



A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

A Concise Biblical Discussion Guide for
The Screwtape Letters (written by C.S. Lewis)

Scripture References taken from NASB 1995

Designed for College & Adult Bible Study Groups

by

DANIEL T. FAUCETT

About:

This study guide contains hundreds of discussion questions and a plethora of scripture references. Each letter guide contains specific questions and scriptures to supplement the reading of the Christian literary classic *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. This work is perfect for one-hour study sessions that take place in small group Bible studies or Sunday school classes. It is appropriate for all ages but works best with college and adult groups, since the language used in the book is advanced and can be difficult to understand.

Letter 1 Discussion Questions

Quote: “Do remember you are there to fuddle him. From the way some of you young fiends talk, anyone would suppose it was our job to *teach!*”

Chapter Introduction: The senior demon, Screwtape, is writing a letter to his nephew and demon underling, Wormwood, about how to sufficiently “fuddle” his patient.

1. Why do the demons use the word “patient”? What does this mean?
2. What does the demon mean when he says that people used to know when something was “proved” and when something wasn’t, and that these beliefs would alter their way of life? (He says, “but what with the weekly press and other such weapons we have largely altered that”.)
3. What is beneficial to the Devil to convince people that doctrines or neither true or false, but rather academic, practical, outworn, or contemporary?
4. Why would it be foolish (from the Devil’s perspective) to convince someone that materialism is true rather than convince them that it is a strong/courageous/futuristic philosophy?
5. Why does Screwtape tell Wormwood to be careful with pushing his patient towards argument. Why would this push his patient into the “Enemy’s own ground”?
 - a. What is the logical conclusion of our honest and true reasoning pertaining to deep spiritual and philosophical questions?
6. Screwtape shows jealousy that the Enemy was once a human being. Why is this an advantage for Jesus in spiritual warfare?
7. Screwtape goes on a long talk about the man at the British Museum. God is influencing the man with reason, what does Screwtape make the man think about instead of arguing with God on a fair playing field?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. What does Screwtape mean when he says, "they find it all but impossible to believe in the unfamiliar while the familiar is before their eyes"?

9. Screwtape says that the real sciences can lead people to think about supernatural realities (that they can't touch or see), and that there have been "sad cases among modern physicists". What is he talking about here?

10. Screwtape finishes his discussion by highlighting the role of making a person think they already understand everything there is to know about science already, to prevent them from honest investigation. Why would this be beneficial to their plans?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin."

Ephesians 6:12

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*."

Conclusion Questions:

11. Where in your life do you try to solve things practically, when you should be thinking about the spiritual battle taking place around you?

12. What can you do to handle spiritual warfare more readily?

13. What gives us hope in the battle?

14. What is something in your life that God could be using to sanctify you spiritually, that you have seen as simply a practical matter?

Letter 2 Discussion Questions

Quote: “Keep everything hazy in his mind now, and you will have all eternity wherein to amuse yourself by producing in him the peculiar kind of clarity which Hell affords.”

Chapter Introduction: In this chapter, the “grave displeasure” of conversion has occurred in Wormwood’s patient.

1. Do the spiritual forces of darkness give up when you become a Christian?
2. In your own life, if you are a Christian, how has spiritual warfare changed since you became a Christian? Is it hard or easier now?
3. Screwtape emphasizes that all the “habits” of his patient are still in their favor. What does Mean? Do you see your habits working against you in spiritual warfare? Contemplate habits you have that are hurting your walk with Christ and your effectiveness for the Kingdom.
4. What difference is described between the real Church and the perception that people have of Church, and how can this be something the Devil can use to harm our faith?
5. Screwtape puts a lot of emphasis on making Wormwood’s patient focus on the neighbors he’s ignored in his daily life, as well as drawing a false connection between squeaky shoes, double chins, and singing out of tune with the value of Christianity. Why is this effective?
6. What are some things we focus on in Church that can be a distraction to worship?
7. Why does Screwtape say that people wearing normal contemporary clothing in Church could be an unconscious barrier for a Christian?
8. Screwtape says to talk full advantage of the inevitable disappoint one feels when they first attend church. What disappoints do people, especially new Christians, often face when they become regular church attendees?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

9. What expectations might not be met by someone who comes to church? What lie are we taking part in when we have unrealistic expectations for Christians and the operations of the church?
10. Why does God permit us to have unrealistic expectations and disappointments?
11. "If once they get through this initial dryness [disappointment/unrealistic expectations] successfully, they become much less dependent on emotion and therefore much harder to tempt." – Screwtape
 - a. Thoughts?
12. Screwtape wants to make sure that the patient doesn't realize that everyone has different struggles and vices. Why?
13. Screwtape is thankful that the patient hasn't spent enough time with the "Enemy" to learn true humility. What is the great benefit to humility in the Christian walk?
14. How does humility change the way we understand, apply, and share the Gospel?
15. Do you feel right with God because you have run up a "favorable credit-balance" in God's favor?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

2nd Corinthians 11:3

"But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of *devotion* to Christ."

1st Corinthians 7:5

"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

1st Thessalonians 3:5

"For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain."

Conclusion Questions:

16. What is the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ? In lieu of these verses, is it far-fetched to have a spiritual view of temptation?
17. As a new Christian convert, what were some of your biggest hurdles in dealing with other Christians? What about mutual expectations, rules, etc.?

Letter 3 Discussion Questions

Quote: “When two humans have lived together for many years it usually happens that each has tones of voice and expressions of face which are almost unendurably irritating to the other.”

Chapter Introduction: In this chapter, Screwtape brings Wormwood's focus on turning the man against his mother.

1. How does God work from the center outwards in us?
2. What evidence in our lives shows us that God is working in us?
3. Why is mutual annoyance such a powerful tool the devil can use against us in our relationships?
4. What sort of silly things do you make a big deal out of that really don't matter at all in the grand scheme of things in your relationship with other people?
5. Screwtape says to keep his mind off the basic duties of life by distracting him with the most advanced and spiritual duties. How can this be effective in hindering a Christian's character?
6. Screwtape wants to make the patient unaware of his own shortcomings... why?
7. When they realize that they can't keep him from praying for his mother, what do they do instead?
8. Screwtape desires to make the patient equate his mother's undesirable behaviors with her sins. What effect will this have on the patient's prayer time?
9. Screwtape tries to make as wide a gap as possible between the imaginary person that you pray for and the real one. Why does he do this?

10. Screwtape wants Wormwood to emphasize the annoying habits of his mother, even to the point that he assumes his mother is doing these things just to get under his skin. Do you ever find yourself thinking that someone else is purposefully annoying you, or trying to get under your skin, even though they probably aren't? What does this do to a relationship?

11. How often do you self-reflect and think about the things you do and how they might annoy other people?

12. Screwtape wants the patient to believe that his own words should only be received as they would be written on paper, as though the tone of voice is unimportant, but also to convince that the way his mother says something (her tone of voice and expression), is ultimately the most important thing. Therefore, he always is operating with a double standard that drive a wedge between himself and his mother. Do you ever find yourself doing this?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Ephesians 4:32

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Colossians 4:6

"Let your speech always be with grace, *as though* seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

Romans 14:19-21

¹⁹So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. ²⁰Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. ²¹It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles."

