

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 27 ~ Effectual, Fervent Prayers
September 26th, 2021

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short **Letter 27**, for today's Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

I'd like to start by reading a summary of Letter 27 from [Sparknotes](#). It says; *“Wormwood, writes Screwtape, is doing a terrible job. His efforts to use the Patient's love to distract him from the Enemy are canceled out when the Patient prays for help with his distraction. Wormwood should make the Patient pray only for spiritual aid, rather than make simple requests for daily bread. If that fails, he should make the Patient believe his simple prayers have no real effect. The Enemy sees all of time at once. But Wormwood can make humans believe their granted prayers are a consequence of cause and effect stemming backward in time, while the cause, the prayer, the effect, and all the choices of the individual exist, for the Enemy, at once. Yes, human writers have written about this, but Wormwood need not worry. Hell has dealt with human learning by introducing the “Historical Point of View.” As a result, when scholars encounter old ideas, they are not concerned with whether the ideas are true. Instead, they ask questions like: Who influenced the idea? Is the idea consistent with the writers' ideas elsewhere? This keeps humans from learning from the past.”*

Also, this is an analysis from [Litcharts](#); *“Lewis leaves the problem of prayer almost until the end of his novel. In part, this is because prayer is one of the most challenging parts of Christianity for outsiders to understand. While Lewis doesn't say outright that prayer always works—if it's petitionary—he does imply that people are wrong for doubting that prayer works. The implication is that everyday, petitionary prayer does work, provided that people pray for things they genuinely need, and allow sufficient time for their prayers to be answered.”*

Screwtape says the following to Wormwood; *“False spirituality is always to be encouraged. On the seemingly pious ground that “praise and communion with God is the true prayer”, humans can often be lured into direct disobedience to the Enemy who (in His usual flat, commonplace, uninteresting way) has definitely told them to pray for their daily bread and the recovery of their sick. You will, of course, conceal from him the fact that the prayer for daily bread, interpreted in a “spiritual sense”, is really just as crudely petitionary as it is in any other sense.”*

Jesus left a perfect model of prayer that dispels all the lies and distractions that the devil would want to plant in the Christians mind about the ineffectiveness of prayer.

It's found in **Matthew 6:5-14**; *“5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the [a]hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you [b]openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. [c]For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. 14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”*

When you pray this prayer, it's ok to personalize it with specific petitions that would apply to your life in the here and now, and not just read it as a general blanket prayer that covers everything. This is what makes it not a

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repetitive religious exercise, but rather a model prayer to follow and personally apply to your life by being transparent to God about your present daily needs, debts, debtors, temptations, and forgiveness.

It's the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much in the spirit realm as well as the physical, and general, religious, repetitive prayers are not going to avail much of anything. But these general, repetitive and religious prayers is what the devil would like you get caught up in, he doesn't want your prayers to avail much in his kingdom of darkness.

The Apostle James talks in **James 5:13-18** about meeting specific needs in prayer; *"13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 [a]Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, [b]fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit."*

The devil would like to separate you from this kind of prayer. He'd love to have you removed as an intercessor right out of the picture; with all your personality, the righteousness you walk in, the holy life which gives you the right to boldly stand before God and make your petitions, to have His ear.

It's not the, "if it be Thy will Lord to heal the sick" prayer, but rather it's the "prayer of faith that heals the sick". You're walking in faith, you're being proactive with God's Word, you're speaking it knowing it's alive. We know that it's always God's will to heal the sick, and that He doesn't afflict us with sickness but rather heals us of the sicknesses that the devil afflicts us with. Could it be that a lot of Christians have bought into the lies of the devil that it's Gods will for them to be sick and infirmed and that no prayer of faith can heal them unless, "God wills it?"

Look what Jesus says in **Mark 11:20-25**; *"20 Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." 22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."*

These are proactive prayers of faith, they don't have fear, doubt and unbelief in them but have action. We have to keep in perspective that Screwtape is operating in lies and deception and is behaving like his father Satan, who is the father of lies, but how many Christians today have bought into his lies and are behaving the same way when it comes to not praying the prayers of faith and believing that God afflicts His children with sickness?

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for being of their father the devil in **John 8:37-47**; *"37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have [a]seen with your father." 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and*

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the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God's words; therefore, you do not hear, because you are not of God."

How many Christians are not able to hear God's Word like these Pharisees? How many Christians are rejecting God's Word about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? I've notice that when Christians pray the prayer of faith and stand on God's Word regarding healing of the body, provision for needs to be met, and deliverance from the evil in times of temptation, that other Christians, that don't believe and pray the prayer of faith, are often very critical and hostile towards them, to the point that they go so far to accredit the miraculous answers to prayers of faith to being of the devil, and this also would include the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that are given to them.

It's the prayer of faith that moves mountains not the opposite, and if Christians are accrediting the works of the Holy Spirit to be that of the devil, this is what blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is, AND IT IS UNFORGIVABLE. It makes you wonder if they're a Christian at all.

