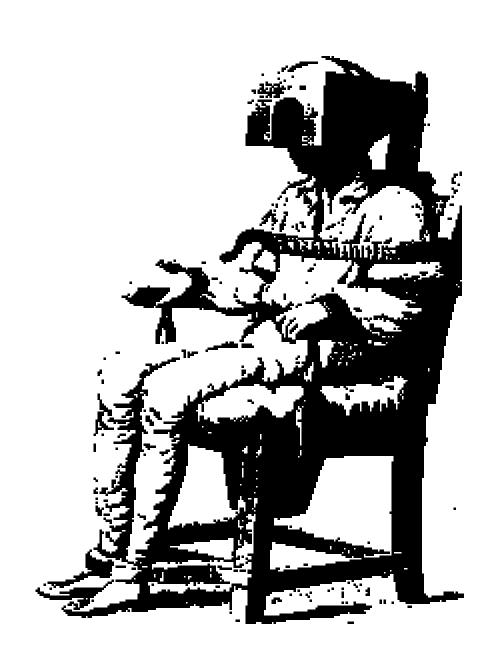
The Screwtape Letters Study Guide

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The Screwtape Letters

In C.S. Lewis' classic "The Screwtape Letters" Lewis creatively exposes his views on what causes people to spiritually succeed and what causes people to spiritually fail. This class will examine Lewis' complicated views on Christian success and failure, specifically in the areas of character formation, belief formation, and habit formation. Practical application of these views discussion addiction, will include on procrastination, anxiety, and destructive perceptions of God, and more.

People often make two equal and opposite errors regarding demons:

- (1) To believe they do not exist
- (2) To focus excessively on their existence

Preliminary Words:

We are involved in spiritual warfare!

"Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" – I Pet. 5:8

What should we do about this?

"Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering." – I Pet. 5:9

Can we "resist him"?

"...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not ignorant of his schemes." – II Cor. 2:11

The Screwtape Letters are about Satan's schemes...

Screwtape Reading Guide

Letter 1

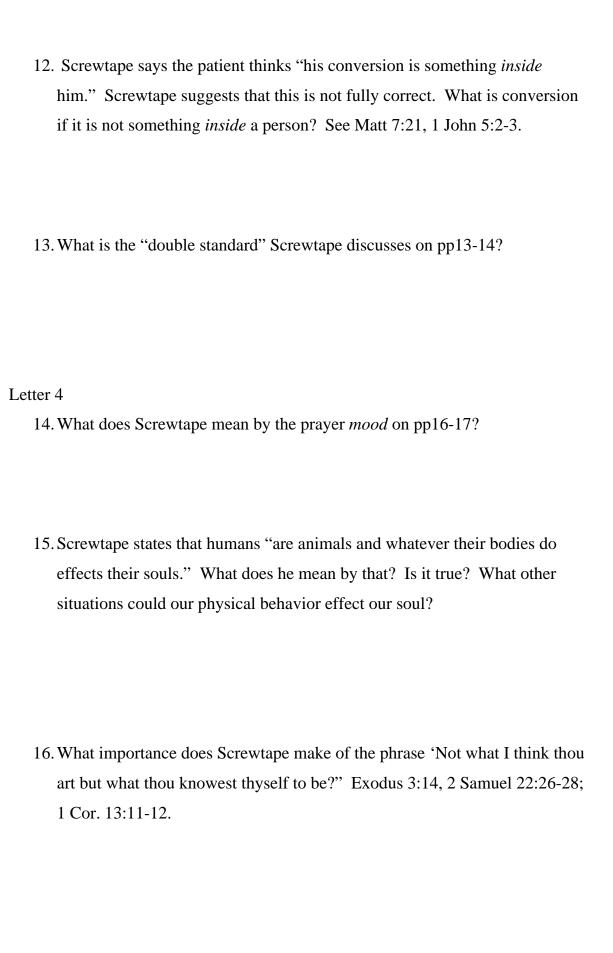
1.	Screwtape reflects that people's thought and behavior were at one time related in what way:
2.	Screwtape encourages labels like 'practical,' 'outworn,' 'strong,' or 'stark.' How are these terms different than 'true' or 'false.'
3.	What is "the pressure of the ordinary? How does it keep us from God?
4.	How does "argument" move "the struggle on to the Enemy's own ground?"
5.	Why do you think Screwtape encourages propaganda over argument?
6.	What is the "abominable advantage" God has over Satan? Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

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- 8. What does Screwtape suggest happens to a Christian when they become less dependent on Emotions?
- 9. What does Screwtape mean by "parrot talk" on p.8? Matt 6:7
- 10. In what ways can church be an ally to Satan?

11. How is focusing your prayers for others on "spiritual" topics like the state of a person's soul potentially inhibiting to prayer?



