paul refers to him as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4) and "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). Although the devil does not have absolute control over the world, he and his angels do have considerable ability to create harm in pursuit of their evil goals. He can cause a range of catastrophic events, including physical afflictions and even death (Job 1–2; Luke 13:16; Heb. 2:14). His demons are able to afflict and torment people in a variety of ways, many instances of which are recounted in the Gospels. But it is of course important to note that not all physical and mental afflictions come from the devil.

THE DEVIL'S GOALS AND MAIN TARGETS

From this and what Scripture shows elsewhere, we can safely say that the devil's goals are to reclaim or at least neutralize God's people, to destroy

the church, to overthrow the kingdom of God, to displace God as King of creation and to become the object of all worship. This helps explain much of the evil and suffering that rages on earth. Here, Lovelace explains that normally,

The destructive malice of Satan against all humanity, and particularly against the church, is channeled through human agents and the systems and institutions they have built. Humanity in general is afflicted by the destroyer through the structures of injustice and oppression of which the flesh and the devil are joint architects, and Christians are murderously attacked by individuals and governments ultimately directed by Satan.¹¹

We see evidence of this in the political realm from nearly the beginning of time. Evil spirits seek to influence governments, their leaders and world affairs to advance Satan's purposes. A brief glimpse is given in Daniel 10:13–14, where the “prince of the kingdom of Persia,” an evil spirit of high rank and power, resisted one of God's angels who was sent to Persia to answer Daniel's prayer. He held God's angel at bay for twenty-one days, until the archangel Michael arrived to assist him. After delivering his message to Daniel, the good angel took leave to “return to fight against the prince of Persia; and behold, when I go out, the prince of Greece will come” (Dan. 10:20). Another example, this one in the New Testament, is Nero's persecution of the church in AD 64–65. Peter, Paul, and many other believers in Rome were put to death, often in unimaginably cruel ways by this madman. Writing on the eve of that persecution, Peter seems to suggest that the devil was behind the gathering storm (1 Pet. 5:8–9). And in view of Nero's character and behavior, that seems likely. In Smyrna three decades later, we are told that the devil worked through the machinery of government to bring about the arrest and execution of God's people in that city (Rev. 2:10). In recent times, examples abound of widespread demonic evil perpetrated through governments influenced by atheistic ideologies such as Marxism and Nazism, and through religious ideologies like radical Islam. This invisible but very real spiritual war continues to rage around the world.

Religion and its institutions are another of the devil's prime targets for influence and control. By inspiring and energizing false religions, the devil can deceive people and blind them to the true God. The pagan religions of Canaan, for example, were demonically controlled (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37) and were a great snare to Israel for centuries. In New Testament times, Paul said Greco-Roman pagan idolatry was also energized by demons (1 Cor. 10:18–22). But it is in the church itself that the devil seeks to make his greatest impact. Paul warns believers in Corinth about false apostles and workers, saying that “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light...his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14–15). False teaching is often their mode of operation.

From the beginning of the church, the devil has used error, deception, division, sexual temptation, persecution, and a variety of other schemes to undermine congregations and institutions. He has also used these means to hinder ministers, missionaries, and others engaged in preaching and teaching God's truth and spreading the gospel, including Paul (see 1 Thess. 2:17–18). And he has successfully captured many religious schools and theological seminaries that train ministers for the church, turning them into factories of error and heresy. In some cases, entire denominational hierarchies have been captured. False religions and heresies have been a persistent problem throughout the centuries and today are perhaps more numerous and widespread than at any time in history. Interestingly, Paul warns that in the last days, people especially will be particularly at risk from “deceitful spirits and teachings of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1).

Social, cultural, and secular educational institutions are also prime targets. Harvard was founded in 1636 by Puritans to train an educated clergy for the colonies. By 1701, it had become so liberal that some of its graduates founded what became Yale College to train Congregationalist ministers. Yale became liberal some years later. Princeton was founded in 1746 to train orthodox ministers because Harvard and Yale had opposed the Great Awakening. The same basic story occurred in other Ivy League schools and in many, many others over the centuries.

The world of ideas, the world of music and art in their various forms,

popular culture, and the media are all arenas through which the evil one can subtly gain influence and disseminate anti-God ideas on a widespread basis with seeming plausibility. For example, the ideas of Marx, Nietzsche, and others like them have produced enormous evil and human suffering. The influence of existentialism on the youth culture of the 1960s is perhaps another example. Today's postmodernism and post-postmodernism is yet another. Of course, this is not to say that all philosophies and expressions of the world's culture are demonic, only to say that they are vulnerable to exploitation by the devil, and some more than others. Undiscerning people can be brought under their influence.

The personal life is where everyone must be especially alert. In Ephesians, Paul warns ordinary church members against the "schemes of the devil." He says, "...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph: 6:11–12). This language describes an organized hierarchy of evil spirits that is arrayed against individual believers, churches, and even institutions of society. Thus, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to "take up the whole armor of God that you might be able to withstand in the evil day" (6:13). This is essential for every believer.

Peter says much the same: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world" (1 Pet. 5:8–9).

THE DEVIL'S SCHEMES AND TACTICS

How does the devil seek to ensnare us? Deception, accusation, and temptation are his standard tools. His chief goal for anyone who has come to Christ is to recover them. As J.I. Packer says of such a person, "Satan views him as an escaped prisoner and goes to war against him to try to recapture him. He tempts (i.e., tests) the Christian with malicious intent, hoping to find a weakness and betray him into a course of action that will ultimately lead him back into the prison out of which Christ brought him."¹²

Specific approaches vary, but normally he tempts us to sin in our areas of weakness and vulnerability. Packer observes that “he is always seeking to produce unbelief, pride, unreality, false hopes, confusion of mind and disobedience, as he did in Eden; if he cannot do this directly then he labors to do it indirectly, fostering unbalance and one-sidedness.”¹³ Examples in the Bible are illustrative. As we saw earlier, he ensnared Peter by means of fear (Luke 22:31–32). He filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira with lies (Acts 5:1–11). He captures many with sexual lust (1 Cor. 5:1). Paul warns married couples in Corinth who were devoting themselves to special prayer not to refrain from sex for too long, because “Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:5). Pride is a common snare (1 Tim. 3:6). Anger is a special danger and must be dealt with promptly and properly when it arises (Eph. 4:26–27). And there are many others. When we succumb to the devil’s temptation, it is not uncommon for him to exploit guilt and condemnation in an effort to push us toward despondency and despair.

Looking at temptation more broadly, Lovelace says, “Most commonly, temptation is directed toward larger ends: involving believers in whole ways of life or patterns of behavior which are sub-Christian which will extinguish their spirituality and make them negative witnesses; or luring them into adopting outlooks which excuse or justify sin and which may almost totally obscure their faith.”¹⁴ Materialism, worldliness, and racism are obvious examples in American evangelicalism, and there are a number of others. On the theological left, distrust of the Scriptures and disbelief in Jesus’s virgin birth, miracles, and bodily resurrection are major examples.

Each of us needs to be aware of specific sins to which we are vulnerable and work earnestly “by the Spirit...[to] put to death the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13). J.I. Packer gives a helpful explanation of what this means:

How do we “by the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body”? Outward acts of sin come from inner sinful urges, so we must learn to starve these urges of what stimulates them (porn magazines, for instance, if the urge is lust; visits to smorgasbords if the urge is gluttony; gambling and lotteries if the urge is greed, and so on). And when the urge is upon

us we must learn, as it were, to run to our Lord and cry for help, asking him to deepen our sense of his own holy presence and redeeming love, to give us the strength to say no to that which can only displease him. It is the Spirit who moves us to act in this way, who makes our sense of the holy love of Christ vivid, who imparts the strength for which we pray and who actually drains the life out of the sins we starve.¹⁵

We must remind ourselves that we are not helpless victims who cannot resist sin, for as we saw earlier, we will encounter no temptation that is not common to man. And “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13). Sometimes the way of escape is simply to flee from temptation when it confronts us (1 Tim. 6:11).

With unbelievers, Satan’s chief goal is to blind their minds and thus keep them from seeing “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4). He uses all manner of schemes to entice them into sins and idolatries that will keep them under his influence and away from God. Thus, “They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart” (Eph. 4:18). And should they ever hear the word of God, he immediately snatches it away from them (Matt. 13:19).

RESISTING THE DEVIL

What are our defenses against such an enemy? We must regularly remind ourselves that the devil was decisively defeated by Jesus at the Cross. Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). And by shedding His blood on the cross, Christ broke the devil’s power (John 12:27–31; Col. 2:13–15; Heb. 2:14–16), paid the penalty of our sins, and opened the door of salvation to all who repent and trust in Him. We must also regularly remind ourselves that God is for us, not against us and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:31, 37–39). This will enable us to rediscover our own liberation (Col. 2:13–15) and the authority Jesus has given us over the

powers of darkness (Luke 10:17–19), and it will help us learn to exercise it rightly for our own good and the good of His church. This requires us to learn how to “put on the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:13f) and “Resist the devil” so that “he will flee from you” (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:7).

