



**LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION...**

## **A LENTEN STUDY OF CS LEWIS' THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS [#4]**

### **Letter #19 through Letter #25**

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

##### **I. The Screwtape Letters (1942)**

\*\*\*The “genesis” of the book came July 20-21, 1940. Published essays in **THE GUARDIAN** Newspaper in Great Britain from May 2, 1941-November 28, 1941.

\*\*\*One of Lewis’ most popular and best selling books. (31 Letters compiled)

\*\*\*WORMWOOD is a novice devil who has been assigned as a tempter on the earth from his UNCLE SCREWTAPE who is the Undersecretary for the Infernal Lowerarchy and WORMWOOD’S supervisor. THE PATIENT is an ordinary young man who lives in England during WW2. OTHER CHARACTERS include THE PATIENT’S FIANCE, THE PATIENT’S MOTHER, THE ENEMY (GOD), OUR FATHER BELOW (THE DEVIL), SLUBGOB (The Head of the Training College for Younger Tempters/Demons), GLUBOSE (The Tempter/Demon in charge of the patient’s mother), SLUMTRIMPET (The Tempter/Demon in charge of the patient’s fiancé)

\*\*\*Its Purpose: “to give all the psychology of temptation from the other point of View.” (Letter to his brother Warnie Lewis). Dedicated to JRR Tolkien with two quotes (from Martin Luther and Thomas More)

##### **A. Some Thoughts from the Original Preface of 1941/42**

\*No intention of explaining how this correspondence fell into my hands.

\*There are two equal and opposite errors into which our (human) race can fall about the devils...One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them...(continue reading)...

\*Remember the devil is a liar so not everything the devil says should be taken to be true...There is even wishful thinking in Hell as on earth.

##### **B. Some Thoughts from the Revised Preface of 1960**

\*The Most Common Question Lewis Received: Did I really believe in the Devil? Lewis’ Answer (pvii)

\*The Impact of Milton, Dante, Goethe (Faust), Chesterton (read p.ix)

\*The Idea of Hell: Hell is a state where everyone is perpetually concerned about his own dignity and advancement, where everyone has a grievance, and where everyone lived the deadly serious passions of

envy, self-importance and resentment. (p.ix) and then symbolized Hell as a bureaucracy of the Managerial Age where Administration is of the highest virtue (read p.x)

- \*The Absurd Fancy that devils are engaged in the disinterested pursuit of something called Evil... They are practical beings with two motives
  - 1.) The Fear of Punishment (“Hell contains Deeper Hells.”).
  - 2.) A Kind of Hunger (passion to dominate and devour (an)other).
- \*The Desire to have written a similar work with advice from an archangel to a person’s guardian angel (Heaven).

**\*\*\*Letter #19 Summary: Understand that The Enemy (God) does not generally love humans, although we cannot figure out what His true motive is.**

\*Select Readings from Letter #19

\*Key Quote: “The Enemy’s (God’s) idea of Love is a contradiction in terms, what becomes of my reiterated warning that He really loves the human vermin and really desires their freedom and continued existence... There lies the great task. We know that He (God) cannot really love: nobody can; it doesn’t make sense. If we could find out what He (God) is really up to! Hypothesis after hypothesis has been tried and still we can’t find out!”

\*A Biblical Reflection: John 3:16ff

**\*\*\*Letter #20 Summary: Do not give up if your direct attacks on The Patient’s chastity fails; to try to arrange a desirable marriage for him...and tempt with visions of an unrealistic woman.**

\*Select Readings from Letter #20

\*Key Quote: I (Screwtape) note with great displeasure that the Enemy (God) has for the time being put a forcible end to your direct attacks on The Patient’s chastity. I suppose you’ve tried persuading him that chastity is unhealthy?...

\*A Biblical Reflection: I Corinthians 6:15-20 on the effect of sexual sin.

**\*\*\*Letter #21 Summary: Convince The Patient to use the pronoun “my” in the fully possessive sense of ownership (examples include “my time, my body, my boot, my dog, my wife, my God”) We produce this sense of ownership not only by pride but by confusion...All the time the joke is that the word “Mine” in its fully possessive sense cannot be uttered by a human being about anything.**

\*Select Readings from Letter #21

\*Key Quotes: At present The Enemy (God) says “Mine” of everything on the ground that He made it. Our Father (The Devil) hopes in the end to say “mine” of all things on the more realistic and dynamic ground of conquest.”

\*A Biblical Reflection: James 4:13-17 Why is having a personal sense of “mine” over time “equally funny in Heaven and in Hell”?

**\*\*\*Letter #22 Summary: Understand that The Enemy (God) has filled His Creation with pleasures and that your task is to twist/distort them before He can use them to His advantage.**

\*Select Readings from Letter #22

\*Key Quote: “There are things for humans to do all day long without His (God) minding in the least---sleeping, washing, eating, drinking, making love, playing, praying, working. Everything has to be twisted before it’s any use to us...Music and silence how I detest them both...All has now been occupied with NOISE...We (the devils) will make the whole universe noise in the end. We have already make great strides in this direction as regards the Earth.

\*A Biblical Reflection Psalm 46:10 “Be Still and know that I am God.”

**\*\*\*Letter #23 Summary: Encourage The Patient to embrace a “historical Jesus” and to treat Christianity as merely a means to an end.**

\*Select Reading from Letter #23

\*Key Quote: “You will find that a good many Christian-political writers think that Christianity began going wrong and departing from the doctrine of its Founder at a very early stage..thus the conception of the historical Jesus which is to be found by clearing away later accretions and perversions and then to be contrasted with the whole Christian tradition...The earliest converts were converted by a single historical fact (the Resurrection) and a single theological doctrine (the Redemption) operating on a sense of sin which they already had...sin against the old, platitudinous, universal moral law which they had been taught.”

\*A Biblical Reflection: Luke 1 and Acts 1

**\*\*\*Letter #24 Summary: Confuse The Patient with spiritual pride for being part of an elite.**

\*Select Reading from Letter #24

\*Key Quote: “There is a quite untroubled assumption that the outsiders who do not share this belief (non-Christians) are really too stupid or ridiculous...The strongest and most beautiful of the vices (is) Spiritual Pride.”

\*A Biblical Reflection Luke 18:9-14 or James 2:1-4

**\*\*\*Letter #25 Summary: Encourage The Patient to replace “mere Christianity” with a “Christianity and...” by increasing his horror of “the same old thing” and thus increasing his desire for novelty (the next new thing/fad).**

\*Select Reading from Letter #25

\*Key Quote: “The real trouble about the set your patient is living in is that it is merely Christian. They all have individual interests of course but the bond remains mere Christianity...but work on the horror of The Same Old Thing

\*A Biblical Reflection on Jude 3-4

**Conclusions**

**Closing Prayer ending with The Lord's Prayer (focus on lead us not into temptation)**