Conclusion Questions:

1. Is the only thing that matters what we do and what we say? Or does how, when, where, and why we do what we do matter also?

2. **Interesting Fact:** 93% of all communication is non-verbal, meaning the vast majority of communication is tone of voice and body language. This has become known as the 7% Rule. Thoughts?

Letter 4 Discussion Questions

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

Chapter Introduction: the central focus of this chapter is prayer.

1. What is prayer? Why is it important?
2. Why does Screwtape want the patient to focus on his “mood” while praying, rather than utilize his “intelligence” and “will”?
3. Screwtape says that these emotion-centered prayers of new Christians can be used to resemble the silent prayers of those mature in the faith. What does he mean by silent prayers, do you ever pray silently?
4. The demons want to make humans think that their bodily position during prayer is irrelevant (that it doesn't matter if they get on their knees to pray), he says that we forget that we are animals and that what we do with our bodies influences our souls. What have you noticed about how your prayer life is different depending on where and how you pray?
5. The demons admit they are powerless against us when we are focused on Christ, so they try to make us focus on ourselves. What are some areas in your life that you need to turn your focus to Christ instead of yourself?
6. Screwtape says that it is effective if people place value on their prayer based on whether it produced the desired feelings they were seeking. Do you ever catch yourself doing this?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Screwtape wants to ensure that people pray towards objects of prayer, and not to the one who made them. Do you find yourself praying to an image rather than a Person?
8. When you don't feel like praying, should you pray anyway?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always; ¹⁷ pray without ceasing; ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ "Pray, then, in this way:

'Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ 'Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.']"

James 5:16

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective [\[a\]](#)prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Conclusion Questions:

1. Christ gave us a model for prayer. What is this model ,and why do you think He did this?
2. Why do you think God wants us to pray?
3. What happens when you pray?
4. What are some ways for you to revolutionize your prayer life?

Letter 5 & 6 Discussion Questions

Quote: “For the first time in your career you have tasted that wine which is the reward of all our labours—the anguish and bewilderment of a human soul—and it has gone to your head.”

Letter 5 Chapter Introduction: the central focus of this chapter is war and its relation to humans. The time period that Lewis is writing about is the onset of World War II.

1. The demons speak of a lost soul dying as being “yours forever—a brim-full living chalice of despair and horror and astonishment which you can raise to your lips as often as you please.” Thoughts?
2. The demons are torn about the spiritual utility of war. In some respects, it can be good for dragging lost souls to Hell, but in some ways war can draw our attention to things that the devil doesn't want us to think about. Screwtape says that in war people will turn their gaze from themselves to values and causes that are higher than the self. Is this true? And what are ways that God works during times of war?
3. Why doesn't Screwtape like the idea that men will be killed in places where they know they are going to be killed?
4. Screwtape prefers that people die in nursing homes, where they are “amid doctors who lie, nurses who lie, friends who lie, as we have trained them, promising life to the dying, encouraging the belief that sickness excuses every indulgence, and even, if our workers know their job, withholding all suggestion of a priest lest it should betray to the sick man his true condition!”
5. Screwtape says, “How disastrous for us is the continual remembrance of death which war enforces.” Thoughts?

Quote: “There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human's mind against the Enemy.”

Letter 6 Chapter Introduction: the central focus of this chapter is the patient and his interactions with the war and potentially his service in the war.

1. Screwtape says, “He [God] wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what *will* happen to them.” Why do demons want to keep people focused on the future?
2. Do you find yourself anxiously stuck in the future, rather than seeking God in the present?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

3. The demons don't want the patient to realize that in our present suffering, anxiety, and tribulation, that we are to say, "Thy will be done", and we are to ask for God's provision of "daily bread".
4. Screwtape suggests that Wormwood ensure that anytime the patient is falling into sin, cause him to focus outwardly on objects of sin, and when the patient is seeking Christ, cause the patient to focus inwardly on his state of mind. He says, "Let an insult or a woman's body so fix his attention outward that he does not reflect, 'I am now entering into the state called Anger—or the state called Lust.'" Why would this be effective for the demons?
5. Screwtape says that the best move is to use the war to create malice in the patient, and to get the patient to direct that malice towards his neighbors on a day-to-day basis, and to summon benevolence to people he doesn't know; thus, in reality, the patient becomes malicious, and the benevolence becomes mostly imaginary. Do you find yourself treating people you don't know better than the ones you do?
6. Screwtape talks about the innermost man being his will, then his intellect, then his fantasies. Screwtape says, "It is only in so far as they [the desirable qualities of God] reach the Will and are there embodied in habits that the virtues are really fatal to us." What does he mean by this?
7. Screwtape says, "All sorts of virtues painted in the fantasy or approved by the intellect or even, in some measure, loved and admired, will not keep a man from Our Father's house: indeed they may make him more amusing when he gets there". What does he mean by this?



Verses to Read & Discuss:

Joshua 24:15

¹⁵If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Daniel 1:8

⁸But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank."

Conclusion Questions:

1. What is the difference between will and intellect, and why is our will so integral to who we are as spiritual beings?
2. Do you find yourself ever being comfortable with your dreams of your spiritual life, rather than actually pursuing spiritual fruit?

Letter 7 Discussion Questions

Quote: “We are really faced with a cruel dilemma. When the humans disbelieve in our existence we lose all the pleasing results of direct terrorism and we make no magicians. On the other hand, when they believe in us, we cannot make them materialists and sceptics.”

Letter 7 Chapter Introduction: the focus of this chapter is on the benefits of keeping the patient in the dark about the existence of demons.

1. Why does Screwtape say it is beneficial to keep the patient from believing in demons?
2. What is the problem that occurs for Screwtape when someone believes in demons?
3. Screwtape says, “The fact that ‘devils’ are predominantly *comic* figures in the modern imagination will help you.” He goes on to say that a great way to create doubt in the patient’s mind is to make him imagine a devil in red tights. How does this lead to doubt about God?
4. Screwtape says that generations of man that are lukewarm need to be pushed more greatly into complacency; while other generations are unbalanced and need to be pushed into greater extremes. Why are these effect tactics? Which generations do we live in today, and which direction do you think we are moving?
5. “All extremes, except extreme devotion to the Enemy, are to be encouraged.” – Screwtape
6. Screwtape talks a great deal about the benefits of pushing people into divisive factions. He says they have never had success at fully making the Church a faction, but that they have done well with what they have had to work with and have used Paul and Apollos at Corinth and the various parties within the Church of England. How do Christians faction themselves, and how do you think God wants us to handle disagreements?
7. Why does Screwtape say he wants the Church to be small?
8. Why is it beneficial to demons to make humans think that patriotism and pacifism should be a part of our religion?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

9. "Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing." – Screwtape
10. C.S. Lewis ends this chapter with a point about shifting religious focus from prayers, sacraments, and charity, to meetings, pamphlets, policies, etc. What is the point he is making here about Christians?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Joshua 5:13-15

¹³ Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" ¹⁴ He said, "No; rather I indeed come now *as* captain of the host of the Lord." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" ¹⁵ The captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so."

