

**The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 17 ~ The, “All-I-Want” State of Mind
March 7th, 2021**

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short **Letter 17** for today’s Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

Screwtape says to Wormwood; *“The contemptuous way in which you spoke of gluttony as a means of catching souls, in your last letter, only shows your ignorance. One of the great, achievements of the last hundred years has been to deaden the human conscience on that subject, so that by now you will hardly find a sermon preached or a conscience troubled about it in the whole length and breadth of Europe. This has largely been effected by concentrating all our efforts on gluttony of Delicacy, not gluttony of Excess.”*

For the most part now a days, gluttony of excess has been swapped out with the gluttony of delicacy, and what the Bible teaches about the topic of excess, in any thing, is rarely preached in the pulpits. It’s all too clear in the times we’re living in, isn’t it?

The KJV Dictionary Definition of glutton is: *“One who indulges to excess in eating.” “1. One eager of any thing to excess.”*

So, let’s read in **Philippians 3:17-21** about where our focus should be as Christians; *“17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

It’s a clear indicator that an enemy of the cross is a person’s belly as their mind is on earthly things, the flesh, and not the heavenly realm.

As Christians we are taught that overeating is sin, but what about being excessive in the delicacies, the foods that have to be made perfect in order for a person to enjoy eating or drinking them? A Christian may say, they are not a drunkard or a glutton, but if the delicacies they enjoy in what appear to be meager portions, are not made to their liking and can’t be eaten, they are being excessive in appetite.

Screwtape says; *“Your patient’s mother, as I learn from the dossier and you might have learned from Globose, is a good example. She would be astonished--one day, I hope, will be--to learn that her whole life is enslaved to this kind of sensuality, which is quite concealed from her by the fact that the quantities involved are small. But what do quantities matter, provided we can use a human belly and palate to produce querulousness, impatience, uncharitableness, and self-concern?”*

So Christian, when the barista at your favorite coffee bar, does not make your humble once a week Tall, Half-Caff, Soy Latte at 120 Degrees just right, what is your response, and is it Christlike? Whether a Christian wants to admit it or not, there may be a series of excessive appetites for food that have crept into their lives that appear to be humble and not gluttonous, but is it?

Galatians 5:22-23 says; *“22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 [a]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

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THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS BY C.S. LEWIS

If we as Christians do not exemplify the fruits of the Holy Spirit, when the delicacies we enjoy are not just right to our liking, it's a clear indicator that we are walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit and what would appear to be a humble, meager portion of the world, has now become a stronghold for the devil to operate thru.

Screwtape says of the patient's mother; *"She is a positive terror to hostesses and servants. She is always turning from what has been offered her to say with a demure little sign and a smile "Oh please, please... all I want is a cup of tea, weak but not too weak, and the teeniest weeniest bit of really crisp toast". You see? Because what she wants is smaller and less costly than what has been set before her, she never recognises as gluttony her determination to get what she wants, however troublesome it may be to others."*

After Church, Christian, when you all go to your favorite diner, do the waiters and waitresses look forward to serving you or is the worst shift for them to work Sunday because of the lack of the fruits of the Holy Spirit operating in your life?

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, when the food you've ordered isn't perfect just as you wanted, you need to esteem those serving you more than yourself and not walk in selfish ambition or conceit. In the bigger picture, they're the one that wasn't able to attend Church because of their work and has gladly worked to serve you. It also gives you no reason to not give them a generous tip.

In **Romans 8:5**, the Apostle Paul says; *"5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."*

As Christians, we always have to let the Word correct us when we're in the flesh and not in the Spirit.

Screwtape says; *"The woman is in what may be called the "All-I-want" state of mind. All she wants is a cup of tea properly made, or an egg properly boiled, or a slice of bread properly toasted. But she never finds any servant or any friend who can do these simple things "properly"--because her "properly" conceals an insatiable demand for the exact, and almost impossible, palatal pleasures which she imagines she remembers from the past; a past described by her as "the days when you could get good servants" but known to us as the days when her senses were more easily pleased and she had pleasures of other kinds which made her less dependent on those of the table."*

It could be that's why many waiters and waitresses don't look forward to Sunday, when they get the after-Church group coming to be served with their, "all-I-want" mindset.

Let's use this letter as a spiritual mirror as to how Christians ought to live and how it applies to their personal walk with Christ. How many Christians in Church today are in the, "All-I-want" state of mind; all I want is a meager sermon that is to my liking? Meanwhile the Lord has prepared a feast in His word, but their selective hearing will only allow them to hear what they want to hear? Religious tradition will have a Christian totally reject what the Holy Spirit is wanting them to hear and therefore they are not able to grow in the knowledge of Christ, but remain on the milk instead of receiving the meat of God's word. How many immature Christians are in Church today only wanting to be fed seeker-sensitive, eternal security sermons, and cheap grace that costs them nothing? They reject the feast and choose only the delicacies.

