

## **Letter 3: Relationships**

In this third letter, Screwtape suggests that Wormwood focus on the patient's relationship with his mother. By cooperating with Glucose, the demon who is working on the mother, Screwtape imparts secrets on how to slowly deteriorate the relationship.

***Read Romans 12:2 and 1 Timothy 4:16.***

- How is God working “from the center outward” to transform our conduct to His standard?
- What is the first method of temptation that Screwtape suggests using on the patient? (paragraph 2)

***Read John 14:15, 1 John 5:3, and Ephesians 6:6.***

- Screwtape says the patient thinks “his conversion is something inside him.” What is conversion if it's more than just a commitment to a heart change? (paragraph 2)
- Although seemingly counter-intuitive, why would Screwtape want Wormwood to have the “patient” practice an hour of self-examination “without discovering any of those facts about himself which are perfectly clear to anyone who has ever lived in the same house with him or worked in the same office”? (paragraph 2)
- What methods does Screwtape suggest Wormwood employ to render the patient's prayers for his mother innocuous?
- What are the two advantages that Screwtape says will occur by employing this method?
- What is the “double standard” Screwtape encourages between the patient and his mother? (paragraph 5)

## **Letter 4: Sincere Prayer**

Screwtape is insulted by Wormwood's last letter to him on the topic of prayer in which Wormwood attempts to assign blame for his mistakes on Screwtape. As a result, Screwtape provides a more in-depth discussion on the subject of prayer telling Wormwood that he should keep his patient from seriously intending to pray at all. If that fails, Wormwood should misdirect the focus of the patient's prayers so they are only about himself or an object rather than another person.

- What is Lewis referring to in the comment about the “parrot-like nature” of prayers? (paragraph 2)

***Read Matthew 6: 5-9.***

- How does Jesus respond to this same question?

***Read John 4:24.***

- What sort of balance must take place between our emotions (or spontaneous prayer) and more formal prayers like what we find in the Disciple's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-15?
- How does 1 John 1:9 relate to praying for forgiveness and our desire to feel forgiven?
- What does Screwtape mean when he writes that humans don't "start from a direct perception of Him"? (paragraph 4)
- Screwtape likes imaginary pictures of God as a focus for prayer. What mental images of God do we create in our mind?
- Why does Screwtape say that we do not desire the "real nakedness of the soul" as much as we suppose? (paragraph 4)
- What does God say in Ecclesiastes 5:4 about making bold claims in our prayer life?

**Letter 5: War**

Screwtape begins this letter by once again reprimanding Wormwood for his naivety and his excitement about a "new war" in Europe. Screwtape explains that war can be very entertaining in so much as it brings about hatred and violence, but it can also drive masses of people to God. Screwtape warns his nephew not to get caught up in the enjoyment only to lose his patient to God.

Screwtape warns Wormwood not to be overly confident in "terro-pictures of the future" and "self pitying glances" of the past that Wormwood has used to scare the "patient."

***Read Luke 9:61-62.***

- How does Jesus use the plow to illustrate our attention to our past and future? (paragraph 1)
- What is Screwtape's attitude toward war? Does it surprise you? (paragraph 1)
- What is the "real business" that Wormwood is to be about? Provide examples of how our faith is diabolically assaulted and the development of virtues are hindered? (paragraph 1)
- What is the "blockade" that God is imposing on Screwtape and other demons? (paragraph 2)

***Read Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 5:10; and James 1:2-4.***

- How does God use suffering in the life of a Christian?
- From Screwtape's perspective, why is it better if humans died in nursing home rather than a war? (paragraph 2)
- What does Screwtape mean by "a faith which is destroyed by a war or pestilence cannot really have been worth the trouble of destroying"? (paragraph 3)

## Letter 6: Focus

Military service seems inevitable for Wormwood's patient, and Screwtape affirms the decision to cultivate anxiety and fear about the future. Wormwood's first goal for the patient is to divert his attention away from God and the good he should be doing. Secondly, Wormwood should seek to transfer the patient's hatred for the war on to his everyday neighbors.

### *Read Mark 4:18-19.*

- How can suspense and anxiety “barricade” a person's mind against God?
- How does Satan benefit by keeping us anxious about things that may never happen?
- According to Philippians 4:6, what should be our approach to anxiety?
- What does Screwtape mean when he writes, “it is your business to see that the patient never thinks of the present for as his appointed cross, but only of the things he is afraid of?”

### *Read Luke 9:23.*

- What does it mean to pick up your cross daily and follow Christ? What insight can we gain from this about the nature of anxiety and the way it misleads us? (paragraph 2)
- “We have nothing to fear, but fear itself.” This famous line used in the first inaugural address of Franklin D. Roosevelt was given during the depths of the depression in 1933. Why does Screwtape encourage Wormwood to divert the patient's mind “from the thing feared to fear itself?” (paragraph 3)
- What is this “general rule” Screwtape is referring to? How can Satan use this strategy in our prayer life? (paragraph 3)
- Why does Screwtape write that getting people to hate distant enemies is disappointing? Why is it easier to hate those who are close and to be charitable toward those who are far away? (paragraph 4)
- How does Screwtape suggest getting the patient to the point where his malice is real and his benevolence is imaginary? (paragraph 5)
- Draw and then explain the concentric circles that Screwtape says are the three levels to a human being. At what point in the circle does Lewis say that a person is authentically living the Christian life? (paragraph 5)
- What does Screwtape mean when he insists that Wormwood “must keep on showing all the virtues outward till they are finally located in the circle of fantasy, and all desirable qualities inward toward the will? (paragraph 5)