1st Corinthians 1:10-17

¹⁰ Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. ¹² Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one would say you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other. ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void."

Conclusion Questions:

1. What conclusions can we draw from Joshua 5?
2. What conclusions can we draw from 1st Corinthians 1:14-15 especially?
3. Why do you think Christians in particular fall prey more than worldly people to divisiveness? Do you think it has something to do with our presuppositional beliefs about truth?
4. What are some areas where we need to stand firmer on, and what are some areas where we need to be more merciful towards other believers?

Letter 8 Discussion Questions

Quote: “This means that while their spirit can be directed to an eternal object, their bodies, passions, and imaginations are in continual change, for to be in time means to change.”

Letter 8 Chapter Introduction: the focus of this chapter is on the animal-spirit duality of mankind, and how to trip them up using this truth.

1. What does it mean for mankind to be made half animal and half spirit?
2. Screwtape speaks of the Law of Undulation, how humans go up and down in their affection for their friends, their physical appetites, and everything in their life. The constant thing about humans is that they are always changing and their emotions are always changing. How can the highs and lows affect us spiritually in positive and negative ways?
3. Screwtape suggests that God relies more on humans' low points (troughs), then He does on their high points in their life, to steer them in His direction. Do you think this is the case in your life?
4. Screwtape sneers at the idea that God would want to fill the Universe with small representations of Himself. Why would God make us in His image, love us unconditionally, and spend so much effort to grow us more into the image of His Son?
5. Screwtape compares the demons desire for mankind with God's: the demons want mankind to function like cattle that can be fattened and consumed, while God wants mankind to function like servants who ultimately become sons. Do you find this to be an accurate comparison?
6. “We are empty and would be filled; He is full and flows over.” – thoughts?
7. Screwtape says that for God to act irresistibly and indisputably would override human free will and would thus be useless, because He wants those who actually depend on Him and want Him, not those who are forced to obey. What does this tell you about C.S. Lewis' view of sanctification and perhaps grace?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. Screwtape says that for a soul to feel God's presence in a faint and unmitigated way would be an irresistible force that mankind could not refuse. Thoughts?

9. Screwtape says that God will let His presence be felt at the onset of a believer's faith, but that He purposely wanes His presence at times in a believer's life. Why does God do this?

10. How does praying in the troughs of our life please God?

11. The most dangerous thing to the efforts of all demons, according to Screwtape, is a believer who feels abandoned by God, and yet still obeys God. Why is this so?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Romans 5:1-5

¹Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Job 30:20-23

²⁰I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. "You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me. ²²"You lift me up to the wind *and* cause me to ride; And You dissolve me in a storm. ²³"For I know that You will bring me to death And to the house of meeting for all living."

Conclusion Questions:

1. What does Romans 5 tell us about tribulation?

2. What does Job 30 (where Job is laying out his lamentations before the Lord) tell us about prayer?

Letter 9 Discussion Questions

Quote: “The attack has a much better chance of success when the man’s whole inner world is drab and cold and empty.”

Letter 9 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on how to exploit a human when they are at a low point in their life.

1. Screwtape pays a great deal of attention to using the low points in someone’s life as opposed to using their high points. Why is it easier to be tempted when you are at a low point?
2. Screwtape says that it is easier to make someone an alcoholic by giving him a drink when he is weary and sad rather than when he is happy or celebrating. Why is this the case?
3. Screwtape believes that when a pleasure is felt in a healthy, normal, and satisfying way, that this is in the “Enemy’s” ground. He says that God invented pleasure, not the Devil. Why is this important to keep in mind?
4. Screwtape says that the aim of the demons is to work from God’s boundaries for pleasures to a place that He has forbidden, this makes them unnatural, less reflective of their Creator, and unpleasurable. Do we see this trend for those who pursue pleasure outside of God’s boundaries?
5. Does it appear that those who pursue pleasure outside of God’s boundaries ever find satisfaction? Or do they have an increasing craving for a particular pleasure coupled with a diminishing experience of satisfaction?
6. “A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all — and more amusing.” – Screwtape

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Screwtape speaks of tricking someone into losing their faith by using jargon (not reason) to get them to equate losing interest in their faith with their faith being false. Why is it unreasonable to equate interest in something with the truth of something?
8. Screwtape doesn't want people to focus on what is true or what is false, but rather, that we all outgrow phases in our adolescence. What does he mean by this?
9. There are many testimonials of people converting from Christianity to other religions, to atheism, to Catholicism, or to agnosticism. What are some of the unreasonable excuses people make for leaving the faith?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st John 2:19

"¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, so that it would be evident that they all are not of us."

James 1:12-17

"¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."

1st Corinthians 10:13

"¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

Conclusion Questions:

1. How does James 1:12-17 fit into a theology of the preservation of the saints? Do genuinely saved Christians ever ultimately leave the faith?
2. How does James 1 influence our view of temptation?
3. What does 1st Corinthians 10 tell us about all the temptations we will ever face as believers?

Letter 10 Discussion Questions

Quote: “No doubt he must very soon realise that his own faith is in direct opposition to the assumptions on which all the conversation of his new friends is based.”

Letter 10 Chapter Introduction: this chapter is about how to make use of the patient's new friends.

1. Screwtape talks about using the patient's friends as a way to get him to mimic their behaviors and attitudes and skepticisms. Do you think some of your friends rub off on you in a bad way? Do you ever find yourself saying things that you know you don't believe because of their influence?
2. Screwtape says that humans tend to become whatever they pretend to be. What does he mean by this?
3. The demon talks about how Christian writings don't discuss the dangers of worldliness, one's choice of friends, or how we spend our time anymore — these were the focus points of the Puritans. Screwtape says that they have done a good job of making the word Puritan unpalatable. Why do Christians seem to frown on discussions of these things and especially the pursuit of purity?
4. Screwtape talks about being able to get a human to live two different parallel lives: in one, he behaves a certain way with his friends, in another, he behaves altogether differently. Do you find yourself falling prey to this behavior?
5. What are some ways you can help bring Christ to the forefront of your friend group?
6. What are some ways you can spiritually invest in your unbelieving friends?
7. Screwtape goes into great details to describe how one can live this double life. On one hand, we find satisfaction around church folk because we know what it's like to be a part of the worldly crowd; on the other hand, we find satisfaction around worldly people because we know deeper spiritual truths. Thus, we are always better than everyone we are around, and we are never truly ourselves psychologically. Have you ever felt this play out in your own life?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. Screwtape says that it's helpful to convince the patient that he is helping the worldly people he is hanging out with by laughing at their jokes and partying with them, and that if he were to stop being a part of these things, he would be "intolerant" and "Puritanical". Do you find yourself waging war with who God wants you to be and who some of your friends want you to be?

9. Do you find yourself going along with worldly movements, fads, movies, TV shows, jokes, and trends, because you don't want to be seen as someone who is "holier-than-thou"?

10. How can we separate ourselves from worldliness, while also being gracious towards unbelievers and maintaining our witness?

