

The Screwtape Letters ~ Letter 24 ~ Bondservant?
August 22nd, 2021

Before reading the following overview of this Letter, we suggest that you click on the link above to read the short **Letter 24**, for today's Illustrated Message, which will help you understand the following message.

Screwtape says to Wormwood; *“I have been in correspondence with Slumtrimpet who is in charge of your patient's young woman, and begin to see the chink in her armour. It is an unobtrusive little vice which she shares with nearly all women who have grown up in an intelligent circle united by a clearly defined belief; and it consists in a quite untroubled assumption that the outsiders who do not share this belief are really too stupid and ridiculous.”*

The ‘outsiders’ mentioned here are unbelievers and this young woman is operating in spiritual pride toward those who don't believe the way she or her family believes, nor believe in the traditions that have been handed down to her. Her perception is that she is in the truth, and everyone who doesn't believe as she does, are stupid and ridiculous. It's something that becomes engrained in religious people.

Pride is sin and when exposed in a Christians life, needs to be repented of like all other sins, and in fact it falls under the category of the six things that the Lord hates and that are an abomination to Him.

Proverbs 6:16-19 says; *“16 These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”*

Have you ever seen a proud look from someone, or have heard the term that their thumbing their nose at you, or when they walk by you, they stick their nose in the air when they walk by you? In God's eyes, a proud look is an abomination and is as bad as the other six things listed in this scripture which are very serious. This is something to keep in mind as a Christian, regardless if you think there is a good reason to do it, just don't do it. Instead, walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

James 4:1-10 talks how pride promotes strife; *“Where do [a]wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and [b]war. [c]Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 [d]Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

Some would say, ‘this is why I'm so religiously separate from the world, this is why I don't fellowship at all with the world’. Christians will even use this as an excuse to not talk to those who are outside of the church, perverting the scripture to walk with their head in the air or to the ground, not even engaging in communication with unbelievers. In doing so, they don't share the gospel with them which is the greatest commandment Jesus has given us. By avoiding the sinner, you're not going to be able to lead them to Jesus and save their soul. This is a religious spirit that comes upon Christians. It hinders them from sharing the gospel which they claim to live

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by. It causes them to be puffed up and proud and can become so dysfunctional, that they'll live in communes. They see it as, 'coming out from among the world and being separate', when in reality it's being very religious.

Screwtape says of the patient's girlfriend; *“Hers, which she supposes to be due to Faith, is in reality largely due to the mere colour she has taken from her surroundings. It is not, in fact, very different from the conviction she would have felt at the age of ten that the kind of fish-knives used in her father's house were the proper or normal or "real" kind, while those of the neighbouring families were "not real fish-knives" at all.”*

Religious pride will convince you that what you're doing is the only way and what those around you are doing, is not the real thing. It's a very narrow, twisted, perverted belief that is opposite of what Jesus requires of you as a Christian. It's the 'us 4 and no more' mentality. This young woman that is mentioned above has a very condescending attitude to go so far as to say that those who don't believe as she does are stupid and ridiculous.

Have you ever been continually snubbed by a person who is a Christian? It's a very religious spirit that has come in somehow, and somewhere has entered them at sometime, be it thru family tradition, or false Bible teaching about, 'coming out from among the world and being separate.' It's a spiritual 'silver spoon in the mouth' mentality, that opens the door for religious spirits to operate and ultimately take over a Christian without them even knowing it. So blinded that they don't even realize they're operating in it.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 says how immorality must be judged; *“9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to [a]keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.”*

The Apostle Paul clarifies the idea of 'coming out from among the world and being separate', that it's the Christian who is walking in ungodly ways, that you're to not to keep company with, and not to even eat with. A Christian must be salt and light to the sinner, to rub shoulders with them to point them to Jesus, but not engaging in their sinful ways.

Jesus says this parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector in **Luke 18:9-14**; *“9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

Screwtape says about the Patient; *“It is always the novice who exaggerates. The man who has risen in society is over-refined, the young scholar is pedantic. In this new circle your patient is a novice. He is there daily meeting Christian life of a quality he never before imagined and seeing it all through an enchanted glass because he is in love. He is anxious (indeed the Enemy commands him) to imitate this quality. Can you get him to imitate this defect in his mistress and to exaggerate it until what was venial in her becomes in him the strongest and most beautiful of the vices--Spiritual Pride?”*

Christian, the devil would love to see you become spiritually proud, like that of the Scribes and Pharisees whose father was not God but the devil. A good question to ask yourself, Christian; “am I behaving like a Scribe and

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Pharisee?" Am I acting like this toward someone in my circle, my place of work, at the gym, at the supermarket or someone in my town?

Jesus says this in **Matthew 15:1-20**; "15 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"— 6 then he need not honor his father [a]or mother.' Thus you have made the [b]commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:8 'These people [c]draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' " 10 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." 12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." 15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us." 16 So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

Screwtape says; "*You must teach him to mistake his contrast between the circle that delights and the circle that bores him for the contrast between Christians and unbelievers. He must be made to feel (he'd better not put it into words) "how different we Christians are"; and by "we Christians" he must really, but unknowingly, mean "my set"; and by "my set" he must mean not "The people who, in their charity and humility, have accepted me", but "The people with whom I associate by right".*

There is a privileged mindset in religious pride that comes into play here to declare your rights and privileges. Do you notice how the temptation is to take your eyes off of 'we' and turn it into 'me or my'? It's a 'me, myself and I' mindset. Church begins to evolve around me, myself and I, and my rights.