Hebrews 5:12-14 talks about spiritual immaturity; *"12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the [a]oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he*

is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are [b]of full age, that is, those who by reason of [c]use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

A person can't discern between good and evil if they remain only a milk diet. They'll easily be led down a road of destruction of listening to false teaching and doctrine in doing so, because their appetite for God's Word isn't right. It's called selective hearing on a road to destruction, which keeps them from the truth, and from hearing the Holy Spirit who is their teacher.

The Apostle Paul tells Timothy in **2 Timothy 4:3-4**; “3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

Jesus is coming back soon to rapture His Bride, the Church, and now is not the time for a Christian to be in the, “All-I-want” state of mind, selectively hearing only what they want to tickle their itching ears.

Ezekiel 34 reveals what the devil wants to do to the Patient in this letter. The devil wants to get the Patient to sit under irresponsible Shepherds, or Pastors as we read about in this chapter in Ezekiel.

It says in **Ezekiel 34: 1-10**; “And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. 4 The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and [a]cruelty you have ruled them. 5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.” 7 ‘Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: 8 “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock”— 9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! 10 Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them. 11 ‘For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, [b]in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD. 16 “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.””

We know that this is a specific prophecy regarding Israel, some of which has been fulfilled and some is still unfulfilled, but as you read it, you can see clearly the parallel of how it applies to Pastors in Churches today. The devil would like the Patient to get under this type of false teaching, get him to believe a lie, or to even be a religious glutton as Ezekiel describes them, only feeding themselves.

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The devil, working on the vanity of the Patient, tries convincing him that gluttony is all part of being a man, to get him to be a connoisseur of the best food in the city, and which restaurant has the best steak etc. Again, just like these Shepherds in Ezekiel, having a gluttonous spirit to feed only themselves as **Verse 3** says; *“You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock.”*

Verse 4 says; *“...; but with force and [a]cruelty you have ruled them.”* The devil would like the Patient to be under a Church Pastor with this kind of unruliness, and as the Patient is already struggling with gluttony, just add to it a Pastor who is only looking after themselves who will not feed the Patient or the flock, but give him scraps. You see, religion prepares a religious feast of teaching, with pomp and tradition, but serve the scraps to the congregation. Just like one feeds their dog the scraps from under the table.

Verses 5-6 says; *“5 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered.” 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”*

It's no wonder the devil would like the Patient to be under Shepherds like this, as they would soon scatter and would be open prey for the devil to kill, steal and destroy. These irresponsible Shepherds in the sin of gluttony are only feeding themselves with all of the religious pomp and prestige on the exterior as they know the Bible inside out, yet they withhold its truths from the congregation, such simple truths like the baptism in the Holy Spirit for one.

I'd encourage you to read the full chapter of Ezekiel 34 as there are so many types and shadows of what is going on in the Church world today. Especially during this pandemic when so many have fled the pulpits. We see what the heart of the true Shepherd, Jesus, is for the sheep and it's not like the Shepherds that God rebuked. The good Shepherd seeks out the sheep to feed them. Today, some Pastors are not feeding their flock the word of God like they're commanded to, but are Pastors who are gluttonous in self indulgence and are in it only for themselves.

As we said earlier, Jesus is coming back soon to rapture His Bride, the Church, and now is not the time for a Christian to be in the, “All-I-want” state of mind, selectively hearing only what they want to tickle their itching ears. It doesn't go well for those who sit under Pastors who preaching false teaching, withholding the truth, who are feeding themselves but not feeding you. An example could be, a Pastor who was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and moved in the gifts of the Spirit, but does not practice it any longer because the devil lied to him about it, so he withholds the truth and knowledge about the baptism in the Holy Spirit to his congregation.

As you continue to read Ezekiel 34:17-31, you see how the prophetic future of Israel will be one of peace with King Jesus being the Good Shepherd over them, likewise, this is what Jesus wants for His Church today. But with all that's happened over this past year during the pandemic, many irresponsible Shepherd's are gone and the sheep have scattered. The Shepherds have not held the sheep together and that's not God's will. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church, but it will take true Shepherds to build the Church who genuinely care about the sheep and congregation, not gluttonous Shepherds, full of religious gluttony and self-indulgence not just of food, but of the Word.

It's a sobering word today, but it has to be taught. The whole council of God's word needs to be taught by Pastors and nothing is to be withheld from the congregation, so they too can grow to spiritual maturity. **Verse 26** says that there will be *‘showers of blessing’*, and I believe that's what God wants for His Church today.

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We'll end with what was already said, that Jesus is coming back soon to rapture His Bride, the Church, and now is not the time for a Christian to be in the, "All-I-want" state of mind, selectively hearing only what they want to tickle their itching ears. You don't want to be left behind because of the, "All-I-Wanted", state of mind.