One day the devil and all who serve him will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:1–3). But until that day he and his minions fight on. Thus we must daily remember that our life in this world is lived on a spiritual battlefield, and we must keep sober and alert. We must live by faith, keeping our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus our King, not the devil. As E. Stanley Jones once said, “What has your attention has you.” If the devil cannot keep us blinded, he is happy to run us off a cliff through preoccupation with his activities and paranoid fear.

SEEING UNSEEN REALITY

Another essential for dealing with the devil is a proper perspective on reality. God and the devil are not equally matched opponents, as in some types of cosmic dualism. God is infinitely more powerful than the devil, who is one of His creatures. When God is called the Lord of hosts in the Old Testament, it refers to His position as commander of heaven’s armies—armies of angels who do His bidding. They are the vast majority of angels, far more than those which rebelled with Satan. These unseen divine agents are active in the world, serving and defending God’s people (Heb. 1:14), and battling the devil and his angels.

At the battle of Jericho, for example, the commander of the Lord’s army of invisible angels appeared to Joshua on the eve of battle to encourage him and let him know that he was not alone (Josh. 5:13–15). Another instance is when Elisha and his servant were besieged by the Syrian army, which intended to kill them. When his servant reported this to Elisha, Elisha responded, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘LORD, please open his eyes that he may see.’ So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2 Kings 6:16–17). Or consider the exciting story of Peter in the New Testament. Herod had just executed James and had arrested Peter, intending to kill him as well. Peter was

in prison being guarded by four squads of soldiers. But the church made earnest prayer for him, and God sent an angel to supernaturally deliver him from prison (Acts 12:1–11). God’s angels are on assignments throughout the world obeying God’s orders in the battle against Satan and his forces (Ps. 103:19–21). And they also watch over each of His children (Heb. 1:14).

GROWING STRONG IN GRACE

Finally, we must use all the means of grace God has provided for our growth in grace. For those who have come to faith in Christ but have not yet been baptized, this means doing so as soon as possible. For every believer, it means being filled with the Holy Spirit daily (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16–25), for “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4), and it was in the power of the Spirit that Jesus overcame the devil (Luke 4:1). In the Spirit’s power, we must follow the example of the early church and be continually devoting ourselves to “the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). This is far more demanding than the halfhearted efforts most of us make. J.I. Packer elaborates on each of these:

Bible truth, preached and received through preaching, studied in the text, meditated on, applied to oneself, taken into the heart, laid up in the memory, taken as a guide for life; prayer, the regular exercise of communion and fellowship with God; worship with the Lord’s people, particularly at the Lord’s Supper but also in hearing the word proclaimed and joining in the prayers and vocal praise; and the informal fellowship and interchange of the Lord’s family as one stands by and ministers to another.¹⁶

Wholehearted commitment to Christ as Lord and obedience to known truth are essential responses to God’s grace in order to keep walking in the Spirit and on the path of His blessing and protection. A spiritual mentor—whether a pastor, elder, or mature believer—will be very helpful for periodic counsel, including discernment of any subtle schemes or attacks of the devil against us. And our commitment to fellowship should include a small accountability group (two or three people). Last, but by

no means least, we must understand and actually put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18) and keep it in place day by day.

These disciplines will keep us under the protective canopy of God’s grace and keep us growing as disciples of Jesus. They will not exempt us from temptation or attack, but they will enable us to glorify God by standing firm when it comes.

RECOMMENDED READING

Borgman, Brian and Rob Ventura. *Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).

Lloyd-Jones, Martin. *Not Against Flesh and Blood: The Battle Against Spiritual Wickedness in High Places* Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2012.

Spurgeon, Charles. *Spiritual Warfare in the Believer’s Life* (Lynwood, WA: Emerald Press, 1993).

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. Book 3, chap. 8, “The Great Sin” (New York: Harper Collins, 1952).

NOTES

¹ Barna Report.

² Barna Report.

³ Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 134.

⁴ John Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979), 73–74.

⁵ C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: MacMillan, 1944), 9.

⁶ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 136.

⁷ J.I. Packer, *God’s Words* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 85.

⁸ John Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1990), 50.

⁹ Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

¹⁰ Stott, *God’s New Society*, 267–275.

¹¹ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 140.

¹² Packer, *God’s Words*, 91.

¹³ Packer, *God’s Words*, 92.

¹⁴ Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 137.

¹⁵ J.I. Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1992), 175.

¹⁶ J.I. Packer, “Means of Growth” (an article in *Tenth*, a publication of Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1981), 10.

INTRODUCTION TO *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*

The year 2022 marked the eightieth anniversary of the publication of C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*. Even though the book initially sold well, Lewis indicated in the preface to an early edition of the work that he was worried that the book would eventually be quietly banished "toward spare bedrooms, there to live a life of undisturbed tranquility." Yet eighty years after it was first published, the series of letters from a senior devil named Screwtape addressed to his underling Wormwood on how to corrupt the life of Wormwood's nameless "patient" remains a regular on Christian bestseller lists.

The idea for *The Screwtape Letters* came to Lewis while he was sitting in church. In a 1940 letter to his brother, Warnie, he wrote, "Before the service was over—one could wish these things came seasonably—I was struck by an idea for a book which I think might be most useful and entertaining. It would be called *As One Devil to Another* and would consist of letters from an elderly retired devil to a young devil who has just started work on his first 'patient.'"

Before *The Screwtape Letters* appeared in book form, they were published as a series of thirty-one installments in a weekly religious magazine known as *The Guardian* (no relation to the more well-known British daily currently publishing under the same name). The first letter was published on May 2, 1941.

Although popular with most readers, some didn't quite grasp the underlying concept. A country clergyman wrote to *The Guardian* to cancel his subscription because he found Screwtape's advice to Wormwood, "not only erroneous but positively diabolical." Shortly thereafter, the letters were released in a single volume in February 1942.

Notwithstanding the confused clergyman, the book was Lewis's first commercial success, bringing him out of the academic periphery and into the spotlight.

Lewis dedicated *The Screwtape Letters* to his close friend J.R.R. Tolkien, writing under the printed dedication in Tolkien's copy, "In token payment of a great debt." Ironically, Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*, and a strong Christian with a belief in the supernatural world, was

not keen on the book as he didn't think it wise to trifle with the powers of evil in such a facetious manner.

However, if you take a moment to read the two quotations Lewis included in the book between his dedication to Tolkien and the Preface, you'll find that Lewis is in good company when it comes to the idea of making fun of the devil. The quotations are from the great Reformer Martin Luther and the English statesman Thomas More.

Lewis's previous books, such as *The Pilgrim's Regress*, *The Allegory of Love*, and *The Problem of Pain*, were more abstract and theoretical. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis employed satire to reach his target audience.

Lewis described that target audience in a 1947 letter to a gentleman who had contacted him about adding an index to *The Screwtape Letters*. Lewis responded, "the success of the book depends on luring the ordinary reader into a serious self-knowledge under pretense of being kind of a joke... But it is the worldly reader I specifically want to catch."

It's uncertain to what extent *The Screwtape Letters*' readership includes the "worldly" readers that Lewis originally targeted. But in a culture that has become increasingly polarized by religion, politics, sexuality, and race (a development Screwtape himself would most assuredly approve of), more than likely the majority of *The Screwtape Letters*' current readers are now the religiously inclined or those with an existing faith tradition. For this demographic, *The Screwtape Letters* are helpful in thinking how to be "as wise as serpents, yet gentle as doves."

For Lewis, it is not so much that we must be delivered from demons that possess and control us; it is that we are constantly and quietly influenced by them. The demons are eager to corrupt and pollute, dissuading godly choices that cultivate faith and virtue. And Christians are not immune; indeed, they are the primary target. In his famous sermon "The Weight of Glory," Lewis noted that there are no ordinary people; we are all becoming either eternal wonders or eternal horrors. Similarly, *The Screwtape Letters* show that there are no ordinary actions. It is a battle all the way from here to heaven.

Taken as a whole, it is not possible to distill *The Screwtape Letters* down to a single topic, but the metanarrative throughout is Screwtape's twisting

of the truth. Without truth, or an objective standard, humanity's beliefs and behaviors can be molded and shaped. But it is not just that he twists the truth, or "T"ruth. Screwtape understands that a lie is made far stronger by mixing in a little truth. For the patient, marriage is fine, as long as it occurs with someone who does not follow the Enemy. Attending Church is fine, as long as it is a Church that is doctrinally malignant. Even Christianity can be fine, as long as it is an insignificantly small part of the patient's whole life.

Some have noted that reading the *The Screwtape Letters* is not a pleasant experience. This may be because it is not a book you read; it is a book that reads you. Indeed, it is difficult to discover how tainted and corrupted we truly are. But such self-knowledge is essential to spiritual growth and maturity. The Lord's Prayer will take on new meaning and greater urgency, as we cry, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Within the pages of *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis has presented us with a gift, insight into Ephesians 6:12 where Paul describes the Christian life in this way,

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (ESV)

It is our hope and prayer at the C.S. Lewis Institute that this guide will help you recognize in advance the trap doors set for us by these "powers," so we can avoid them and go on to live the lives of obedience, purity, and joy that God has called each of us to.

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK'S NARRATIVE AND APPROACH

The dust jacket of the first American edition of *The Screwtape Letters* published by The Macmillan Company of New York in 1944 provides a good synopsis of the book. It reads,

This extraordinary little book is a startling, unique, and powerful presentation of the old, old problem of the continuous battle for the soul of man between the insidious forces of evil and the triumphant forces of good.