Sounds familiar, like that of Lucifer. **Isaiah 14:12-14** talks about his fall; "12 How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"

Lucifer wanted to be served and not serve, he wanted to be God. How many Christians has he tempted to have the same attitude? To have a religious privileged mentality? The only realistic right any Christian has in the Church body is to be a bondservant of Jesus and obey what He wants you to do with your life, that's it. Just as God gave Lucifer tasks and duties to do as the highest archangel in heaven, somewhere along the line he got it in his heart to step out of his duties and enter into pride, rights and privileges.

How many Christians are going to church with that mentality today; I'm here to be served, I have rights in this place, I came for you to serve me pastor, I came to be served by my brothers and sisters. It's an unrealistic expectation of God to walk into church that way, for a Pastor or members of the congregation to act that way,

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because it shows that you're walking in the flesh and in pride, but not in the Spirit. If you were in the Spirit, you'd walk in with the mentality of; how can I serve you today, what can I do for the church, how can I operate in the gifts the Holy Spirit has given me today?

In **Matthew 16:24-25** Jesus shows what your rights are; *"24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."*

As a Christian, you're to lose your life, deny yourself, lay down all the rights and privileges you think you have based upon whatever religious tradition that has been handed down for years or generations. Go to church to serve.

Here are a number of examples of what the apostles and disciples called themselves;

Romans 1:1; *"I Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God."*

2 Corinthians 4:5; *"5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake."*

Galatians 1:10; *"10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."*

Philippians 1:1; *"I Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the [a]bishops and deacons:"*

James 1:1; *"I James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:"*

2 Peter 1:1; *"I Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have [a]obtained like[b] precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:"*

Jude 1; *"I Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are called, [a]sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:"*

Jesus rebuked the disciples about entering into pride in **Mark 9:33-35** when there was a dispute about being the greatest; *"33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you [a]disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. 35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."*

Christian, a good question is to ask yourself today; "Am I a bondservant of Christ and His Church, and am I the last of all and servant of all?"

Screwtape says; *"What you want is to keep a sly self-congratulation mixing with all his thoughts and never allow him to raise the question "What, precisely, am I congratulating myself about?" The idea of belonging to an inner ring, of being in a secret, is very sweet to him. Play on that nerve. Teach him, using the influence of this girl when she is silliest, to adopt an air of amusement at the things the unbelievers say. Some theories which he may meet in modern Christian circles may here prove helpful; theories, I mean, that place the hope of society in some inner ring of "clerks", some trained minority of theocrats. It is no affair of yours whether those theories are true or false; the great thing is to make Christianity a mystery religion in which he feels himself one of the initiates."*

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What Screwtape is pushing is really how cults get started, by becoming secret societies or churches or congregations.

Screwtape doesn't want the Patient to become a bondservant of Christ and His Church, but would rather he become puffed up in spiritual pride and as we read in the story, "*keep Christianity a mystery religion in which he feels himself one of the initiates.*"

We read from GotQuestions.org the following on what a bondservant is. "*Throughout the New Testament, the word bondservant, slave, or servant is applied metaphorically to someone absolutely devoted to Jesus. Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, and Jude all describe themselves as "bondservants of Christ" (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1, NKJV).*

Believers today should still consider themselves bondservants or slaves of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:22; Ephesians 6:6; 2 Timothy 2:24). He is our Lord, and our allegiance is due to Him alone. As bondservants, we renounce other masters (Matthew 6:24) and give ourselves totally to Him (Matthew 16:24).

That's what it comes down to, those are your rights and privileges as a Christian. Ask yourself today; am I behaving like a bondservant of Christ towards outsiders, towards my Christian brothers and sisters? What is your attitude; is it to serve and help build the church, to utilize your gifts and calling or have you lost that bondservant attitude that you once had and are now caught up in rights, privileges and religious traditions?

In fact, to be called a bondservant to you would almost make you think to mock it or to think how silly it is to be called that. You'd mock them to be so 'spiritual and deep', thinking 'who do they think they are to call themselves a bondslave'? Can't you see questions like those arising from some who has lost that heart, so blinded by spiritual pride and rights, having lost the attitude of going to church to serve arguing that they've put in their time at church, they have rights to not serve any longer but desire to be served. That kind of attitude has to go so the Lord can use you somewhere else. Move on, find some place where you can serve.

Proverbs 16:18 says; "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*" The same spirit of pride that got Lucifer thrown out of heaven is the same pride that could cause your downfall.

Proverbs 6:16 says; "*16 These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look...*"

Give up the religious rights and privileged mindset today and get back to being a bondservant of Christ, go back to your first love when you were born again, go back to the days when you were discovering your Holy Spirit given gifts to serve the body of Christ. Undig and unstop the well that is full of me, myself and I. Let the wellspring of life start flowing again. Get back to being bondservant of Jesus and His church.