11. Is the faithful life of a regenerated believer more about what we run *from* or what we run *to*?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Corinthians 15:33

"Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Proverbs 12:26

"The righteous is a guide to his neighbor,
But the way of the wicked leads them astray."

Proverbs 13:20

"He who walks with wise men will be wise,
But the companion of fools will suffer harm."

Proverbs 27:17

"Iron sharpens iron,
So one man sharpens another."

Conclusion Questions:

1. Are you a guide or one being led astray?

2. Do you think your friends give you wise and biblical advice?

Letter 11 Discussion Questions

Quote: "All these, as I find from the record office, are thoroughly reliable people; steady, consistent scoffers and worldlings who without any spectacular crimes are progressing quietly and comfortably towards our Father's House."

Letter 11 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on the causes of laughter.

1. Screwtape says that joy as a phenomenon is disgusting. Why would joy be disgusting to demons?

A table of Screwtape's Philosophy of the causes of human laughter is provided below:

Primary Causes of Human Laughter		Secondary Causes	The Demonic Philosophical View
Joy		Fellowship of friends/couples. Music. Heaven.	-An insult to the realism, dignity, and austerity of Hell.
Fun		Arises from the play instinct. It promotes charity, courage, contentment, etc.	-Can be used to divert humans from something else.
Joke Proper		Funny stories.	-Deficiencies in this area can be used to shame people. -The all-consoling, and all-excusing, grace of life.
Indecent Humor	Decent Humor		
Flippancy		Talking as if virtue was funny. Everything is seen as ridiculous.	-Economical. -Builds up an armor against God's influence. -Deadens the intellect. Hinders affection with others.

2. Fun rests on our instinctiveness to play. How could fun be used as a good thing, and how could it be used in a bad way?
3. Screwtape says that cruelty is shameful, unless it is used in a joke form, then it is excused. Do you find this to be true, and have you ever found yourself passing off cruel remarks as a joke?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

4. Screwtape says that it is very important to make sure that the person saying a cruel joke never realizes that their joke is cruel. He wants to ensure that the person saying the joke feels that to resist the joke would be to have a lack of humor. Do you think that people who say cruel jokes realize they are being cruel, or do you think that they believe they are only teasing someone?
5. Flippancy is defined as a lack of respect or seriousness. How can those who practice flippancy drive a wedge between themselves and those closest to them? What happens when you never take someone seriously?
6. The Word says that we are made in God's image. What aspects of human behavior and ability are reflective of this "image"?
7. Do you think some aspects of human nature are broken and some parts are whole; or, is our entire existence broken in sin, and it is all aspects of human nature that need regeneration?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Proverbs 18:21

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit."

Ephesians 5:3-4

³ But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; ⁴ and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

Conclusion Questions:

1. Why are words so powerful? Why does God care so much how we speak?
2. Do you think all words have underlying truth claims?
3. Why is it significant that God created the Universe with words?

Letter 12 Discussion Questions

Quote: “He must not be allowed to suspect that he is now, however slowly, heading right away from the sun on a line which will carry him into the cold and dark of utmost space.”

Letter 12 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on the progress of the patient.

1. Screwtape says that he is glad that the patient still goes to church. How can going to church be used by the Devil?
2. Screwtape says, if possible, it is better to make the patient focus on repenting of a vague feeling rather than a fully recognized, definite sin. Why would this be beneficial to them?
3. Screwtape says that all humans have a temptation to be reluctant to think about God. He says its similar to how someone with financial troubles might not want to see a passbook (a bank's record of deposits and withdrawals). What is he getting at here?
4. People can get to the point where they don't want their prayers to be real, because if they are, that means they are having effective contact with God. Why might people be reluctant to have real contact with God?
5. Screwtape says that a poor soul who ended up in Hell said upon his arrival, “I now see that I spent most of my life in doing neither what I ought nor what I liked.” – Do you think many people will have this feeling when they end up in Hell?
6. Screwtape says that one can lull someone into wasting their life pursuing simple gratifications and curiosities that are unimpactful and boring. He essentially wants to bore people into Hell. Thoughts?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Screwtape says that “the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.” Thoughts?
8. Screwtape says that it doesn't matter what sin someone falls into, whether big or small, so long as it works to separate someone from the Light. Thoughts?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Revelation 21:8

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’”.

Matthew 25:46

“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Luke 16:19-31

¹⁹ “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. ²⁰ And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹ and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. ²² Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ ²⁵ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.’ ²⁷ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹ But Abraham *said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ ³¹ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Conclusion Questions:

1. What conclusions can we draw about Hell from these passages? How can we apply these verses to our lives?
2. How can a perfect and loving God create Hell? How is this level of eternal suffering justifiable?

Letter 13 Discussion Questions

Quote: "The deepest likings and impulses of any man are the raw material, the starting-point, with which the Enemy has furnished him."

Letter 13 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on ways to keep someone from experiencing reality.

1. Why does Screwtape say that for a Christian to repent and experience overwhelming grace is a type of "second conversion", and a "deeper level" conversion?
2. Screwtape describes the presence of God in a believer's life as a cloud by which the demons cannot pass through to attack us. Why does spending time with God effect the spiritual warfare going on around us?
3. Screwtape says the problem with pain and pleasure is that they both bring people in touch with reality. What's the benefit to Christians when they experience true pain?
4. Screwtape says that real pain makes our imaginary distresses pale in comparison. What imaginary distresses do we succumb to on a daily basis, and how do these hurt our effectiveness as believers?
5. Screwtape says that when a believer is wholly God's they become more themselves than ever before. What does he mean by this, and do you find this to be true in your own experience?
6. Screwtape says that it can be effective to turn someone from their own true and deepest desires towards what is worldly, popular, or fashionable. Why is that an effective tactic? What does this do to the human soul?
7. Screwtape says that the best course of action now that the Christian has repented of some of his deepest sins, is to ensure that he doesn't act. "Let him do anything but act," says Screwtape, "The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able ever to act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel". Do you find this to be true in your own life, and in your own spiritual goals as a believer?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1 John 2:15-16

“¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

Psalm 46:10

“Cease *striving* and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

*Hebrew word translated as *cease striving* is הַרְפּוּ (*harpu*). Some translations render this as “be still” or simply “cease”. *Harpu* is in the imperative (command) form.

Conclusion Questions:

1. What are some things that you really like that you know no one else cares about? How could you use these interests to grow closer in your appreciation of God and to give God glory?
2. How can we avoid loving the things of the world? How will this influence how we participate in the world we live in? Our creative ventures? Our work? Etc.?
3. How can we “cease striving”, how can we “be still”, in a world that pushes us to move faster every day?

Challenge: Set aside a few minutes this week daily to be completely still, away from any technology or distractions, and try to focus on the presence of God.

Letter 14 Discussion Questions

Quote: "...and almost immediately—pride at his own humility—will appear."

Letter 14 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on humility.

