



THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS:
A LOOK AT TEMPTATION AND FORTITUDE
Letters 1-4 & 8

OPENING PRAYER

Come, O Blessed Spirit of Fortitude, uphold my soul in times of trouble and adversity, sustain my efforts after holiness, strengthen my weakness, give me courage against all the assaults of my enemies, that I may never be overcome and separated from Thee, my God and greatest Good. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

- CS Lewis
- Screwtape- "lower" echelon demon, uncle to wormwood, writer of the letters
- Wormwood- new tempter
- Our Father Below- Lucifer
- The Enemy- God

LETTER 1: CONVERSION

- Step 1- Don't use argument... the Enemy can turn it against you!
 - Use "strong" or "courageous" rather than "true" (the truth of an argument is objective, where as the strength is subjective, and includes an emotional component)
- Step 2- Use propoganda!
 - When he starts to get close to a realization about God, remind him that he is hungry or tired. It's a great distraction.
- Step3- Keep him focused on here and now, not theoretical sciences.
 - Keep him ignorant, but make him think he knows it all, so he stops investigating further

LETTER 2: CHURCH

- Habits are in our favor.
- How to keep your patient from future faith:
 - Step 1- Keep him focused on the people in the church, and how their dress or squeaky shoes are ridiculous (so their religion must be ridiculous too)
 - Step 2- Make him feel disappointment or anti-climax (shifting from the dreaming about something to the *work* of actually doing it)
 - Step 3- If he knows the character flaws of those in the pew with him, have him regard them, and by extension, their religion, as hypocrites, while ignoring his own vices.

LETTER 3: MOTHER

HOW TO DISRUPT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- Step 1- Keep his mind focused on his inner life, but without reflecting on his duties to others.
- Step 2- When praying for his mother, keep him focused on her soul (because she is *such* a sinner!).
 - Focus on her sins, not on her trials and difficulties.
 - Create a false version of her in his head, so that he really is praying for someone who doesn't exist in reality.
- Step 3- Focus on her tone of voice and her mannerisms...magnify any little things she does until that are unbearable!
- Step 4- Create a double standard: I must be judged on the words I say but may judge you on your tone and facial expression.

LETTER 4: PRAYER

- Funny admonishment of Screwtape (That's no way to talk to your Uncle, let alone to the Undersecretary of the Department!)
- Step 1- Remind the "patient" of the parrot-like nature of his childhood prayers and encourage free-form prayer (which only the more experienced can do well)
- Step 2- Misdirect him so that he is focused on himself, not the Enemy (God)
 - Rather than asking to be forgiven, have him try to manufacture the feeling of being forgiven.
 - Make him think the value of his prayer= the extent to which he FEELS it
- Step 3- Focus on his image of God and try to get him to refine that image rather than praying directly to God.
 - Humans don't have an immediate experience of God

LETTER 8: DRYNESS, FREE-WILL

- Humans are amphibians- Half spirit, half animal
 - Undulation is the closest they can get to consistency because to live in time is to change
- The Enemy does not want little robots, but rather people who freely choose Him. They are united to Him but remain distinct.
- Prayers offered in dryness are those that please Him best, as they are not done for the emotional reward, but purely out of a desire to be who the Enemy wants him to be.



NEXT CLASS: MARCH 6
Letters 9, 11-14