



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

## **A LENTEN STUDY OF CS LEWIS' THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS [#5]**

### **Letter #26 through Letter #31 and "Screwtape Proposes a Toast"**

#### **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 #26 Summary: Sow seeds of unselfishness in The Patient in his relationship and courtship**

- \*Select Readings from Letter #26
- \*Key Quote: “Avail yourself of the ambiguity in the word “love”... Teach a man to surrender benefits not that others may be happy in having them but that he may be unselfish in forgoing them.”
- \*A Biblical Reflection: I Corinthians 13 What is the difference between unselfishness and charity/love?

**\*\*\*Letter #27 Summary: Mess with The Patient’s Prayer Life**

- \*Select Readings from Letter #27
- \*Key Quote: “Don’t forget to use the ‘heads I win, tails you lose’ argument. If the thing he prays for doesn’t happen, then that is one more proof that petitionary prayers don’t work; if it does happen, he will, of course, be able to see some of the physical causes which led up to it and “therefore it would have happened anyway,” and thus a granted prayer becomes just as good a proof as a denied one that prayers are ineffective.”
- \*A Biblical Reflection: Matthew 6:5ff on prayers

**\*\*\*Letter #28 Summary: Guard The Patient’s Life so that he grows old because real worldliness takes a lifetime.**

- \*Select Readings from Letter #28
- \*Key Quotes: “They (humans) of course do tend to regard death as the prime evil and survival as the greatest good. But that is because we have taught them to do so.”
- \*A Biblical Reflection: 2 Timothy 4:7 and Philippians 3:12-16 and “finishing life well”.

**\*\*\*Letter #29 Summary: Defeat The Patient’s courage and make him into a coward. Overwhelm him with hatred, fear, anxiety, shame and guilt that will strip him of courage and drive him away from God.**

- \*Select Readings from Letter #29
- \*Key Quote: “The emotion of fear is in itself no sin, though we enjoy it.”

\*A Biblical Reflection

**\*\*\*Letter #30 Summary: Capitalize on The Patient's fatigue and manipulate his emotions with the word "real".**

\*Select Reading from Letter #30

\*Key Quote: "To produce the best results from The Patient's fatigue, you must feed him with false hopes."

\*A Biblical Reflection: Luke 21:12

**\*\*\*Letter #31 Summary:**

\*Select Reading from Letter #31

\*Key Quote:

\*A Biblical Reflection: Job 19:25-27 and I Corinthians 15:50-57

**\*\*\*Back to "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" (Screwtape revisited 20 years later)**

**Conclusions**

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