1. Screwtape's complaint at the beginning of the chapter is that the patient is leaning on God for daily and hourly pittance to meet the constant temptation. We are told in Scripture to "pray without ceasing" (1st Thessalonians 5:17). Why does God call us to constant prayer and how does this guide us?
2. Screwtape then talks about how the patient is unfortunately becoming very humble. He says that one trick is to make the patient realize that he is humble to make him proud of his humility. Have you ever fallen prey to this type of thinking?
3. For true humility, God wants to turn our focus from ourselves to Him and to our neighbors. Why?
4. The Devil wants to trick us into a false humility—one in which we see ourselves, our talents and character, as lowly. He says that humans can be made to think that humility "means pretty women trying to believe they are ugly and clever men trying to believe they are fools." Why is this a false sense of humility?
5. How would you define humility?
6. Screwtape says that God wants to have people who can express their immense talent and be satisfied in their work (such as in building a beautiful cathedral), who can realize the quality of their work, yet, in the end, would be just as satisfied if someone else had completed the work. Essentially, God wants people who are free from bias in their own favor so much that they can rejoice in the quality of their own work, but just as much so in the work of others. Do you agree?
7. Screwtape says that this kind of humility and appreciation for others leads to a love and appreciation for one's own life. It can lead to the recognition that all life is valuable. Do you agree?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. "When they have really learned to love their neighbours as themselves, they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbours." – thoughts?

9. Screwtape doesn't want the patient to realize that he doesn't need to have an opinion about himself. Why is it good to realize that we don't have to constantly evaluate ourselves?

10. Why is it important to realize that we did not create ourselves, and that God has given us our talents, appearances, and has even allowed us to have very specific weaknesses?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Peter 5:5

"⁵ You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Romans 13:8

"⁸ Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law."

Ephesians 5:28-32

"²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church."

Conclusion Questions:

1. How is loving our neighbor a fulfillment of the law?

2. How can we clothe ourselves in humility?

3. How is loving our spouse a reflection of loving ourselves?

Letter 15 & 16 Discussion Questions

Quote: "For the present is the point at which time touches eternity."

Letter 15-16 Chapter Introduction: these chapters focus on the differences between thinking of the past, living in the present, and worrying about the future, as well as aspects of Church and how to make one dissatisfied with the whole endeavor.

Letter 15:

1. Screwtape says that their goal is to keep people away from thinking about the past. Why?
2. Screwtape doesn't want people living in the present. Why?
3. Screwtape says that nearly all vices are rooted in thinking of the future: fear, lust, avarice, and ambition. Do you find yourself worrying about the future?
4. What is the issue with always being concerned about the future?
5. Screwtape fears the person who embraces the possibility of horrors in the future and prays for the virtues to handle them. Why is this a good attitude to have as believers?
6. Screwtape talks about pleasure and sin, about how they must come together, but that they would love to get rid of the pleasure part of a sin if they could. Why?

Letter 16:

7. Screwtape says that if you can't keep someone out of church, then at least make them keep searching for a church that suits him, making him a connoisseur of churches. Do you know people who are always church shopping?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. Screwtape speaks of a healthy church bringing people together who normally would not come together, whereas a "club church" just brings in people who have common interests. Why does God make us all so different and desire that we worship and serve in unity?

9. Screwtape speaks of a certain pastor who watered down his sermons to make them less offensive for so long that he has shocked his own congregation with his lack of faith. Do we see this happening in the modern church today?

10. Screwtape contrasts the former pastor with one who simply says things to offend, is hateful, and likes to shock his congregation. However, the fear of Screwtape is that this pastor actually believes in the Bible. Do we see this in the modern church?

11. Screwtape says the best way to drive a wedge between Christians is not to focus on doctrinal differences, but to keep them focused on the names of things, such as "holy communion" vs. "mass". Why is it better for demons to divide Christians over terminology, music, candles, etc., rather than doctrine?

12. Screwtape says that Paul taught that the human without scruples (scruples are a feeling of doubt about the morality of a course of action) should always give in to the human with scruples. Thoughts?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

2nd Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

- *Some translations, such as the LSB, say "All scripture is God-breathed"*
- Greek: ***theopneustos*** (only use once in New Testament, most literally means "God-breathed")

Conclusion Questions:

1. What should our approach to teaching the Bible be in the church?

2. What should our attitude be for receiving teaching be in the church?

Letter 17 & 18 Discussion Questions

Quote: "This has largely been effected by concentrating all our efforts on gluttony of Delicacy, not gluttony of Excess."

Letter 17-18 Chapter Introduction: Chapter 17 focuses on various forms of gluttony and self-indulgence. Chapter 18 focuses on relationships.

Gluttony Definition: the habitual giving in to a greedy appetite by overindulging in eating and drinking. Gluttony includes an excessive desire for the pleasure that food and drink give to a person.

Letter 17:

1. Screwtape brags that the demons have been able to deaden the human conscience with regards to gluttony, so much so that no one preaches on it anymore. Do we fall prey to focusing on certain sins more than others? Why do we do this?
2. Can you describe the difference between gluttony of Excess and gluttony of Delicacy, and perhaps which one you fall prey to more often?
3. Screwtape describes the "all-I-want" state of mind, what is this and how can we avoid falling prey to its demands?
4. Screwtape advises that males are harder to be caught by the "all-I-want" camouflage. He says that vanity can be used to turn males into gluttons. Thoughts?
5. Screwtape says that when a glutton is caught without the indulgence in their chosen taste, they are put out, and their charity, justice, and obedience are sacrificed. Thoughts?

Letter 18:

6. God's design for intimate behavior is either complete abstinence, or unmitigated monogamy. Why did God limit intimacy to marriage in this way?
7. Screwtape speaks of using the propaganda of writers and poets to persuade humans into thinking that the only way for marriage to work is to have the short-lived experience of "being in love", and that the excitement of such feelings should be permanent in marriage. Why is this such a clever trick?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. Screwtape speaks of the philosophy of Hell meaning that for one to expand, others must be pushed out of the way. For one to grow, another must shrink. For the demons, they want to suck the will and freedom from weaker vessels into themselves. How do we contrast Heaven with Hell, in this sense?

9. Screwtape says that God claims to be three as well as one; how does the triune nature of God affect how we view love?

10. Screwtape goes on and on about how grotesque the family is (from his point of view). How is the family a picture of the triune nature of God, and how is it a picture of God's love?

11. Screwtape says love often precedes marriage, and emotion often precedes conversion to Christianity. Are these feelings and emotions prerequisites for either saving faith or holy marriage?

12. Screwtape seeks to make people think that those who marry for mutual help, chastity, and the transmission of life, are lower than those who marry for emotion. Are they?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Proverbs 23:20-21:

"Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, *Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; ²¹ For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *one* with rags."

Ephesians 5:22-24:

²² *Wives, be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the *wives ought to be* to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body."

Conclusion Questions:

1. What should our focus be when we think of gluttony and other struggles?

2. How is the order and makeup of the family a picture of the trinitarian nature of God?

Letter 19-20 Discussion Questions

Quote: "He must have some *real* motive for creating them and taking so much trouble about them."

Letter 19-20 Chapters Introduction: these chapters focus on the motive behind God's love, the use of spiritual raw materials, and chastity.