It consists of a series of letters written by Screwtape (an important official in his Satanic Majesty's "Lowerarchy") to Wormwood, his nephew, who is a junior devil on earth. The letters are instruction in temptation as to how to corrupt the faith of Wormwood's "patient," who is in danger of becoming a Christian.

The book sparkles with wit and reveals on every page a penetrating understanding of man's spiritual struggle upward toward the City of God.

Lewis places the historical context behind this fictional work during the Second World War, which was at the forefront of everyone's minds when these letters were first published in *The Guardian* newspaper.

Since Lewis is writing from the perspective of the demon or lower devil, Screwtape, it can take the reader a moment to switch gears and realize that what the devil describes as good is bad and what is bad is good. In other words, the reader must see this as the devil's playbook and thus must read accordingly.

Note Lewis's statement in the Preface about reading the book that "Readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar. Not everything that Screwtape says should be assumed to be true even from his own angle." With this in mind, as you go through this study, pray, and ask the Lord for discernment between truth and error, right and wrong as you respond to both the readings and the study guide questions.

MAIN CHARACTERS IN *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*

Screwtape (Experienced lower devil): The letters of this book are written in the voice of Screwtape, who is an undersecretary in the "lowerarchy" of Satan's Hell. In other words, he is a devil or demon with some experience. He has been charged with training his nephew, an inexperienced devil named Wormwood. Screwtape's perspective is one in which God is the "Enemy," and the devil is "Our Father Below." His goal is to corrupt the man in the story, the "patient," and put him on the path to hell.

Wormwood (Inexperienced devil in training): Wormwood is the incompetent devil in training, and the nephew of Screwtape who addresses his letters Wormwood. His job on earth is to corrupt the “patient” and lead him to hell. However, Wormwood’s youthful mistakes and the overwhelming power of “the Enemy” (God) make his mission difficult to accomplish.

The Patient (Young Englishman): The patient is a young Englishman who lives during World War II. He is contemplating the truths of Christianity. The letters from Screwtape to Wormwood explore ways to lead the patient astray through various aspects of his life, including his thought life, interactions with church goers, his love life, and his service as a soldier. In the end, the patient finds God’s truth and overcomes the schemes of the devil.

The Patient’s Fiancée (Godly young woman): The patient’s fiancée is a lovely young Christian woman, full of Christian virtues. She introduces the “patient” to her Christian family and a whole new set of friends. Of course, Screwtape abhors the influence of this godly fiancée on the patient.

The Enemy (God): From Screwtape’s perspective, the Enemy (God) is unfathomable because he loves “human vermin.” God is in a spiritual battle against the devil and the underling devils for the souls of men and women to whom He’s given freewill to choose sides.

Our Father Below (The Devil): Screwtape is subservient to “Our Father Below,” the devil. The devil is battling for the souls of men and women against his foe, the “Enemy” (God).



Letter 1

Theme: Pre-Conversion

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Jargon
2. Appetites

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Science and reason

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The trouble about argument is that it moves the whole struggle on to the Enemy’s own ground. He can argue too.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS: (¶ = PARAGRAPH)

1. Screwtape instructs Wormwood to keep the patient focused on “jargon” ¶1. How is jargon different from truth?
2. Screwtape affirms Wormwood for encouraging his patient’s association with a “materialist” friend, ¶1. How would a preoccupation with the physical side of reality and ignorance of the spiritual be foundational for diabolical strategy?
3. How did Screwtape use what he called the “pressures of the ordinary” or “real life” ¶3, and the familiar ¶4, to “rescue” a patient from the influence of the Enemy?
4. In what ways do you think the “pressures of the ordinary” make you susceptible to diabolical influence? Hinder you from the pursuit of truth?
5. What do you learn about the diabolical and the divine when it comes to the value of arguments ¶2, and science ¶4?
6. What did you learn about the nature of divine and diabolical strategies?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” Colossians 2:8

Ask God to help you be aware of and combat the deceitful worldviews and philosophies of the world that are harmful to you and others and instead be empowered by the truth of God, which can be found in reason, science, and the Scriptures.

2. Seek God’s truth through science and reason to combat jargon and our appetites:

Understanding that “all truth is God’s truth,” as God has revealed it in creation, and through the human conscience, use the gifts of science and reason to combat falsehoods and lies.

Reflect and ask yourself if you have any unanswered questions about God or the world that are bothering you or hindering your relationship with God. If so, know that there are probably some thoughtful Christian apologists who may have a response to your question worthy of consideration. One place to look for reasonable answers is the C.S. Lewis Institute’s website, www.cslewisinstitute.org under the Topic “Apologetics.”



Letter **2**

Theme: Church

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Unconverted habits
2. The straw-man church
3. Straw-man Christians
4. Innate hypocrisy

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Disappointment

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“One of our great allies at present is the Church itself ...I do not mean the Church as we see her spread out through all time and space and rooted in eternity, terrible as an army with banners. That, I confess, is a spectacle which makes our boldest tempters uneasy.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. While bemoaning the fact that Wormwood’s patient has become a Christian, Screwtape hopes to “reclaim” him by using the patient’s new habit of attending church. Why might Screwtape think church attendance can extinguish spiritual growth ¶2?
2. How do the tempters use hypocrisy and disappointment with other Christians as a snare ¶2?
3. How might the church have been a snare for you?
4. What is it about the church that Screwtape does not want the patient to see ¶2?
5. How does God use disappointment with the church for His own purposes ¶3?

6. Screwtape celebrates how easy it is to highlight the hypocrisy of other Christians while encouraging Christians to ignore their own hypocrisies ¶4. Consider: What is there about your own conduct and character that you prefer to avoid or ignore?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“I was glad when they said unto me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord!’” Psalm 122:1

Ask God to help you worship Him in the community of the church and to love “the sinners” who have been saved by His grace.

2. Bring your disappointments to God:

Our disappointments can make us bitter or better. Rather than succumb to bitterness, talk to God honestly about your disappointments and in humility seek God’s grace for yourself and offer it to others, even those who may hurt or disappoint you. Take a moment now to reflect upon your life and see if there are any disappointments with the church, other people, or even yourself that may be hindering your relationship with God and others. If so, ask God to turn your disappointment into an opportunity for redemption.



Letter **3**

Theme: Family

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Introspection
2. Vacuous prayers
3. Irritating habits
4. Annoying communication
5. Religious irritation

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Process and stages

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“In civilised life domestic hatred usually expresses itself by saying things which would appear quite harmless on paper (the words are not offensive) but in such a voice, or at such a moment, that they are not far short of a blow to the face.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways does Screwtape seek to foster “a good settled habit of mutual annoyance” between the patient and his mother ¶1?
2. Next to the church, the family is a choice tool for tripping up Christians. How can a false spirituality be a snare ¶¶2–3?
3. Under the influence of the tempters, it seems that familiarity can indeed breed contempt. What does Screwtape encourage Wormwood to highlight ¶¶4–5?
4. How does Screwtape’s advice shed light on your own family interactions?
5. God works “from the center outward” to conform our conduct to His standard ¶1. How have you seen your own conduct change under God’s influence?

6. Even our “religious” behavior can be used to get under the skin of family members. Are there ways that your family members might struggle with your faith and Christian conduct?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”
Colossians 3:12–13

Ask God to (1) fill you with His Holy Spirit so that your life richly exhibits the fruit of the Spirit and (2) help you forgive those who have sinned against you.

2. Recognizing that each person in the church is in process and in various stages of spiritual maturity and understanding, practice patience with others:

Take time to examine your heart and see if there is anyone in your church family who irritates you, bothers you, or toward whom you feel judgmental. Ask the Lord for wisdom in interacting with this person(s) as your brother or sister in Christ and, if necessary, repent of your irritation.

Ask God to bring to mind anyone against whom you hold a grudge or from whom you are withholding forgiveness. If someone comes to mind, ask God for the power to forgive this person and take the steps needed to seek reconciliation within your church body.



Letter 4

Theme: Prayer

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Devotional mood
2. Spiritual feelings
3. Childish images

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Intentional discipline of prayer

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The best thing, where it is possible, is to keep the patient from the serious intention of praying altogether.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. According to Screwtape, the best way to keep a “patient” from praying is to cultivate a “devotional mood” ¶2. What is there about such a mood that Screwtape likes?
2. Next to a devotional mood, Screwtape recommends a focus on feelings ¶3. What is there about feelings that Screwtape likes when seeking to twist prayer?
3. Screwtape also likes imaginary pictures of God as a focus of prayer ¶4. What is so diabolically attractive about praying to a mental image of God?
4. How can the advice of Screwtape to Wormwood help you pray better?
5. What is there about Screwtape’s fulminations that could encourage your own prayer life ¶4?
6. What are some of the worldly distractions that keep you from spending time in prayer with God?
7. Screwtape writes that, “mortals always picture us as putting

things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out” ¶2. What do you think Screwtape is trying to keep out of the patient’s mind?

8. A “real nakedness of the soul in prayer” for the patient is a situation Wormwood is to avoid at all costs ¶4. Why is this condition such a threat?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Pray then like this: 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.”
Matthew 6:9–13

Ask God to deepen your understanding of the Lord’s prayer and put it into practice.

