



Discussion Questions: Week 8

Letter 27

In this letter, Screwtape advises Wormwood to attack the prayer life of the patient by seeking to capitalize on distraction or have the patient “overly spiritualize” his prayers. Screwtape also recommends convincing the patient that prayers are not efficacious on the grounds that whatever he prayed for would have happened or not without prayer. The goal is to render the patients prayer life inert or to get him to stop praying altogether.

1. What does Screwtape say Wormwood should do when distractions or sins surface during the patient’s prayers?
2. Read Matthew 6:9-13. How does Jesus instruct us to pray?
3. Describe Screwtape’s “heads I win, tails you lose” argument.

Letter 28

Screwtape begins this letter criticizing Wormwood for letting his patient remove himself from worldly friends, fall in love with a Christian woman and thus fail at gaining a foothold with his spiritual attacks. Wormwood’s only hope to corrupt the patient is a long life in order to inflict him with dull monotony leading to worldly attachment or despair.

1. Though Wormwood thought the war would upset the spiritual life of the patient, it seems to be bolstering it instead. How is this occurring?
2. What is it about death that is terrifying? How should Christians view death?
3. What are the possible pitfalls of middle-aged prosperity? What are the possible pitfalls of middle-aged adversity?

Letter 29

The patient's town is now likely to be bombed, so in this letter Screwtape advises Wormwood to stoke fear and cowardice in his patient, leading to necessary feelings of shame in order to drive the patient away from God.

1. What does it look like to identify with those who are experiencing suffering that you aren't?
2. Is it proper to forgive someone who has not wronged you?
3. What role does courage have in the Christian faith?