Letter 19 Discussion Questions:

1. Screwtape feels that it must be impossible for God to really love humans. Why would it seem that God's love must possess some ulterior motive?
2. Screwtape speaks of God's love for mankind being shrouded in secrecy. Is it?
3. Screwtape says that if Christians saw God's love for what it really is, they would re-enter Heaven. What does He mean by this?
4. Screwtape says that basically it doesn't matter what the people believe about certain issues; what matters are whether a particular mind state moves someone closer to Enemy or closer to them. He says this is especially true with what people think about *falling in love*. These things are described as spiritual raw materials that the Enemy and the demons are trying to exploit. Thoughts?

Letter 20 Discussion Questions

5. Screwtape says that one of the weaknesses of their attacks on unchastity is that God will not let their attacks last forever. Do you find that the temptations you face eventually go away?
6. Screwtape says that if they can't use a young woman for the purposes of impurity, they should try to use her for a "desirable marriage". What does he mean by this?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Screwtape describes how demons have used propaganda to always be ahead of the curve on determining what is “desirable” in the opposite sex. He says they are trying to make men desire something more and more that does not exist. What are their goals with this propaganda and why would this be effective?
8. Screwtape describes the two types of women that a man might desire. One is the type that draws a man into deep commitment and honor, the other the man is attracted to because of the evil within the relationship itself. That sinful desire is what is fostered in the latter. How can the devil use something good, such as marriage, for evil purposes?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Proverbs 31:10-31

An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. ¹² She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. ¹³ She looks for wool and flax And works with her hands in delight. ¹⁴ She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. ¹⁵ She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷ She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. ¹⁸ She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. ¹⁹ She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle. ²⁰ She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. ²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. ²² She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. ²³ Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land. ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells *them*, And supplies belts to the tradesmen. ²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future. ²⁶ She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband *also*, and he praises her, *saying*: ²⁹ “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.” ³⁰ Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *But* a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. ³¹ Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.

Conclusion Questions:

1. What traits do we see as highlighted in a Proverbs 31 woman?
2. What isn't a focus of a Proverbs 31 woman?

Letters 21-22 Discussion Questions

Quote: "Men are not angered by mere misfortune but by misfortune conceived as injury."

Letter 21 Chapter Introduction: this chapter discusses the question of ownership on one's time and one's life.

1. What does Screwtape mean by saying that men are only angered by misfortune conceived as injury?
2. Screwtape speaks of ensuring that someone has as many "claims" (entitlements) on life as possible, why?
3. Screwtape says that one of the best ways to get under the skin of a human is to make him expect time he will get to spend on himself, only to make sure that time gets interrupted by someone. Why does this bother us so much?
4. Screwtape says to make sure people wake up thinking that they are the lawful possessor of the next twenty-four hours. Thoughts?
5. Screwtape goes in deep on this idea of what we mean when we say "my... bear, wife, father, country, God, etc.". He says a child could mean two different things when they say "my teddy bear". What are the two ways we can mean this word?
6. What is the difference between the way God claims something as "mine" vs. the way the Devil claims something as "mine"?

Letter 22 Chapter Introduction: this chapter has to do with Christians and their relationships with others.

1. Screwtape is incredibly angry at the prospect of Wormwood's patient being with a Christian. What is the spiritual effect on us when we have a genuine Christian as our spouse and life partner? What about when we don't?
2. Screwtape says that God is a hedonist, offering pleasures evermore to believers. Is this true?
3. Screwtape says that everything must be twisted in order for them to use it, and that nothing is naturally on their side. Is this the case?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

4. Screwtape says that the Christian girl's house is even full of the "impenetrable mystery." What does he mean by this?
5. Screwtape wonders in awe at how well the Christians are hiding what they're really up to, "making capital out of others". What does he mean by this?
6. Screwtape speaks of Hell being occupied by Noise. What does he mean by this? How does this apply to our lives?
7. Screwtape says that transformation proceeds from within on our own power (from the Life Force) that deserves to be worshipped. Where do we see this evidenced in society today?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Psalm 115:3

But our God is in the heavens;
He does whatever He pleases.

Psalm 46:10

"Stop *striving* and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth."

Psalm 150:1-6

Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse. ² Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. ³ Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. ⁴ Praise Him with tambourine and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flute. ⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Everything that has breath shall praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Conclusion Questions:

1. What does it mean that God does whatever He pleases?
2. How does silence relate to the life of a believer? What does silence say about God?
3. How does music and dancing relate to the life of a believer? What does music say about God?

Letter 23 Discussion Questions

Quote: "Through this girl and her disgusting family the patient is now getting to know more Christians every day, and very intelligent Christians too."

Letter 23 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on the effects of the Christian community around the patient.

1. Why is there a fear of the patient being surrounded by *intelligent* Christians?
2. Screwtape realizes that the patient is going to be spiritual no matter what, so now they want to disguise themselves as angels of light to corrupt his spirituality. What are the temptations/trials that Christians will face with regards to their spirituality that are unique to *practicing/active* Christians?
3. Screwtape says that the borderline between politics and theology is a great place to attack the patient. What are the dangers for Christians as we engage in politics?
4. Screwtape describes changing the perception of what the "historical Jesus" was like with each generation to try and skew people's view of Christ. What *kind* of Jesus is the Devil trying to make us believe in today?
5. What does Screwtape mean when he says each "historical Jesus" is unhistorical?
6. What is Screwtape referring to when he says, "the documents say what they say and cannot be added to"? What is significant about that? What view of preservation do you hold?
7. What does he mean when he says that each 'historical Jesus' is formed by "suppression at one point and exaggeration at another"? Do we find ourselves doing this?
8. Screwtape says they must distract people from who Christ is, and what Christ did. Thoughts?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

9. Screwtape says that the earliest converts to Christians believed a single historical fact, and a single theological doctrine. What does he mean by this?

10. What does Screwtape mean by saying the Gospels came “later and were written not to make Christians but to edify Christians already made”?

11. What is the difference between Christianity flowing over into our politics, and Christianity as a means to a political end?

12. Screwtape summarizes that Christianity can be supported because it might be useful, rather than true. Do we see this in the political landscape of America today?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Timothy 2:1-2

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

Philippians 3:20

²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;”

Romans 13:1

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Conclusion Questions:

1. Why isn't a single historical fact and a single theological doctrine enough for us?
2. Do we see a 1st Timothy 2:1-2 attitude in Christians today?
3. How can a heaven citizenship mindset help us navigate politics and our lives?
4. How can we live under evil leadership and still reconcile that this authority has been established by God?

Letter 24-25 Discussion Questions

Quote: “What you want is to keep a sly self-congratulation mixing with all his thoughts and never allow him to raise the question ‘What, precisely, am I congratulating myself *about*?’”

Letter 24-25 Introduction: these chapters focus on generating pride over the patient's inner circle of Christian friends, as well as steering a Christian's emphasis into being a “Christians And...” something else.