2. Develop a daily habit or discipline of prayer:

How would you describe your current prayer life? Reflect upon this and ask God to help you develop and deepen your prayer life. Consider setting aside a specific time daily to pray and commune with God.

Reflect upon ways that your prayer life has been hindered or distracted, and ask God to help you remove those things that are hurting your relationship with Him. forgiveness. If someone comes to mind, ask God for the power to forgive this person and take the steps needed to seek reconciliation within your church body.



Letter 5

Theme: War

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Long-term medical care

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Responding to desperation

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Consider too what undesirable deaths occur in wartime. Men are killed in places where they knew they might be killed and to which they go, if they are at all of the Enemy’s party, prepared.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. World War II was raging in Europe during the correspondence between Screwtape and Wormwood, so it is not surprising that war is a subject of several of the letters. What is the surprising devilish attitude toward war ¶¶1–3?
2. Screwtape says that Wormwood’s primary business involves “undermining faith and preventing the formation of virtues” ¶1. What are some ways in which your faith has been diabolically assaulted and your development of virtue hindered?
3. In Screwtape’s scenario, why do devils prefer death in a nursing home to death during war ¶2?
4. How does Screwtape say the Enemy (God) uses war to His advantage ¶2?
5. How might this letter change the way you view death? Your perspective on eternity?
6. Why are so many people reluctant to think about death?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:12

Ask God to give you a healthy understanding of your mortality and the shortness of life so that you will seek His wisdom on earth.

2. Focus on eternal values and truth:

As you experience or hear about desperate times created by war, famine, natural disasters, and other catastrophes intentionally focus your attention on eternal values and truth.

If you knew that you had one month to live, how would that change the way you live your life? In what ways can you make changes now to your beliefs, actions, and lifestyle that would orient your life toward things of eternal value?

How might you help others reflect upon their mortality and focus on “things above, not on earthly things”?



Letter 6

Theme: War (Continued)

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Worry for the future
2. Self-conscious/un-self-conscious
3. Imaginary virtues

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. The present
2. Active virtues

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human’s mind against the Enemy. He wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would the devils want us to be preoccupied more with the future than the present ¶¶1–3?
2. What insight do we gain from Screwtape’s advice on how the Enemy (God) helps us face our difficulties and challenges ¶3?
3. What burdens and challenges are you carrying that could be helped by the godly “resignation” that Screwtape wants us to avoid ¶¶2–3?
4. In what ways does Screwtape guide Wormwood in regard to the self-conscious and un-self-conscious attitudes of his patient ¶4?
5. Why is it that the devils are much more interested in our actions toward others than in our attitudes ¶5?

6. Screwtape tells Wormwood to think of the patient as a series of concentric circles with the patient's will at the core, followed by his intellect, and then his fantasy life ¶5. Where does Screwtape want the patient's virtues to be located? Where does God want our virtues to be located?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?... And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"
Matthew 6:25, 27

Ask God to help you cast your worry and anxiety upon Him, trusting Him to provide for you as you bring your needs before Him in prayer.

2. Live fully in the present today by actively loving God and neighbor:

Is there anything in your past (unforgiveness, broken relationships, or unfinished business) that you need to address? If so, ask the Lord to reveal those things and give you a strategy for dealing with them today so that your past will no longer control your present.

Are you worried or anxious about the unknown of the future or an upcoming event? If so, pray and ask the Lord to remove your worry and help you focus on the good works which He has prepared for you to do today.



Letter 7

Theme: Devils, Patriots and Pacifists

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Spiritual ignorance
2. Christianity as means for a cause

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Intervention

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Some ages are lukewarm and complacent, and then it is our business to soothe them yet faster asleep. Other ages, of which the present is one, are unbalanced and prone to faction, and it is our business to inflame them.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. What advantages do devils gain by making their presence known ¶1?
2. What advantages do devils gain by hiding their existence ¶1?
3. At the time those letters were written, it was the policy of hell to keep demonic existence a secret. What do you think their policy would be at the present?
4. The themes touched on in this letter include causes, factions, and zeal ¶¶2–4. Why is zeal to be encouraged ¶2?
5. Throughout this letter, Screwtape gives examples of different factions that divide people, such as patriotism and pacifism or High Church and Low Church. Is there a “faction” you have allegiance to that prevents you from loving others? From loving God?

6. Why would Screwtape want to make Christianity a “means” and the world a “goal” ¶4?
7. Pacifism and patriotism were key opportunities for turning Christianity into a “means” at the time of World War II. In or by what ways might Christianity be treated in the same way today?
8. Screwtape tells Wormwood that “All extremes, except extreme devotion to the Enemy, are to be encouraged” ¶2. What, if any, causes, people, or things are you devoted to above God??

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28

Ask God to help you treat all people with love and respect regardless of their political party, ethnic background, race, religion, or any other identifier the world uses to divide people.

2. When people are being mistreated, abused, or harmed, come to their defense with God’s help:

Whether it’s the bullying of a friend or the unjust attack by one country against another, Christians are called to intervene and confront evil actions. Reflect upon your life today. Is there someone who is being mistreated in your family, neighborhood, or workplace that you can come alongside, defend, or encourage? Ask God for wisdom in knowing how to come to the defense of those who are being treated unjustly and then act.



Letter 8

Theme: Dry and Desert Experiences

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Opposing God's intentions

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. The law of undulation

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

"He relies on the troughs even more than on the peaks; some of His special favourites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else."
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. According to Screwtape, we humans are "amphibians—half spirit and half animals" ¶1. What key does this provide for understanding human nature?
2. How might this insight into human nature be helpful for understanding your own life experiences and responses to God ¶2?
3. The troughs we go through spiritually are part of a pattern of "undulation" ¶2. How does Screwtape seek to use the "natural phenomenon" of undulation? How should we respond to the pattern of undulation?
4. God uses the lows of our spiritual experience as means to do deep work in our souls ¶4. How have the lows in your own life been used to enhance your connection with God?
5. Screwtape says God "cannot ravish. He can only woo" ¶4. What do you think this means?

6. What fresh insights do you gain into the devilish and divine ways of working with and on humanity from Screwtape's instruction about human depression and difficulties?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the oil fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.” Habakkuk 3:17

Ask God to grow your faith and teach you to be content and rejoice daily regardless of your circumstances.

2. Seek God:

Seek Him in times of plenty and in times of want, knowing that God often does the deepest work in our lives in the most difficult times.

When have you felt closest to God? Has it been in times of plenty or during a crisis? How are you feeling today about your relationship with God? What can you do today regardless of your circumstances to rejoice in God, your Creator and Redeemer?

Ask God if there is anyone who may be facing great difficulties whom you can come alongside today. If someone comes to mind, find a practical way through prayer to encourage or comfort them in their time of need.



Letter 9

Theme: Life Phases

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Troughs and down times
2. Twisted pleasure
3. Phases

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Pleasure

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Hence we always try to work away from the natural condition of any pleasure to that in which it is least natural, least redolent of its Maker, and least pleasurable. An ever increasing craving for an ever diminishing pleasure is the formula.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Screwtape continues his guidance to Wormwood on how to exploit “down” times ¶1. How is it that sex and sensuality are especially powerful diabolical tools during times of darkness and depression ¶¶2–3?
2. How do our temperaments affect the way the devils tempt us ¶3?
3. One of the underlying themes of Screwtape’s advice is that reality is shaped by truth, not by feelings. Why is it important to take all our phases and feelings with a grain of salt ¶¶4–5?
4. Screwtape encourages Wormwood to persuade the patient that he is just going through a “religious phase” ¶4. What are some of the persuasive means Screwtape instructs Wormwood to use?

5. Have you ever been tempted to give up your faith, either by denying or just ignoring it?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Psalm 16:11

Ask God to help you enjoy the good pleasures of life that He has created for you to enjoy so that you might walk on the path that brings life rather than death.

2. Take time to enjoy and be grateful for the healthy, good pleasures that God has given to you each day:

Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy,

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.” 1 Timothy 6:17

Name some pleasures of life that God has provided to you for your enjoyment. Intentionally take some time to enjoy those pleasures and offer up your gratitude to God for them.

How might you help others put their hope in God and enjoy all that God provides us with to give us pleasure?



Letter 10

Theme: Cliques

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Snobbery
2. Peer pressure

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Inclusion
2. Integrity

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“All mortals tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Clever, slightly sophisticated intellectuals especially fashionable during World War II were “just right” for diabolical use. How would they be a snare for Wormwood’s patient ¶¶1–2?
2. What social set would be just the right tool for a tempter to use on you?
3. Screwtape hopes the patient lives two different lives—one with his “rich, smart, superficially intellectual, and brightly sceptical” friends and one with those he kneels beside on Sunday morning ¶¶1, 5. Are there places where you act one way with one group of people and act another way with a different group of people?
4. Screwtape notes that the value they have given to the word “Puritanism” is “one of the really solid triumphs of the last hundred years” ¶3. How would Screwtape wield the word “Puritanism” to “rescue annually thousands of humans from temperance, chastity, and sobriety”?