Letter 5
17. How does Screwtape propose using the past and present against us on p21
18. What does Screwtape think about war? Which is better for destroying someone's relationship with God, according to Screwtape: going to war or going to a nursing home? Why?
Letter 6 19. What does suspense and anxiety do to keep people from God? Mark 4:18-19
20. Why should we focus on our <i>present</i> fear and burden? Matt 6:27, 34
21. What does Screwtape mean by diverting the patient's mind "from the thing feared to fear itself"?
22. Why might hatred of mother be more damaging to one's soul than hatred of Osama bin Laden, according to Screwtape?

23	3. Screwtape says that God "wants people to be concerned with	what they do,
	our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen	to them."
	How is being focused on what will happen to us destructive?	See Matthew
	7:24-27, Eph 2:10, James 3:13.	

- 24. Why would believing in demons keep a person from being "a materialist or a skeptic"?
- 25. How does the media inhibit our belief in demons and spirits?

Letter 8

- 26. What does undulation mean?
- 27. What, according to screwtape, is the purpose demons have in attacking humans? Read Matt26:26-29 and John 6:27-58 How does this contrast with the intentions of demons?

28. Why are being 'irresistible' and 'Indisputible' two weapons God do use to get humans?	oes not
29. Which is a more powerful display of Faith in a God, according to Screwtape:A. A person who is on fire for God and does God's will.B. A person who feels abandoned by God, but does God's w	rill.
Letter 9 30. Why would Screwtape want to encourage words like "phase" regard person's conversion experience?	rding a
31. According to Screwtape, are there any pleasures that are evil (bad)? on your answer, how can pleasure be destructive?	Based
32. Why would Screwtape want to keep the patient away from experien Christians during his dry spells?	ced
33. Compare the Last paragraph of this Letter with the first paragraph o one. What do both of these paragraphs say about language?	f Letter

34.	. What does Screwtape mean by saying "All mortals tend to turn into	the
	thing they are pretending to be"? Explain how this might happen. G	ive
	examples that you have seen if you can.	

35. Given your answer to the previous question, what are the risks of associating with others?

36. If it is true that humans *become who they are pretending to be*, how can that truth improve our faith? I Cor. 4:16; Heb 6:1:12, 13:7; 3 John v.11.

37. Tell me about the two parallel lives Screwtape speaks of regarding the patient's friends.

Letter	1	1

Letter 11
38. Why do you think flippancy "deadens, instead of sharpens, the intellect," and keeps people from God?
and keeps people from God?
39. Screwtape confesses that he does not know the real cause of Joy. What is
the real cause of joy. See John 15:5-12, 16:19-24.
Letter 12
40. Why is having a vague, uneasy feeling that we are not doing well worse for us than recognizing clearly that we are being sinful?
41. What types of things, do you think, might increase vagueness?
42. Why does the "vague" feeling keep us from God, and the blatant, clear sin
should not?
42 What is the "sefect and to be 112" and the Committee of Committee of the
43. What is the "safest road to hell" according to Screwtape? Contrast with Matt 7:13,14.

Letter 13
44. What does Screwtape say about Pain and Pleasure? How are they related?
45. How does giving up innocent pleasures that you like for things that everybody else likes weaken one's will?
46. What does Screwtape mean by "The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able to act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel?"
Lotton 14
Letter 14 47. What is a way to ruin genuine humility? (p.69)
48. Describe the type of Humility that would be what God wants for us:

49.	Describe destructive ideas of what humility is:
	Read Matt 23:2-12, then Mark 12:28-34. What is the vision of humility Jesus casts?
	How is Strong Hope or Strong Fear about future events potentially damaging? Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6.
y se	crewtape talks about sending the client "all over to churches." In what ways do ou think that is destructive to a person? What does it say about a person who earches until they find the church that "fits" <i>them</i> ? What does it say about their iew of church? Read II Tim. 4:3-5
53. Г	Describe the two Vicars (preachers) Screwtape illustrates.

Lette	: 17
54	. How is gluttony of delicacy different than gluttony of excess?
55	. How does the woman's gluttony affect her relationships with others?
56	. How is the man's gluttony related to vanity?
Lette	: 18
57	. Screwtape says that marriage has been built up as an escape. An escape from what?
58	. On p. 94, Screwtape says that "for us, [absorption] means the sucking of will and freedom out of a weaker self into a stronger." How does this relate to #27.
59	. How is "one flesh" different than a "happily married couple"?

Letter	19
60.	What does Screwtape mean when he says that being in love, health or sickness, age or youth, war or peace are mainly just "Raw material?" How is this point important to our lives when these things occur?
	20 How does Screwtape suggest in this Letter that sexuality can lead to destructive marriages?
	Screwtape talks about the "sexual taste" of the age. What is the "sexual taste" of our age?
63.	How does the media affect love relationships?
64.	Are there male versions of the "venus type"? How would you describe it?