Letter 24:

1. Screwtape says that those who grow up in an intelligent circle with a clearly defined belief often think that outsiders are really stupid and ridiculous if they don't agree with them. Do we do this ourselves?
2. Screwtape speaks of Spiritual Pride. What is this and do we fall prey to its devices?
3. Screwtape wants to use the patient's affection for the Christian girl and her genuine circle of Christian friends to make him find regular society dull, and eventually to make him prideful of his status with fellow Christians; however, Screwtape doesn't want him to acknowledge it or put it into words. Only to feel it to affect his actions towards others. We see here a description of something subconscious in essence. Do you fall prey to subconscious sinful thoughts?
4. Do we have Christian “clicks”?
5. Do we judge those outside our Christian click?

Letter 25:

1. Screwtape is worried that the patient isn't factious enough. His group is merely Christians without an additive. He says, “If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference.” He goes on to list Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Vegetarianism, etc. What is the issue when you make yourself a member of “Christianity And”?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

2. What is the "horror of the Same Old Thing"?
3. Screwtape wants to break people from a balanced (rhythmic) appreciation of change and permanence for a gluttonous desire for novelty. Are you more tempted to idolize permanence or novelty/change, and why?
4. How does a desire for novelty diminish pleasure and increase desire? What happens when you become bored with a particular activity, hobby, location, restaurant, etc.?
5. Screwtape wants to push skepticism of virtues at the time when the opposite vice is being practiced. For example, when the populace is being lukewarm, they try to make enthusiasm and emotion frowned upon. Do you see this taking place in Christian culture now, perhaps with another vice?
6. Screwtape says that God wants men to ask simple questions about our actions: Is it righteous? Is it prudent? Is it possible? Rather than questions such as: Is it in accordance with the general movement of our time? Is it progressive or reactionary? Do we see ourselves asking the wrong questions about our actions?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' ¹³ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be [f]merciful to me, the sinner!' ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Conclusion Questions:

1. What are some takeaways from the message Christ gives us in Luke 18:9-14?

Letter 26 Discussion Questions

Quote: "If people knew how much ill-feeling Unselfishness occasions, it would not be so often recommended from the pulpit."

Letter 26 Chapter Introduction: this chapter discusses the enchantment of courtship, views on love, official unselfishness and real selfishness.

1. Screwtape says you can use the enchantment of love to make people think they have solved issues between each other, when in reality the issues are festering underneath the surface, masked by mutual infatuation. Do you think this happens often?
2. Screwtape says, "A woman means by Unselfishness chiefly taking trouble for others; a man means not giving trouble to others." Do you agree with this? How do you view being a good neighbor?
3. The book points out that because men and women are different, we interpret a man's inactivity as selfishness, and a woman's overactivity as selfishness. Why are we so quick to misinterpret each other's actions not only in marriage, but also in relationships more broadly?
4. Screwtape says, "You must make them establish as a law for their whole married life that degree of mutual self-sacrifice which is at present sprouting naturally out of the enchantment, but which, when the enchantment dies away, they will not have charity enough to enable them to perform." – Thoughts?
5. Screwtape demonstrates that we can, out of a sense of insincere obligation, argue against our own wants while also arguing for them, and when we both do this, neither of us get what we want. Thoughts?
6. Screwtape shows that we can be bitter when we realize how easily our spouse accepted the sacrifice of our own desires and preferences. Thoughts?
7. Do we harbor a secret claim to future preferential treatment when we help someone else?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. The word charity in olden days was used as a type of love. The KJV translates the noun "agape" 87 times as love, but 26 times as charity. Why is charity a good word for love?
9. Screwtape describes the Generous Conflict Illusion and how it results from years of nominal or official "Unselfishness". Thoughts?
10. Screwtape demonstrates that a little real selfishness is often better than false unselfishness. Thoughts?
11. Screwtape describes how we can be offended when someone doesn't notice our unselfishness. Do we do this often?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

John 10:17-18

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

Conclusion Questions:

1. When we think of the love of Christ, what kind of love is this?
2. Is the love of Christ out of obligation or genuine affection and desire for relationship?
3. How can we model the love of Christ to others, and not fall into the trap of nominal or official "Unselfishness"?

Letter 27 Discussion Questions

Quote: “Anything, even a sin, which has the total effect of moving him close up to the Enemy, makes against us in the long run.”

Letter 27 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on distractions in the Christian life.

1. Screwtape says that anything, even a sin, that moves someone closer to God, is a problem for the demons. Is this true? Does God work through our sins to draw us closer to Himself?

2. Can God lie? Can God work through lies?

3. Screwtape says to fill the mind of the patient that prayers for “daily bread” are pointless and don’t actually affect anything. Do we ever feel this way?

4. The ‘heads I win, tails you lose’ argument:

Petitionary Prayer Unanswered	Petitionary Prayer Answered
- Evidence that petitionary prayers simply don’t work.	- There must be some physical causes that led up to the event or supplication, so it would have happened anyway.

- Do you find yourself thinking this way? What’s something you prayed for that happened, and then you doubted if it was a God thing or just happenstance?

5. Screwtape says that since God created the weather to be exactly like it is today from the foundation of the world, then for men to pray for the weather to be as such means that they were simply predestined to, and ultimately prayer doesn’t even matter since God’s plan was going to take place either way. Thoughts?

6. Screwtape addresses the difficulty in determining the role of free will in a universe that plays out exactly in accordance with the creative act of God from the beginning. How can we be free creatures if God set everything up in the beginning, and everything plays out exactly in accordance with His plan? (Ephesians 1:11 says He works *all things* after the council of His will)

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Why is it significant that God is timeless with regards to how everything things play out on earth, especially with regard to prayer and prophecy?
8. Screwtape shows this problem with the erudite, how people become to focused on the history of ancient authors that they don't stop and ask themselves if what they have said is true. Do we see this in our culture today with regards to ancient figures or even within Christianity?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all [a]comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ "Pray, then, in this way:

'Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ 'Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ 'Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.']

Conclusion Questions:

1. How can God command us not to be anxious when we aren't in control of our feelings?
2. Should we pray for anything we are anxious about? What has God told us to pray about?
3. How can God not be the author of evil if He has worked all things after the council of His will?

Letter 28 Discussion Questions

Quote: "...he will almost certainly be lost to us if he is killed tonight."

Letter 28 Chapter Introduction: this chapter focuses on how being outwardly focused on others can draw us closer to God as we depend on Him more and more.

1. The demons discuss how the timing of the death of the Christian is important. Do you ever wonder in what spiritual state you will die? What state do you want to be in when you pass on from here to the presence of the Lord?
2. Screwtape says that the long years of middle-aged prosperity are fruitful grounds for temptations. Have you thought about how you want to live your middle-aged years, if you are blessed to have them?
3. The demons speak of wearing out a soul from their youth to their middle-aged years by dull living, dull feelings, and constant adversity. Do you know older people who seem to have hardened their hearts to the Lord due to these things? How can we keep our hearts soft towards Jesus as we age?
4. Screwtape says concerning prosperity, that people think they are finding their place in the world when they become prosperous, but in reality, the world is finding their place in them. Thoughts?
5. Screwtape says that since God has destined believers for Heaven, His Spirit works in us a contentment in Him and a longing for Heaven. If this is so, why are we so tempted to love this world and the things of this world?
6. What can we do to stir our hearts towards what's most important?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. One of the great tricks Screwtape says is to make people think that earth can be turned into Heaven in the future by politics, eugenics, or science. Do you find yourself thinking this way? What's really clever about this trick the devil plays on us?

