

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 3

September 27th, 2020

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, please click on the link above to read the book and for today's Illustrated Message, please read **Letter 3**.

We'd like to read the summary from [Sparknotes](#) again for Letter 3. It says; "*Screwtape advises Wormwood to manipulate the Patient's relationship with his mother. According to Screwtape, she is a difficult and nitpicky woman. First, Wormwood should make the Patient think that his conversion to Christianity is internal and grand rather than a part of his day-to-day life. Second, Wormwood should encourage the Patient to offer only prayers for his mother's sins. This will make him think of what she does wrong. Screwtape says he has made his patients so hypocritical in this respect that they stood up from praying for their children's souls only to beat their children's bodies. Third, Wormwood should encourage the Patient focus on his mother's annoying habits. Fourth, he must encourage his patient to read a bitter tone into his mother's voice even when she is not using one. At the same time, the Patient must expect his mother only to take into account his words, not the tone with which he uses them. That way, both mother and son will argue often and both will think they are in the right.*"

Screwtape says: "The Enemy will be working from the centre outwards, gradually bringing more and more of the patient's conduct under the new standard, and may reach his behaviour to the old lady at any moment. You want to get in first."

The scheme of the devil is to get in first to thwart conversations with the Holy Spirit who will illuminate the truth. When a person is born again, there is a work of the Holy Spirit that takes place from the inside out, and is unlike religion, which works from the outside in with religious good works. Screwtape knows from experience, that the new convert needs to fill this with religious self reflection, to drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit within. This is the opposite though of the work of the Jesus, who wants us to deny ourselves.

Jesus says in **Luke 9:23-24**; "23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [[a](#)]daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

The Apostle Paul also says in **Galatians 2:20**; "20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Jesus commands us to live a crucified life.

Some good examples of what demons use today to get Christians to not deny themselves and open doors for the demon to get in first, is through New Age, yoga and other inner healing, self meditation practices all of which stem from eastern religions. All of these and more are going on in the church. But what happened to the Holy Spirit in the church? Isn't He enough? Why do eastern religious practices have to be incorporated into the body of Christ? If this is going on, someone left the door open, more than likely the pastor and hence, the devil got in. If the pastor would rise up and unequivocally say 'no, it's unacceptable', then it won't happen as he's closing the door. You do have authority, pastor, to say to the yoga master or those with eastern philosophies, 'no, it will not be taught or practiced here'. It's your God given authority to watch over the sheep – your congregation – to protect them from wolves in sheep's clothing. If you give place to these practices, the devil will walk in and fill you and them up to the point that you won't know up from down, right from wrong. The Bible says that you'll

be on the broad and wide road that leads to destruction. Christians on the sideline, observing these practices need to stand up and be a voice.

Screwtape says: "Keep his mind on the inner life. He thinks his conversion is something inside him and his attention is therefore chiefly turned at present to the states of his own mind--or rather to that very expurgated version of them which is all you should allow him to see. Encourage this. Keep his mind off the most elementary duties by directing it to the most advanced and spiritual ones."

Demons know that if they can get Christians to focus on religious works, be it Christian or a combo of eastern religions and Christianity, rather than the work of the Holy Spirit alone, it will ultimately lead to open up doors for them to keep the Christian in the works of the carnal mind that breed works of the flesh and not of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:19-21 says; "19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: [a]adultery, [b]fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, [c]murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

So long as the demons can keep Christians examining themselves instead of denying themselves, they are able to keep them blind to the works of the flesh that they are operating in them that only others that know them can see.

Religious works that are not directed by the Holy Spirit thru self denial, are a breeding ground for the works of the flesh, and we can see how Screwtape advises Wormwood to make sure that the patient's prayer time for his mother is to focus on her sins and not her ailments, knowing that this will keep the wounds in their relationship from the past open and will end in strife and violence. Yes, violence in the church. Just go on the internet and read up on domestic violence in the church. It's shocking.

Screwtape says: "In time, you may get the cleavage so wide that no thought or feeling from his prayers for the imagined mother will ever flow over into his treatment of the real one. I have had patients of my own so well in hand that they could be turned at a moment's notice from impassioned prayer for a wife's or son's "soul" to beating or insulting the real wife or son without a qualm."

How can that happen you ask? By religious dead works, by not getting changed from the inside out by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is always concern and prayer about your family members' sins, but how about praying that the Holy Spirit fill them so the work is from the inside out instead? Religion tries to do the work from the outside in, but the Holy Spirit works from the inside out.

James 3:13-18 says; "13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and [a]self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

Make peace by getting out of religious works and be filled with the Holy Spirit, make peace by not bringing up the person's sin, make peace by praying for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's not God's will that they

walk in sin, but it's a work of the Holy Spirit that convicts them of it. Religion and dead works will never be able to change a person. You see, that's why many churches have put a clamp on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Demons have lied to pastors about being baptized in the Holy Spirit which keeps them from the power to be able to resist and bind the devil's power.

When you are led by the Holy Spirit in prayer for Christian family members, it will always involve death to self, because you're not focusing on their sins, but rather the work of the Holy Spirit abiding in them that will bring a change from the inside out and not the outside in. But if the baptism of the Holy Spirit is removed from the picture, that which is needed to overcome sin, then people just continue to struggle and struggle with sin. The devil knows that if you're baptised in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and utilizing the gifts that accompany it, he will lose his power over you and you'll be able to overcome sin.