Dake's Bible shows the meaning of blasphemy as; 1. *Speak evil of*; 2. *Revile*; 3. *Insult by blasphemy*; 4. *Defame*; 5. *Slander*. *Explaining what blasphemy is: any insulting remark or curse, even attributing to Satan the works of the Holy Spirit. It is unforgivable if it is done maliciously and knowingly as referenced in Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-31, 1Timothy 1:13.*

Jesus says to the religious leaders in **Matthew 12:22-32**; "22 *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the [a]blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by [b]Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."* 25 *But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. 31 "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come."*

You can hear the religious people of today saying; 'these Pentecostals are full of devils', or 'these Pentecostals are speaking in tongues of demons', or 'they're prophesying under the influence of a demon', or 'they're operating in the gifts of demons.' Think about it; it goes on all the time. They're coming against the gifts and baptism of the Holy Spirit, accrediting it to being the works of the devil, which is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit as we just read. The Pharisees were accrediting the works of the Spirit to the devil and Jesus said it was unforgivable. This is a sobering word as there are many Christians who speak flippantly against the Holy Spirit's work in a Pentecostal church.

Screwtape says; "*But since your patient has contracted the terrible habit of obedience, he will probably continue such "crude" prayers whatever you do. But you can worry him with the haunting suspicion that the practice is absurd and can have no objective result. 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."

Again, we see the lies of Screwtape. I would rather align myself with what the Holy Bible says and pray the prayer of faith that avails much, than to pray prayers of fear, doubt and unbelief that avail nothing in the end. Don't buy into the lies that those prayers of faith are ineffective just because some prayers were not answered. I would rather pray the prayer of faith and see my prayers not answered, than not pray the prayer of faith at all. You've heard what comes out of Christians mouths, mocking the Holy Spirit, mocking spirit-filled Christians who are praying the prayer of faith, yet not seeing answers to those prayers. Again, I would rather pray the prayer of faith than not.

Jesus illustrates this in the parable of the persistent widow in **Luke 18:1-8**; "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor [a]regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, [b]'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow troubles me I will [c]avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " 6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

We are living in a time like never before, that praying the Word of God found in His Bible, is under attack by both Christians and non-Christians, and now is not the time lose faith in God's Word, but rather pray the Bible continuously, and remind God that this is what it says in His Bible about the situations you're praying about.

When you pray the Word of God, the words of Jesus, it's alive, and God will watch over His word to perform it. Here are some scriptures to edify you about faith and the Word;

Hebrews 11:1; "11 Now faith is the [a]substance of things hoped for, the [b]evidence of things not seen."

Romans 10:17; "17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Hebrews 4:12; "12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When Jesus was under temptation by the devil, He always responded by saying 'it is written.'

Matthew 4:1-11; "4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' " 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.' " 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not [a]tempt the Lord your God.' " 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to

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him, [b] “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”

So, if this is how Jesus responded to the devil when being tempted, what would make us exempt to not have to do the same? No matter what the situation is your facing today, Christian, find out what the Bible has to say about those situations, and say to the devil, ‘it is written’, and quote the scripture that was found in the Bible.

For instance, if the devil is fighting against you with fear. Quote the following scriptures at him;

2 Timothy 1:7; *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

Philippians 4:6-7; *“6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

John 14:27; *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Psalms 27:1; *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”*

No matter what the devil is coming at you with, let him know, ‘it is written’, and quote the Bible scripture as it would apply to the temptation.

The devil would love for you to view this as a, ‘word of faith’ movement, established in the ‘80s, instead of faith in God’s Word, the Holy Bible, with its history established in the story of creation, and is preceded by many historical events where men and women have walked by faith in God and not by sight.

Examples of the Old Testament Saints can be found in **Hebrews 11:1-40**;

“1 Now faith is the [a]substance of things hoped for, the [b]evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3 By faith we understand that the [c]worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”

Faith at the Dawn of History

“4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”

Faithful Abraham

“8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she [d] bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged

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Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”

The Heavenly Hope

“13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off [e]were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.”

The Faith of the Patriarchs

“17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 [f]of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”

The Faith of Moses

“23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command. 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the [g]passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the [h]reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures [i]in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.”

By Faith They Overcame

“30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who [j]did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, [k]were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

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We must remember that all of these saints, were alive before Jesus came, but by faith they're hope was in Him, the coming Messiah. Neither had they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit as we have. This is what the devil would like to take out of history as Screwtape alludes to.

So our promise is in **Hebrews 12:1-2**; *"12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the [a]author and [b]finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

This is the race we're running; this is the history we have as part of our inheritance, no matter how much the devil would like to remove it, that we have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us of men and women who went before us who did not receive Jesus, salvation or the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Yet all of them walked by faith. What we have today, they laid down their lives for, walking by faith and not by sight and that's exactly what the devil would like to remove from your life today and also to remove it from your prayer life. He'd like to remove all the Christian history and replace it with dead religion, dead works, and to even blaspheme the Holy Spirit and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

We have a great inheritance, great opportunities to pray God's word and great opportunities to say, 'it is written devil', this is our promise. Let's stop leaning on our understanding but start using God's Word as a sword against the kingdom of darkness.