5. How is it that the diabolical use of peer pressure can turn us into first-order hypocrites ¶4?
6. How do you handle peer pressure that could be spiritually polluting?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’”

1 Corinthians 15:33

Ask God to help you to develop healthy friendships that draw you and others closer to Him and give you the strength and positive peer pressure to know how to reach out to those who don’t know Jesus.

2. Intentionally include “outsiders”:

Include outsiders and those on the edge of the crowd, even though it might not be socially acceptable. Jesus intentionally reached out to the “tax-collectors and sinners” of his day. Who in your workplace, neighborhood or even church are being excluded from the “in-crowd”? How can you reach out to in love?

Reflect upon your relationships. Are you being unduly influenced by negative peer pressure to ostracize, look down on, or exclude others? What people are good influences in your life? Ask the Lord if you need to make any changes in the way you handle your friendships.



Letter II

Theme: Humor

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Humor as consolation and excuse
2. Humor as flippancy

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Joy and fun

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“I divide the causes of human laughter into Joy, Fun, the Joke Proper, and Flippancy.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Wormwood receives detailed instructions on laughter. What is there about joy and music that is so detestable to Screwtape ¶2?
2. Screwtape doesn’t much care for fun either ¶3. How have you discovered fun to be an aid to spiritual growth?
3. Of the four types of humor, Screwtape prefers jokes and flippancy ¶¶4–6. How is it that a joke can be a means of justifying bad behavior ¶5?
4. Screwtape notes that flippancy “builds up around a man the finest armour-plating against the Enemy that I know.” In what way does flippancy hurt our relationships with God and others ¶6?
5. How might the advice of Screwtape affect the way you “enjoy” parties and entertainments such as music, movies, and television?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.” Ephesians 5:4

Ask God to help you monitor your speech and allow your words to be encouraging and edifying as you go throughout your day.

2. Intentionally plan ways to bring joy and fun into your life and the lives of others:

What do you enjoy doing for fun? In what ways might you be more intentional about planning fun to bring joy into your life and the lives of others?

Reflect upon your use of humor. Is your humor uplifting or degrading toward others? Is your humor honoring to God or crude and “out of place”? Take time this week to be more conscious about the type of humor you use or laugh at.



Letter 12

Theme: Sloth

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Small sins
2. Spiritual drift

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Intruding on our spiritual slumber

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it valuable for Wormwood to encourage church attendance, despite its spiritual snares ¶2?
2. How is it that Wormwood can combine spiritual degeneration and spiritual inclination into snares and roadblocks to spiritual growth ¶3?
3. Wormwood learns how to keep his patient from prayers by wasting time ¶4. What sorts of things keep you from prayer?
4. Screwtape makes a distinction between repentance and a “vague, though uneasy, feeling that he hasn’t been doing very well lately” ¶2. Why does Screwtape want to cultivate in his patient this feeling of not doing well with his spiritual state?
5. How are “small sins” so effective in separating people from God ¶5?
6. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being low), how would you compare your current spiritual vitality with a year ago? What has

encouraged your spiritual growth? What has hindered your spiritual growth?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” Hebrews 11:6

Ask God to increase your faith and give you the power to actively seek after Him.

2. Pursue God daily through active and intentional spiritual habits:

Reflect upon your relationship with God. Are you actively engaged with Him, or has your relationship gradually gone cold or distant? What activities, even good ones, might be creating spiritual laziness in your relationship with God? Which spiritual habits might you implement daily to intentionally pursue God and not drift spiritually?



Letter 13

Theme: Pain and Pleasure

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Eradication of strong personal taste

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Good books, country roads, real pain and pleasure
2. Godly detachment

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“When He talks of their losing their selves, He only means abandoning the clamour of self-will; once they have done that, He really gives them back all their personality, and boasts (I am afraid sincerely) that when they are wholly His they will be more themselves than ever.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Wormwood’s patient did “wake up” from his spiritual drift and, for the time being, slipped through his fingers ¶1. Try to identify ways in which pleasure can be a divine aid and a devilish snare ¶3.
2. What is the difference between the detachment of self that God seeks and the detachment from reality that the devils seek ¶¶3–4?
3. Why would Screwtape want to eradicate small pleasures ¶3?
4. What fresh insight can we gain from Screwtape’s observations about the way that the Enemy (God) works ¶¶2, 4?
5. What pleasures and pastimes do you find spiritually nourishing?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Galatians 2:20

Ask daily to be filled with the Holy Spirit, have the mind of Christ, and allow Christ to live through you.

2. Rejoice in the gifts and personality that God has given you:

Reflect upon the unique way in which God has crafted your personality, your personal tastes and likes. In what ways might you thank God for the unique way that He has made you to enjoy His world? What are some of the small pleasures of life that you enjoy? Make time to enjoy one of those small pleasures today and thank God for it.

How can you encourage others to celebrate their unique gifts, personality, and tastes?

Find ways to intentionally nourish yourself and others spiritually.



Letter 14

Theme: Humility

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Self-consciousness
2. Distortion about the true nature of humility

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Humility
2. Self-forgetfulness

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“All virtues are less formidable to us once the man is aware that he has them, but this is specially true of humility.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. According to Screwtape, virtues are less formidable to devils when they are known to the patient ¶2. Why would he think this?
2. How do the devils twist humility so as to destroy it ¶3?
3. What is the true nature of humility ¶4?
4. What is God’s goal for humility and all virtues ¶4–5?
5. What are your virtues and outstanding talents? How well do you handle them?
6. Screwtape says the Enemy (God) wants us “to be so free from any bias in his own favour that he can rejoice in his own talents as frankly and gratefully as in his neighbor’s talents...” ¶4. Are you able to do this?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:6–7

Ask God for the gift of humility and self-forgetfulness so that you can enter into a deeper relationship with Him and others.

2. Rejoice in the accomplishments, achievements, successes, and joys of others:

Look for ways to celebrate the accomplishments, achievements, and successes of your friends, family, and even your competitors. Send them a congratulations card. Encourage them through words of affirmation. Throw a party for someone else.

Find intentional ways to daily encourage others. For example, you might ask the Lord to bring to mind someone daily that you might send a word of affirmation to via text, email, phone, visit, or written letter.

Practice the discipline of self-forgetfulness by focusing on how you might bless others.



Letter 15

Theme: Time and Eternity

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Suppressing both eternal and the present
2. Worry about the future

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Present and eternity

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“He therefore, I believe, wants them to attend chiefly to two things, to eternity itself, and to that point of time which they call the Present. For the Present is the point at which time touches eternity.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Screwtape believes that the “Enemy” (God) wants humanity to have a double vision, focusing on both time and eternity ¶2. How is that double focus a benefit to us?
2. In contrast to a focus on both eternity and the present, Screwtape wants to obscure both from our sight. How does a preoccupation with the future do just that ¶3?
3. Screwtape makes the enigmatic statement that “nearly all vices are rooted in the future.” Explain what is wrong with over-focusing on the future ¶¶3–4?
4. What is it about the future that worries you?
5. In what ways can you discern concerns for the future that hinder your spiritual growth and hurt your heart?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.” Matthew 6:34

Ask God to help you focus on the present and not be anxious about the future.

2. Examine your heart and explore what worries you about the future and take it to God in prayer:

Set aside some time to reflect upon the things that worry you. Make a list of them. How many of those things are related to the unknown of the future? Knowing that God is in control over time and history, that He loves you and has promised to never leave or forsake you, cast your cares and worries upon Him in prayer.

Takes some time as well to reflect upon the reality of eternity. Ask God to give you His perspective, in light of eternity, on your present situation.



Letter 16

Theme: Church Hopping

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. “Diluted Christianity”
2. Opinionated pastors
3. Party and clique

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Diversity and discernment

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Surely you know that if a man can’t be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighborhood looking for the church that ‘suits’ him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Screwtape want Wormwood’s patient to become a church “connoisseur” ¶¶1–2?
2. One church near Wormwood’s patient serves up a diluted Christianity. What does Screwtape especially like about it ¶3?
3. Another church has a minister who is a passionate protester against almost everything. What does Screwtape especially like about this church ¶4?
4. Above all, Screwtape likes “party” churches in which members takes sides and are attached to causes ¶5. What do you think Screwtape might like about your church?
5. Screwtape notes that people searching for a church are either critics or pupils. God, Screwtape says, wants people in church with a “humble receptivity to any nourishment” ¶2. Which of these reflects your attitude about church?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’” Psalm 122:1

Ask God to give you His perspective on worship and involvement in your local church so that you can be a joyful contributor to the body of Christ.

2. Get actively involved in a Bible-believing church:

By this we mean one that preaches the gospel and emphasizes discipleship of heart and mind. Are you actively serving and worshiping in a Bible-believing, gospel-preaching church? If not, pray and ask the Lord to help you find a local church home in which you can be nourished in your faith and serve others.

If you are part of a local church, take a moment to reflect upon the focus and mission of your church. Is your church actively making disciples of Jesus Christ and equipping you and others to be disciple-makers? Or is your church caught up primarily in social issues and humanism? If your church is not focused on Jesus’s Great Commandment and Great Commission, ask God what your role might be in bringing the church back to its mission.