James 4:11-12 says; *"11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one [a]Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who[b] are you to judge [c]another?"*

This scripture applies for when you're praying for family members or brothers or sisters in Christ. Sometimes prayer times can just become gossip pits where it's divulging their sins. Instead of bringing up their sins, pray in tongues for them and that way you're praying down God's perfect will for their lives and pray that they be baptized in the Holy Spirit so they can overcome sin.

Jesus says in **Matthew 7:1-5**; *"7 'Judge[a] not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what [b]judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

The devil likes to amplify the sins in the body of Christ, to get you in strife with one another by judging each other. That's not God's will for His children.

Philippians 2:3-4 says; *"3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

So long as Wormwood and Gluebose could keep the patient and his mother focused on each others sins of the flesh, and to be in envy, jealousy and strife with each other, **every evil work would be guaranteed to follow.**

James 3:16 also says; *"16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."*

This is a good reminder that if you're walking in envy towards someone and are being selfish, you've opened up the door to the devil to bring confusion and every evil work. That's incredibly sobering and should put up red flags immediately in your heart.

Screwtape says: "In civilised life domestic hatred usually expresses itself by saying things which would appear quite harmless on paper (the words are not offensive) but in such a voice, or at such a moment, that they are not

far short of a blow in the face. To keep this game up you and Glucose must see to it that each of these two fools has a sort of double standard.”

James 1:22-25 talks about a double standard in the life of a Christian; “22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*

If you want the blessing of God on your life, your family and your church, then being a doer of the Word. Don't allow double standards in your life.

1 John 2:9-11 also says; “9 *He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”*

If you feel like you're walking in darkness and can't see where you're going, you may need to allow the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and see if there is hatred there towards someone. In essence, you've turned out the lights and you've caused the darkness to come by not obeying God's word.

James 1:26 says; “26 *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.”*

1 Peter 5:8 says; “8 *Be [a]sober, be [b]vigilant; [c]because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

Screwtape says; “Finally, tell me something about the old lady's religious position. Is she at all jealous of the new factor in her son's life? at all piqued that he should have learned from others, and so late, what she considers she gave him such good opportunity of learning in childhood? Does she feel he is making a great deal of "fuss" about it--or that he's getting in on very easy terms? Remember the elder brother in the Enemy's story.”

We see that this man became a Christian later in life and maybe didn't go through what she went through. It almost sounds like the parable that Jesus gave on the vineyard workers in **Matthew 20** where the landowner hired laborers throughout the day and those hire at the end received the same amount as those who laboured all day. But those who worked all day complained about the injustice to not have received more. So, in the mothers eyes, she sees that her son has come in at the 'end of the day' and hasn't had to sweat and toil like her, and that his terms are easy. Sounds like jealousy and envy doesn't it.

It's a common thing in the body of Christ today where someone has a call on their life to preach the gospel, but because they didn't 'work their way in', they try to stop and hinder them. They don't want others to be filled with the Holy Spirit because they're not filled with the Holy Spirit - maybe because of lack of teaching or of a hard heart - and they don't want you to get it either. It's called jealousy, envy and strife. Similar to Saul chasing down David to kill him because of envy and jealousy.

The elder brother in the Enemy's story is found the parable that Jesus told about the Prodigal Son in **Luke 15:11-32**. (We know that the 'Enemy' that Screwtape is referring to is God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.) You probably know the story and after the backslidden brother returns home and is received with

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unconditional love from the Father, he (the older brother) says the following; “ 29 *So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ 31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’ ”*

The older brother didn’t want his wayward brother to just get back in the door without paying his dues and definitely was not eligible for the best robe, a ring for his finger nor a huge celebration on top of it. The older brother was mad at his father, arguing that for so many years he had been serving him and obeying his commands. It’s the attitude of many religious Christians today isn’t it. Many have this attitude with God today when the new born Christian comes into church or a backslidden person returns to Christ; what’s the general attitude? Jealousy and envy.

To put it into spiritual terms it could be a ‘religious older brother’ saying that they’ve been to church every Sunday, kept the 10 Commandments, never transgressed, donated their tithes faithfully, given to charities, donated their work, haven’t missed a prayer meeting and when some backslidden person or a new convert comes in and there is a great celebration, they’re full of envy because they’ve toiled all of their lives and no one, ‘in their opinion’, has ever celebrated over them, nor given them a love offering.

The attitude of the older brother is full of overweening pride of their religion, bound by grumbling and complaining full of envy, jealousy and strife. What those, like the older brother, never realized, is that they’ve had, at their asking, all of the heavenly Father’s blessings and infilling of the Holy Spirit all along, it was simply theirs for the asking. The Father said that all that He had was theirs, but they opted out.

Does this story sound familiar in any way? You may be the religious Christian big brother working out your salvation from the outside in, or you may be newborn Christian younger brother that the Holy Spirit is working on from the inside out. Either way it’s good to keep in mind that these Letters are schemes between two demons that are liars with no truth in them, and they have one purpose in mind and that is to be able to say of their patient some day, “He is now safe in our father’s house.”

What will the demons assigned to your life say about you after you die? Keep in mind that there are no fire exits in hell, once you in there is no way out.

Here’s another blast from the past called “[The Courtroom](#)” by Carman.