8. Screwtape says that "Experience is the mother of illusion". He means that our experience can often cause us illusion rather than clarity over matters concerning the Moral Law. What are some areas where people's experiences cause them to think certain behaviors or lifestyles are appropriate, when they are actually in opposition to the Moral Law of God?

9. Screwtape says that you can tell how valuable time is by how little of it God gives to people. Thoughts?

10. Many humans die in infancy, many die in their youth, and only a select group live a full life, and of that group only a select group will end up in Heaven with God. All the while, God lets demons interact with these humans. Why does God allow demons to interact with unsaved people? What about saved people?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Conclusion Questions:

1. What are the "things in the world", and why are they so attractive to us?

2. What is the will of God? How do we actively *do* His will? How can we *know* His will?
 - a. **1st Thessalonians 5:18** = that we give thanks
 - b. **1st Thessalonians 4:3** = that we be sanctified and abstain from immorality
 - c. **1st Timothy 2:4** = that all be saved and come to a knowledge of God

3. What is the difference between the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes?

Letter 29 Discussion Questions

Quote: "To be greatly and effectively wicked a man needs some virtue."

Letter 29 Chapter Introduction: this chapter is about virtue and using various qualities or inadequacies as tools for wickedness.

1. Why does Screwtape say a little virtue is needed to make some greatly and effectively wicked?
2. What are some examples of Christian principles that the devil use to his advantage by twisting them?
3. Screwtape says to convince the patients that they should forgive their own enemies, but not other people's enemies. What is the trick going on here, and have you ever found yourself caught in that situation?
4. Screwtape says that hatred is often combined with fear, because it's better than cowardice and has certain pleasures associated with it. Is this true?
5. Screwtape says that when people discover their cowardice, they also discover the moral world, and that can be problematic. This is one issue with wars breaking out in the world. How can discovering your own cowardice and inadequacies point us towards the Moral Law and the Moral Law Giver?
6. Screwtape thinks God allows wars and evil atrocities because it makes people aware of moral realities that are irrefutable. Thoughts?
7. Screwtape says that courage is not just one of the virtues, but it is every virtue at the testing point. What does this mean?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

8. Screwtape says that we can accept God's forgiveness for sins that we don't really fully feel their sinfulness, but for our vices that we really struggle with, we cannot seek, nor credit God's mercy. Thoughts?
9. Screwtape says Despair is a greater sin than any of the sins which provoke it. What does this mean?
10. Screwtape wants to keep the patient from realizing that the only thing a Christian has is God and the courage God supplies. Is everything else meaningless?
11. Screwtape says the emotion of fear isn't a sin, and if not acted on by them, it doesn't do them any good. Can emotions be sinful, and what can we do when we feel a certain way about things?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Corinthians 13:13

But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1st John 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Psalms 16:2

I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good besides You."

Conclusion Questions:

1. Why are faith, hope, and love, grouped together in Scripture, and why is love the greatest?
2. What is the opposite of love? Why isn't hate the opposite of love?
3. What does it mean that there is no good inside of us outside of God?

Letter 30 Discussion Questions

Quote: "It is not fatigue simply as such that produces the anger, but unexpected demands on a man already tired."

Letter 30 Chapter Introduction: this chapter is on using the fatigue of the patient.

1. Screwtape says that whatever people come to expect to occur, that's what they think they are entitled to. Thoughts?
2. Screwtape says that to truly tempt the patient not to grow or become humble in suffering, is to remind him that rather than depending on God to endure the suffering, make them try to endure it on their own for a "reasonable time", and when that reasonable time is up, they can give in to the temptation or suffering. How do you make it through sufferings, ailments, or times of trials, and does it bother you knowing that some sufferings may never end?
3. Screwtape says that suffering men talk less, and suffering women talk more, and that this can be used to create resentment between couples. Do you find this to be true? Who in your relationship likes to talk more, and does this ever create issues of miscommunication or misinterpretation?
4. Screwtape says that sometimes all it takes it seeing human bones on a wall to make intellectual attack on someone's faith by making them consider on the physical world rather than the spiritual. What are some worldly things, or scientific things, that have caused you to doubt your faith in your life?
5. Screwtape admits that the truest realities are the spiritual realities, but he wants to make the patient think only about physical, emotional, and earthly facts. They want to make us think that is the only reality. Which is more real?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

6. Why did God create both a spiritual world and a physical world, and also create in us a physical as well as a spiritual existence? Does the triune nature of God and the incarnation have anything to do with this?
7. Screwtape says that the trick is to show a patient that when a baby is born, only the blood and pain or real and objective, and that the rejoicing that a baby is born is just a subjective point of view. When we see death and hate, these are real, but when we see love, this is subjective. What is the Devil trying to do to the way we interpret the world around us?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

Ephesians 6:12

¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Genesis 1:27

²⁷So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Romans 5:3-5

³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; ⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Conclusion Questions:

1. Where is the battle really taking place? What can we do to protect ourselves *and* fight in this battle?
2. What does it mean that we were created in the image of God, and what does this have to do with the battles going on in the spiritual world?
3. How should we behave through our sufferings, and how should we interpret them?

Letter 31 Discussion Questions

Quote: "My dear, my very dear, Wormwood, my poppet, my pignie"

Letter 31 Chapter Introduction: this chapter is Screwtape's final address to Wormwood.

1. Screwtape says there was a moment in time when the patient saw Wormwood for the first time. In other words, the patient's eyes were opened to the spiritual realm, and his sin. Does this happen to everyone? Does everyone come to the realization that they are truly evil and dead in their sins?
2. Screwtape describes that the manner in which the patient dies. Did he die quickly or slowly, and why were the demons offended at this?
3. Screwtape says in the twinkling of an eye, all the doubts the human had about God became ridiculous. Thoughts?
4. Screwtape says that the patient recognized, after death, all the spiritual beings that had helped him in his life. What are some moments in your life where you felt like God worked through a guardian angel to protect you? What are some moments where you felt like the Spirit of God was working around you to draw you to Himself?
5. Screwtape says that the patient saw not only the angels, but he saw Jesus in the form of a Man. What is most exciting about meeting Jesus in Heaven?
6. Once we are in Heaven, what are some things you are excited to leave behind on this earth, and what are some things that will be hard to part with?

A BELIEVER'S GUIDE TO THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

7. Screwtape says, if only they could find out what God is really up to, they could use that information to their advantage. What is God up to?

Verses to Read & Discuss:

1st Corinthians 15:40-58

⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*; ⁴³ it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴ it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*. ⁴⁵ So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.

Conclusion Questions:

1. What does it mean that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?
2. Why will we not all sleep but we will all be changed?
3. What does it mean that we will put on the imperishable?
4. What does it mean that death is swallowed up in victory and why is this significant in the biblical picture?
5. Why is death the consequence of sin?