Letter 17

Theme: Gluttony

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Delicacy
2. Male and female gluttony

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Fasting
2. Proper enjoyment of food with thanksgiving

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“One of the great achievements of the last hundred years has been to deaden the human conscience on that subject [Gluttony], so that by now you will hardly find a sermon preached or a conscience troubled about it.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. We seldom think of gluttony as sin today; however, the devils do. What’s the difference between the gluttony of Excess and the gluttony of Delicacy ¶1?
2. Toward which type of gluttony are you inclined?
3. It is clear that Delicacy, as present in the patient’s mother, is extremely irritating ¶¶1–2. How does it shape her life and affect those around her?
4. Toward what expressions of gluttony are men especially inclined ¶4?
5. The impact of gluttony is to make food a primary preoccupation that governs our lives. What role do you think food occupies in your life?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”

Philippians 3:19

Ask God to give you a healthy approach to the enjoyment of food, drink, and other pleasures.

2. Reflect upon the ways food and drink impact your life:

Examine your heart and reflect upon how you view food. How much time do you think about food each day? Are you so picky about your food that it impacts the ways you treat other people? Do you treat servers in restaurants with respect and kindness, or are you demanding and overly picky about your food’s presentation, taste, or warmth? Are you hyper-fixated on your diet so that it becomes a topic of most meals and conversations? Are you constantly craving more food and drink?

Consider fasting on occasion to get a deeper understanding of how you think about food and drink. Examine how food can be used in positive ways in our relationships with others and to be good stewards of our physical bodies. Pray and ask God to give you healthy appetites and approaches toward food and drink.



Letter 18

Theme: Sex

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Romantic love

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Abstinence or monogamy

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The Enemy’s demand on humans takes the form of a dilemma; either complete abstinence or unmitigated monogamy.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. According to Screwtape, God has placed humanity in a dilemma concerning sex—either complete abstinence or unmitigated monogamy ¶2. How do the devils seek to twist sex so that we don’t live according to God’s standards?
2. Why is God’s creation of love offensive and irritating to Screwtape ¶¶3–4?
3. The devils not only twist sex but love as well. How have they twisted love to destroy God’s intentions ¶5?
4. What do we learn about God’s true intention for sex and love from Screwtape’s instructions to Wormwood?
5. How might the observations of Screwtape change the way you think about both sex and love ¶¶4–6?
6. Screwtape brags that humans have been persuaded that the commitment of marriage is no longer binding if two people fall out of love ¶6. Do you see evidence of this in contemporary culture?
7. Screwtape claims that “whenever a man lies with a woman, there, whether they like it or not, a transcendental relation is set up between them ¶6. What does Screwtape mean by this?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
Mark 10:6–9

Ask God to help you understand and value God’s creation of the marriage relationship between one man and one woman in which the two become one flesh until death parts them.

2. Seek to honor God:

Honor God with the way in which you steward the gift of sex as it was created to be used, abstinence outside of marriage, monogamy in marriage.

Reflect upon the way in which you view sex. How has your view been influenced by God’s standards as found in Scripture as opposed to the world’s perspective on sex?

How has the idea of romantic love perhaps distorted your perspective on biblical love and unconditional commitment in both singleness and marriage?

In what ways are you promoting God’s perspective on sex in your current relationships, conversations, and recreational activity? If single, what has helped you in practicing faithful abstinence outside of marriage? If married, how have you practiced faithful monogamy in marriage?

Whether married or single, how are you honoring those of the other sex with your sexual attitudes, thoughts, and practices?



Letter 19

Theme: Love

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Twisted love

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Love

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Nothing matters at all except the tendency of a given state of mind, in given circumstances, to move a particular patient at a particular moment nearer to the Enemy or nearer to us.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Love is the fundamental difference between heaven and hell ¶2. What does the conflict over love show about God and Satan?
2. Screwtape also reveals the basic demonic strategy, making use of anything and everything so that we are drawn away from God ¶3. How do the devils twist love to their own purposes ¶2?
3. How have you experienced love as being both a means of drawing you to God and a means of being pulled away from God?
4. Screwtape cannot comprehend God’s “impossible love” for humans ¶1. Why do you think this is so?
5. Does Screwtape regard “being in love” as a desirable state for humans ¶3? Why or why not?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Ask God to help you deepen your understanding both in your heart and mind of God’s love for you, others, and this world.

2. Love the Lord your God:

Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. Reflect upon the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor (Matthew 22:36–40.) What about your thoughts, words, and deeds are demonstrating your love? How might you better love those in your family, neighborhood, or workplace?

Pray and ask for God who is Love (1 John 4:8) to empower you to love.



Letter 20

Theme: Sex, Love, and Marriage

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Twisted sexual desires
2. Terrestrial/infernal Venus

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Direct action

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“It is the business of these great masters to produce in every age a general misdirection of what might be called sexual ‘taste.’ This they do by working through the small circle of popular artists.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Temptations lose their power as God steps in ¶1. Why do you think God allows temptations at all?
2. How has the demonic strategy of twisting sexual desire varied through the ages ¶3?
3. In what ways might the devils be twisting sexual desire for our time?
4. Screwtape writes about the terrestrial and infernal Venus as temptations for men ¶4. What are these temptations like, and how are they useful to the devil?
5. Although Screwtape doesn’t mention them, how might a terrestrial and infernal Mars be tempting for woman?
6. Screwtape says that the most powerful weapon related to sexual temptation is to make humans believe that temptation will go away only if we yield to it ¶3. Do you agree or disagree?

7. Screwtape points out that the sexual morality of culture is influenced by artists and advertisers ¶3. Where do you see evidence of this today?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled.” Hebrews 13:4

Ask God to help you be pure in heart and not allow the world, the culture, and society to twist or distort God’s original design for sexuality.

2. Take captive any thoughts That are ungodly or a distortion of God’s love for other human beings:

Reflect upon the influencers who are bombarding your mind with sexual temptation. How might you avoid and or counter these harmful messages about sex and love? How can you honor members of the opposite sex and care for them in a sexualized world?

Whether you are married or single, seek ways to honor “the marriage bed” and live a pure life.



Letter 21

Theme: Pride and Peevishness

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Conquest

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Creation

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The sense of ownership in general is always to be encouraged. The humans are always putting up claims to ownership which sound equally funny in Heaven and in Hell and we must keep them doing so.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Screwtape encourages Wormwood to leverage his patient’s peevishness—that is, getting easily irritated by unimportant and insignificant things ¶1. What’s devilish about being irritated by interruptions and intrusions on “our” time ¶2?
2. How do you respond when events and people intrude on your own plans?
3. This letter lists things that humans are possessive of and believe they have ownership over such as “my time,” “my body,” and “my God.” What does Screwtape think of this? From a Christian perspective, what’s wrong with a personal sense of ownership?
4. How would your attitude toward life be different if you cultivated a sense of time and possessions that would be more pleasing to God than to the devils?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Psalm 24:1–2

Ask the Lord to help you surrender everything to Him. All that you own, have, and claim—your time, possessions, relationships, and even your very life. In doing so, you'll gain everything.

2. Surrender all that you have and all your time to Jesus:

Reflect upon your attitudes toward what you own, have, or claim. In what ways do things control you or impact your ability to love others?

In what ways do you respond to the intrusion of others upon “your” time and life?

Take some time to list those things that you may have not surrendered to Jesus Christ and allow Him to take control of those things for you.

For one week, keep track of how you spend every hour of every day. Is there any margin in your life to be available to attend the needs of others, spend quality and quantity time with your spouse, children, family members, and friends? Are you spending time alone with the Lord? After evaluating your use of time, make changes according to the Lord's priorities for your life.



Letter 22

Theme: Love

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Lure of the opposite sex
2. Noise

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Pleasure
2. Love
3. Music and silence

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Out at sea, out in His sea, there is pleasure, and more pleasure. He makes no secret of it; at His right hand are ‘pleasures for evermore.’” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. What doesn’t Screwtape like about the new love of Wormwood’s patient ¶2?
2. Why would Screwtape call God a hedonist (one who lives for pleasure) ¶3?
3. Screwtape clearly thinks that the holiness of the woman’s family has an infectious stink ¶4. How would you describe the woman’s family?
4. Why does Screwtape think the woman the patient is in love with would laugh at Screwtape ¶2?
5. While he is on a rant, Screwtape goes after both music and silence ¶5. How have music and silence been a means of pleasure and grace to you?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...a time to weep, and a time to laugh...a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.” Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, 7

2. Enjoy good music, laughter, and the joys of life with thanksgiving to God:

Reflect upon the kind of music you listen to. Is it uplifting, joy-giving, edifying, and honoring to God? Set aside some time to listen to some good music either by yourself or with a group of friends or family.

Reflect upon your relationships with members of the opposite sex. Are your relationships with them healthy, enjoyable, and pleasurable? Find ways to enjoy the gift of “maleness and femaleness” that God has given to us in this world which can be experienced among friends, family, and in singleness and marriage.



