**Screwtape Letters Series: Letter One**

[Screwtape PDF: Letters 1-4](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SS7qN88RL3vJyZOIpGpJ_DCXcknRpx4D/view)

[Screwtape Mandarin PDF: Letters 1-4](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SS7qN88RL3vJyZOIpGpJ_DCXcknRpx4D/view) (Highly recommend to read in Mandarin if English isn’t your first language)

**Discussion Questions:**

Read Letter 1

1. Screwtape suggests that at one point, people would base their actions on whether an idea was true or false - but that we no longer did so. Do you see evidence of this being true?
2. Screwtape encourages labels like “strong,” “practical,” “conventional,” “Republican,” etc. Do you find that we use these labels more than “true” or “false?” How are they different from true and false?
3. What does Screwtape mean by the “pressure of the ordinary?” How does it keep us from God? (Optional: Read Luke 14: 15-24)
4. Read Philippians 3: 1-14

How are we to draw near to God and to know Him when the pressure of the ordinary is all around us?

Extra Credit:

1. What did Screwtape mean by that “abominable advantage” God has over Satan? Read Hebrews 2: 14-18

[**Sermon Slides:**](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/172HU2_HEFqYYl5vnN7gz40aQShewdbz9qQSgLEnCXcc/edit#slide=id.g5cd6223957_0_62)

**Screwtape letters**

* C.S. Lewis and Screwtape letters
* Perspective of demons (our father = satan, the enemy = God, all advice are what we should NOT do)

**Introduction:**

* I grew a lot from this book in my early days as a believer
* Ok, I believe in Jesus….now what?
* Dense little book - and understanding each paragraph and sentence can be laborious
* Misconception that christians need to turn off their brains and let faith take over
* 2 Peter encourages us to grow in the grace and KNOWLEDGE of our lord

**Lies of the enemy:**

* Pastor and I decided to structure the sermon series around a central lie in each letter
* Jesus refers to Satan as a father of lies
* We see it in story of adam and eve - how satan twisted the truth
* The best, most believable lies always have a bit of truth twisted into it

**Letter one:**

* Many of the lies in these letters are so good, you tell yourself that you do not believe it, but you actually do deep down
* We live in a postmodern era - basically means you determine your own truth
* Indian parable of the blind men and the Elephant
* It is considered rude to say you have the answer - what’s true for you is true for you, what’s true for me is true for me
* What if my truth says your truth is a lie - is it still true?
* What’s at stake is the grounds on which we believe in God’s existence, his holiness, our sinfulness, and his work towards reconciling us to himself. If we believe that there is no objective, knowlable truth - then we cannot believe this.
* Truth is self sustaining and does not depend on our belief or disbelief to be true.
* If satan gets us to believe in this lie, we are lost to God and satan wins us.

**Advice 1: don’t argue with your human**

* We see this lie in screwtape’s first advice to his nephew wormwood, do not argue with your human on the grounds of truth vs false.
* The more you engage humans on the level of truth vs falsehood, the less they are able to believe in the lie of there being no objective knowable truths.
* Absolutes like true/false compels commitment and action - whereas looser terms do not
* Instead, rather than trying to make him believe in false statements, get him to believe those statements are strong, practical, conventional, socially appropriate, etc.

**Counter advice:**

* DO think about ideas, issues, thoughts, and actions through lense of true/false as measured against God
* Example: “Materialism (anti spiritualism) is true” or “I am the master of my own destiny”
* Romans 12: Do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is –His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

**Advice 2: Distract your human with “real life”**

* Let me read you guys a section from this book:

I once had a patient, a sound atheist, who used to read in the British museum. One day, as he sat reading, I saw a train of thought in his mind beginning to go the wrong way (meaning starting to think about God). The enemy (God), of course, was at his elbow in a moment. Before I knew where I was I saw my twenty years’ work beginning to totter. If I had lost my head and begun to attempt a defense by argument I would have been undone. But I was not such a fool. I struck instantly at the part of the man which I had best under my control and suggested that it was just about time he had some lunch. The Enemy presumably made the counter-suggestion that this was more important than lunch. At least I think that must have been his line for when I said ‘quite. In fact much too important to tackle at the end of a morning,’ the patient brightened up considerably; and by the time I had added ‘ much better come back after lunch and go into it with a fresh mind,’ he was already halfway to the door. Once he was in the street the battle was won. I showed him a newsboy shouting the midday paper and a No. 73 bus going past, and before he reached the bottom of the steps I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd ideas might come into a man’s head when he was shut up alone with his books, a healthy dose of ‘real life’ (by which he meant the bus and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all ‘that sort of thing’ just couldn’t be true.

**Counter advice:**

* Pressure of the ordinary: Real life can be distracting… Feed the baby, dress the baby, play with baby, feed baby again, put baby to sleep, mow the lawn, clean the garage, answer work email, feed baby, watch tv, bathe baby, put baby to bed, play video game, comfort baby, etc.
* Parable of the banquet
* 3 excuses, bought a field, bought oxen, or recently married were valid reasons for military exemption - but not for an invitation from God into his Kingdom
* What is at stake for these three who disregarded the king’s banquet invitation is missing a banquet - but the banquet was a metaphor for the kingdom of heaven.
* These are three who allowed “real life” to distract them from heeding God’s invitation and entering his kingdom.

**Conclusion:**

* What is at stake IS one’s entry or rejection of the kingdom of heaven
* This is the essence of true Spiritual warfare
* To win you from God, Satan does not need vast armies of demons or wage glorious battle over your soul. He does not need you to become a satanic cultist. He does not need you to be a drug addict or an alcoholic. He doesn’t need you to commit murder or live a life of hedonistic excess... All he has to do is get you to believe simple little lies like this one.
* He just needs you to be a quiet, polite, unassuming person who is preoccupied with the physical “real life” and does not think about Godly truths or spiritual realities.
* If you know yourself to be a Christian, do not let a family, a career, or your possessions and hobbies and leisures be the things that pulls you away from God. Reflect on God’s truth often
* Knowing God rather than merely have faith in God (adam knew eve, joseph knew mary)