65. Compare Proverbs 7:21-27, 9:13-18 with 31:10-31. What do these verses say about female responsibility? What do they say about what a male should seek in female?	a
66. Does 31:10-31 speak negatively about women?	
67. If Proverbs was written by a woman, what would the description of the "man to avoid" be like? What would the description of the "man to seek" be like? See if you can support these with other verses.	
Letter 21 68. What does Screwtape mean when he talks about people "making claims?"	
69. He uses "time" and "bodies" as examples, what else do we "make claims" on? Read I Corinthians 6:19-20.	
70. According to Screwtape, what is the "joke" on humans about their sense of ownership on things? Read James 4:13-17, Psalm 24:1, 100:3, and Romans 14:79.	7-

71. Screwtape discusses a family that "reeks" of holiness where each individual in the group grow ("make capital") off of each other. Do you have certain friends or family members that you feel "more holy," or "more Godly" around? If so, describe what it is like being around them and discuss why you think you get this sense when you are around them (the more specifics the better).

- 72. Screwtape says "There are things for humans to do all day long without His minding in the least." What pleasures does he mention?
- 73. How are these pleasures different than pleasures presented in the media?

71. Screwtape concludes the letter by saying "That's the game," referring to coaxing humans to believe Christianity "for some reason" *other* than the logical, rational truth of Christianity. What are some of those *other* reasons people might profess to be Christians today.

Letter 24

72. Why is it spiritually dangerous to "be amused" at non-Christians?

Letter 25

73. What is the danger of striving to be different? Or, for having a passion to avoid "the Same Old Thing?"

74. Have you known people who strive to be different? Are they *really* successful? If they do have something about them that is "different," is that difference all that meaningful?

75. What does Screwtape mean when he says "The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood?"	
Letter 26	
76. What is the problem confusing 'Charity' with 'Unselfishness?'	
77. Why would it be a "great point gained" to Satan when "a man surrenders benefits not so that others may be happy in having them but so that the man can be unselfish in giving them?"	
78. Why might selfishness be less damaging than unselfishness? That is, What is the "Generous Conflict Illusion" that Screwtape discusses?	
Letter 27 79. What is the "heads I win, Tails you lose" argument Screwtape proposes using against the human regarding prayer?	

80.	Have you ever thought this way about prayer? If so, what have you done about it?
Letter	28
81.	Screwtape says "Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it,' while really it is finding its place in him." How does a person and the world get "knitted together?" What is the bond, or "knit?" That is, what things draw us to the world?
82.	Screwtape tells Wormwood, "Do not let us be infected by our own propaganda." What propaganda is he referring to?
83.	Screwtape actually suggests that the demons are trying to keep the man safe! Why is that?
84.	How does Screwtape propose attacking middle-aged adversity? How is this different than attacking middle-aged prosperity?

85. Why does Screwtape want the human to pursue:
Worldly Advancement? (Phil 4:19)
Prudent connections? (2 Cor. 6:14-17)
Safety First? (Matt. 6:27)
Letter 29
86. Why, according to Screwtape, did God create a dangerous world?
87. Screwtape says that both "courage" and "cowardice" are "undisguisable" How does being undisguisable help the human "awake from their moral stupor? That is, what specifically does undisguise-ability do for us?
Letter 30
88. What are the two ways in which the word "real" can be used?

89. How can it be used against us, according to Screwtape?

Letter 31

90. What, ultimately, happens to the patient?

As you read through the book, keep the following 3 questions in mind.

- 1. POWER OF LANGUAGE: How important are the words we use in our day-to-day lives? What can words do to our faith? Eminem said people should not be offended by his songs because "They're just words." What would Lewis (or Screwtape) say about that? In answering, do your best to expose Lewis' view on how language works citing as many examples from the text as you can.
- 2. RELATIONSHIPS AND VIEWS OF OTHERS: What role do other people play in a person's faith (both positive and negative)? There is frequent discussion of making assessments, or judgements, of others. In light of these discussions, how would Lewis view modern television advertisements in light of what they say about people, and what they say about what makes people happy?
- 3. POWER OF AMBIGUITY: How does ambiguity of words, beliefs, and feelings impact a person's faith? How are these ambiguities increase by Screwtape? How might the church be contributing to ambiguity? What can we do to bring clarity to these ambiguities? What can the church do to encourage clarity, both in what they teach and what they do?

Read the Following Passages. Identify as many strategies Satan uses to get his opponents to do what he wants them to do:

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered,

"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Genesis 3

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Sin is always based on "Good"

(1) A Desire to Enjoy Things: God Gave us things just so that we can enjoy them. (I Tim. 4:3, 6:17; Eccl. 5:19)

[BUT]

These things can become "Lusts of the flesh" (I John 2:16)

(2) <u>A Desire to Obtain Things:</u> We have been "entrusted" with possessions and have been given dominion over the earth. (Genesis 1, Psalm 8)

[BUT]

Can lead to "Lust of the eyes." (I John 2:16)

(3) <u>A Desire to Do Things:</u> God promises to give us life to the fullest and that we are to be perfect (Jn. 10:10; Mt 5:48; Heb 10:14)

[BUT]

This can erode into a "Pride of Life" (I John 2:16)