Letter 23

Theme: Jesus

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Historical Jesus
2. Christianity as a means of social justice

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Great moralists
2. Resurrection and Redemption

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The thing to do is to get a man at first to value social justice as a thing which the Enemy demands, and then work him on to the stage at which he values Christianity because it may produce social justice.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. The search for the historical Jesus that Screwtape refers to is an attempt to reinvent Jesus according to the intellectual fashion of each generation. What does Screwtape like about this ¶3?
2. What do you think is the current “fashionable” teaching about Jesus?
3. A second point of attack for corrupting the patient’s spiritual life is through politics. What does Screwtape think is a possible benefit of humans allowing “Christianity to flow over into their political life” ¶4? What does he say is a potential danger of mixing Christianity and politics?
4. Why would Screwtape be glad to have Christianity be viewed as a means for accomplishing a political agenda for the good of society ¶5?
5. How are the devils of our time active in a diabolical mixture of faith and politics?

6. The fact of the Resurrection and the doctrine of the Redemption were the heart of the early Christian message, according to Screwtape. What do you think is the heart of the currently popular Christian message?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“And he asked them, ‘Who do the crowds say that I am?’ And they answered, ‘John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.’ Then he said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’

Ask Jesus to help you know Him more deeply for who He really is, the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Savior and our Lord.

2. Set aside time to evaluate the influence of “religious scholars”:

What is their influence on your understanding of Jesus as opposed to what Jesus has to say about Himself? Reflect upon the amount of time you spend promoting political causes (even good ones) as opposed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

What people have influenced your understanding, knowledge, and view of Jesus?? Take some time to read the Gospels and see what Jesus said about Himself. Ask God to give you a true picture of who Jesus is so that you can think rightly and worship rightly.



Letter 24

Theme: Godly Influence

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Convention
2. Spiritual pride
3. Spiritual confusion
4. The inner ring

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Spiritual influence of others

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The idea of belonging to an inner ring, of being in a secret, is very sweet to him. Play on that nerve.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Evidently there is something about faith that is contagious; the patient’s girlfriend has “caught” it from her family and friends ¶1. How can Wormwood use this spiritual contagion principle to twist his patient’s faith ¶¶2–3?
2. What does Screwtape say is the “strongest and most beautiful of the vices ¶2?”
3. Essential elements of twisting the patient’s faith are pride and confusion. How can Wormwood use them ¶¶3–5?
4. How is it that peer pressure can be both a positive and a negative for spiritual growth ¶5?
5. How has the influence of others been a positive force in your spiritual development?
6. How might the influence of others be a negative force for your spiritual growth?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.” Proverbs 11:2

Ask God to develop the character trait of humility in your life and to conquer pride in your life.

2. Thank those who have been used by God to contribute toward your spiritual growth:

Make a list of the people God has used in your life who have encouraged you in your relationship with Jesus Christ and helped you grow in your faith. Then take a moment to thank God for each one.

Over the next week or so, write one letter daily to each of these people who are still living and thank them for the role they have had in pointing you to Jesus. Stamp and mail the letters.



Letter 25

Theme: Pleasure and the Same Old Thing

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Christianity and...
2. Novelty and Fashion

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Rhythm and platitudes

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“The horror of the Same Old Thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart—an endless source of heresies in religion, folly in counsel, infidelity in marriage, and inconstancy in friendship.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Screwtape does not like “mere” Christianity; he prefers to water down faith with fashionable issues and concerns ¶1. What sort of fashionable issues are presently being added to Christianity?
2. How do Novelty and Fashion, devilish smoke, and mirrors, affect us ¶¶2–5?
3. What impact do Novelty and Fashion have on where you live, the cars you buy, and the clothes you wear?
4. What does Screwtape mean by the “Same Old Thing” ¶1? How is this different from what Screwtape defines as “Rhythm” ¶2?
5. The greatest triumph of the “horror of the Same Old Thing” is in the realm of ideas. What’s wrong with asking if an idea is relevant rather than asking if it is prudent or true ¶6?

6. Now that you have read Screwtape’s strategy, what would you say to a person who dismissed Christianity as being “old fashioned”?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Philippians 4:8–9

Ask God to help you think about the above traits mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Philippians, so that you will live in such a way as to bring glory to God and not be deceived by the lure of the culture.

2. Reflect upon the difference between the question of relevance versus the question of truth:

In what ways do you see that the desire to be relevant is impacting the church today? Your own spiritual life? How does being fashionable or “cool” impact the way you live out your Christian faith?

Is it possible to pursue God’s truth and still be relevant? If so, how can you live that out in a God-honoring fashion?

Pray and ask God to show you ways the culture may be influencing you in negative ways. Ask God for the ability to ground your life on His truth and the fruit of the Spirit.



Letter 26

Theme: Unselfishness

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Twisting love
2. Twisting eros

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Charity or true love

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“When once a sort of official, legal, or nominal Unselfishness has been established as a rule—a rule for the keeping of which their emotional resources have died away and their spiritual resources have not yet grown—the most delightful results follow.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Screwtape wants Wormwood to sow seeds of confusion that will bear fruit, not immediately but in ten years’ time ¶1. What do you think about his statement that the word “Love” is ambiguous ¶1?
2. Why does Screwtape celebrate the devilish substitution of “Unselfishness” for “Charity” (love) ¶2?
3. How does mistaking sexual excitement for charity, and thinking that this excitement will last, affect us ¶3?
4. Describe how the devil’s twist of unselfishness can sour a relationship ¶4.
5. In what ways can you discern this devilish concept of unselfishness in your own thoughts and behavior?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3–4

Ask God to help you count others as more significant than yourself and to look to the interests of others so that you can live a life without selfishness.

2. Reflect upon how you might intentionally put others first and share the love of Jesus with them in an unselfish fashion:

Examine your heart and ask the Lord to show you ways that you are selfish and are not putting others before yourself. Then make a list of ways that you can begin looking out for the interests of others in your daily life. Begin with those closest to you, asking God for wisdom. As you act upon the ways God gives you to love and serve others, one hopes you'll begin to see your thoughts and attitudes become more naturally service oriented as you walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.



Letter 27

Theme: Prayer and Time

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. False spirituality
2. Historical point of view

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Prayer and distraction

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“But since your patient has contracted the terrible habit of obedience, he will probably continue such ‘crude’ prayers whatever you do. But you can worry him with the haunting suspicion that the practice is absurd and can have no objective result.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. What good advice for handling distractions in prayer can you apply from evaluating Screwtape’s statement to Wormwood regarding prayer ¶1?
2. What specific and practical ways to pray can we discern from evaluating Screwtape’s advice to Wormwood ¶2?
3. What confusion and doubts about prayer does Wormwood’s patient have that Wormwood will accentuate ¶¶3–4?
4. How do humans perceive Time and how does Screwtape tell us that God sees Time ¶4? How does this impact our prayers?
5. What is the “Historical Point of View,” and how does Screwtape say it influences human decision making ¶5?
6. What doubts and concerns may hinder your prayers?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always pray and not lose heart.” Luke 18:1

Ask God to help you be persistent and faithful in prayer no matter how you are feeling. In this way, you will be obeying Jesus’s command to always pray and putting yourself in a place to receive God’s grace.

2. Develop a habit of prayer:

And when distracted, bring the distraction to the Lord in prayer so that God can use it for His purposes and your benefit. Take some time to examine your prayer life. Do you view prayer as an obligation rather than an opportunity to commune with Jesus? Do you feel guilty when distracted during prayer or Bible reading? If so, are you able to take the distraction to Jesus?

Set aside some time this week to write out a prayer and see if by writing your prayers you are better able to commune with the Lord. Or try going on a prayer walk, praying as you walk around your neighborhood, hike a mountain trail, or walk through a park. Allow the Lord to speak to you in a variety of contexts, by intentionally asking Him to help you listen for His still, small voice in your office, neighborhood, church, and home.

Make prayer both a disciplined habit and a joyful opportunity in your daily life as you grow in your relationship with the Creator of the universe.



Letter 28

Theme: The Corruption of Aging

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Middle age
2. Attrition and attachment
3. Idealization of youth
4. “Experience is the mother of illusion”

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Detachment

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is ‘finding his place in it,’ while really it is finding its place in him.” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Screwtape prefer to see that Wormwood’s patient lives through the War to middle age and beyond ¶1?
2. In light of Screwtape’s advice to Wormwood, consider: how has aging affected your spiritual passion and development?
3. Why would devils want us to believe that this world can be turned into heaven ¶2?
4. What does Screwtape say makes up “real worldliness” ¶2?
5. From both the divine and diabolical perspectives, what is the value of a long life ¶3?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19–20

Ask God to show you (1) how you might lay up treasures in heaven and (2) ways to avoid laying up treasures on earth that might corrupt you and others.

2. Thank God daily for your life as you age yet set your mind on heavenly goals and value:

Set aside some time to reflect upon your attitudes and thoughts toward aging. Do you focus on the “glory days of youth,” regret the past, complain about the aches and pains of older age, or are you living fully in the present in the joy of the Lord, looking forward to your reward in heaven?

What might you change in the way you talk about your age or stage in life that would help others (listeners) rejoice in the day which the Lord has given to them?

What treasures on this earth are you allowing to weigh you down? How can you become more detached from the things of earth and be more focused on the upward call of Christ Jesus in your life?



Letter 29

Theme: Twisted Virtues

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Hatred
2. Cowardice

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Virtue and the value of morality

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“He sees as well as you do that courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the testing point of highest reality.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. How do you think that the devils twist virtue to their advantage ¶2?
2. Screwtape says that hatred is best combined with fear ¶4. How do the two work together? What does hatred have to do with shame?
3. What problems do the devils have in using cowardice to trip us up ¶¶4–5, 7?
4. As Screwtape is aware, God has chosen to create a world of dangers in which moral choices truly matter ¶6. Why would God do that?
5. What truly matters to devils about the human experience of sin ¶8?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Ask God to fill you with His love, power, and self-control, especially when you begin to become fearful. God’s perfect love casts out fear and enables us to live fully and courageously for the well-being of others and to serve God.

2. Replace your fears with the love and power of God in prayer and active faith:

Set aside some time to ask God to reveal to you your fears and hatreds. Write them down and then ask God to help you overcome your fears and hatreds through His loving power which casts out all fear.

You might want to share this with a trusted friend and have them pray with you, asking the Lord to help you in overcoming your fears and hatreds and empower you both for His service so that you can more effectively love God and your neighbors.



Letter 30

Theme: Confusing What Is False and Real

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. Fatigue and weakness

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Absolute Truth
2. Faith

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“But there is a sort of attack on the emotions which can still be tried. It turns on making him feel, when first he sees human remains plastered on a wall, that this is ‘what the world is really like’ and that all his religion has been a fantasy.”
– Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. The devils are interested in actions and results, not feelings
¶1. How might this insight affect the way you think about your own growth in virtue?
2. From a demonic perspective, what are the “benefits of fatigue”? How do demons twist it against us ¶¶2–3?
3. Wormwood learns about ways to use “reality” to raise doubts about his patient’s faith. In what two contrasting ways have the devils twisted our thoughts of reality to their advantage ¶4?
4. How does the devilish twisting of our understanding of reality hinder our growth in faith and the development of virtue?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.” Proverbs 29:11

Ask the Lord to help you not to let your feelings or emotions overtake your understanding of reality as God sees it so that your faith may remain strong even in the midst of adverse circumstances.

2. Ground yourself in truth:

Ground yourself through the habit of meditating on Scripture so you won’t be tossed back and forth by the circumstances of life. Begin the habit of biblical meditation so that the Word of God will be planted in your heart and mind. You can do this by simply choosing a verse or two of Scripture, writing the passage of Scripture down on sticky notes or index cards and putting them in places where you’ll be able to read them throughout the day. Repeat the verses in your head and chew on the words, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you through His inspired Word.

Chew on a passage for a week, a month, or however long you’d like. Then choose another passage of Scripture to meditate upon. As you develop this habit, these passages of Scripture will become more real to you as you face the challenges of life. They will be a source of reality and truth that can help sustain your soul.



Letter 31

Theme: Deliverance

DIABOLICAL STRATEGIES EXPOSED:

1. No diabolical strategy available in heaven

DIVINE STRATEGIES REVEALED:

1. Life beyond death

KEY QUOTES TO LOOK FOR:

“By Hell, it is misery enough to see them in their mortal days taking off dirtied and uncomfortable clothes and splashing in hot water and giving little grunts of pleasure—stretching their eased limbs. What, then, of this final stripping, this complete cleansing?” – Screwtape

QUESTIONS:

1. Wormwood’s patient completely escaped demonic harassment by dying. What is the first thing the patient sees on the other side of death ¶2?
2. How does evaluating what Screwtape says help us to grasp what death really means and why death is even beneficial ¶3?
3. According to Screwtape, what sort of insights do people have as they experience the process of dying ¶3?
4. What do you think Screwtape means when he laments that the patient will see “Them” and “Him” ¶¶4–5?
5. How does the sight of Christ on the other side of death affect Wormwood’s patient ¶5?

DIVINE STRATEGIES TO PRACTICE:

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12

Ask God to help you live fully in the present, yet long expectantly for heaven where we will see Jesus face to face.

2. Live fully in the present yet look forward expectantly to heaven by developing God’s perspective on your future:

In the world we are told that people can be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good. Yet in fact, that is false. As C.S. Lewis stated in his book *Mere Christianity*,

“If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next... Aim at heaven and you get earth ‘thrown in’; aim at earth and you get neither.”

Make it a habit daily to ask God to help you have the perspective of Paul who wrote,

“To live is Christ, to die is gain” Philippians 1:21

Knowing that people have the opportunity to make a choice for heaven or hell during their earthly life, ask the Lord to give you the chance to share the gospel with one nonbeliever this year so that they too can experience the joy of knowing that heaven awaits them. This is definitely a prayer that fits within God’s will as Jesus expressed in Matthew 28:18–20.



Appendix:
**Overview Chart of Themes,
Diabolical Strategies and Divine
Strategies Based on the Letters
within *The Screwtape Letters***

APPENDIX

CSLI STUDY GUIDE • *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

| THEME OF THE LETTER | DIABOLICAL STRATEGY | DIVINE STRATEGY |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Pre-conversion | 1. Jargon 2. Appetites | Science and reason |
| 2. Church | 1. Unconverted habits 2. The straw-man church 3. Straw-man Christians 4. Innate hypocrisy | Disappointment |
| 3. Family | 1. Introspection 2. Vacuous prayers 3. Irritating habits 4. Annoying communication 5. Religious irritation | Process and stages |
| 4. Prayer | 1. Devotional mood 2. Spiritual feelings 3. Childish images | Intentional discipline of prayer |
| 5. War | Long-term medical care | Responding to desperation |
| 6. War continued | 1. Worry for the future 2. Self-conscious/unself-conscious 3. Imaginary virtues | 1. The Present 2. Active virtues |
| 7. Devils, patriots, and pacifists | 1. Spiritual ignorance 2. Christianity as means for a cause | Intervention |
| 8. Dry and desert experiences | Opposing God's intentions | The law of undulation |
| 9. Life phases | 1. Troughs and down times 2. Twisted pleasure 3. Phases | Pleasure |
| 10. Cliques | 1. Snobbery 2. Peer pressure | 1. Inclusion 2. Integrity |

APPENDIX

CSLI STUDY GUIDE • *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

| THEME OF THE LETTER | DIABOLICAL STRATEGY | DIVINE STRATEGY |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 11. Humor | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humor as consolation and excuse 2. Humor as flippancy | Joy and fun |
| 12. Sloth | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small sins 2. Spiritual drift | Intruding on our spiritual slumber |
| 13. Pain and pleasure | Eradication of strong personal taste. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good books, country roads, real pain and pleasure 2. Godly detachment |
| 14. Humility | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-consciousness 2. Distortion about the true nature of humility | Humility Self-forgetfulness |
| 15. Time and eternity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suppressing both eternal and the present 2. Worry about the future | Present and eternity. |
| 16. Church hopping | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diluted Christianity 2. Opinionated pastors 3. Party and cliques | Diversity and discernment |
| 17. Gluttony | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delicacy 2. Male and female gluttony | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fasting 2. Proper enjoyment of food |
| 18. Sex | Romantic love | Abstinence or monogamy |
| 19. Love | Twisted love | Love |
| 20. Sex, love, and marriage | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Twisted sexual desires 2. Terrestrial/infernal Venus | Direct action |
| 21. Pride and peevishness | Conquest | Creation |

APPENDIX

CSLI STUDY GUIDE • *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis

| THEME OF THE LETTER | DIABOLICAL STRATEGY | DIVINE STRATEGY |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 22. Love | 1. Lure of the opposite sex 2. Noise | 1. Pleasure 2. Love 3. Music and silence |
| 23. Jesus | 1. Historical Jesus 2. Christianity as a means of social justice. | 1. Great moralists 2. Resurrection and Redemption |
| 24. Godly influence | 1. Convention 2. Spiritual pride 3. Spiritual confusion 4. The inner ring | Spiritual influence of others |
| 25. Pleasure and the same old thing | 1. Christianity and ... 2. Novelty and Fashion | Rhythm and “platitudes” |
| 26. Unselfishness | 1. Twisting love 2. Twisting eros | Charity and true love |
| 27. Prayer and time | 1. False spirituality 2. Historical point of view | Prayer and distraction |
| 28. The corruption of aging | 1. Middle age 2. Attrition and attachment 3. Idealization of youth 4. “Experience is the mother of illusion” | Detachment |
| 29. Twisted virtues | 1. Hatred 2. Cowardice | Virtue and the value of morality |
| 30. Confusing what is false and real | Fatigue and weakness | Truth and faith |
| 31. Deliverance | None available to devil in heaven | Life beyond death |

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



The C.S. Lewis Institute was founded in 1976 and endeavors, in the legacy of C.S. Lewis, to develop disciples who will articulate, defend, share, and live their faith in Christ in personal and public life. From its inception, the Institute has been inter-denominational, has worked closely with a variety of churches and sees itself as a servant ministry, assisting churches and pastors in making disciples of Jesus Christ. This takes the form of discipleship programs, area-wide conferences/seminars, pastor fellowships and resources in print and on the web.

For more information on the C.S. Lewis Institute please go to www.cslewisinstitute.org.

8001 Braddock Road, Suite 301
Springfield, VA 22151-2110
Phone: 703.914.5602
Fax 703.894.1072



“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”

—C.S. Lewis

From Preface to *The Screwtape Letters*

