

Grace of Christ Yakima

Leader Study Guide: Community Life

Part 1: The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis¹

The Sixth Week in our Fall 2021 10-week Grace of Christ Church-wide Community Life Series (*started September 12 and continues through the week of November 14*)

Please use only what you find helpful in this guide.

Week 6 (The Screwtape Letters: Chapters 10, 11, and 12)

Get to Know You Questions

1. What is one of your guilty pleasures? Not something wrong ... but you feel a bit guilty as you enjoy it.
2. What were some of the rules you grew up with that are no longer a big deal (dancing, cards ...)? Why were they forbidden when you were a kid?

Overview of the Study (We will be studying select chapters in the book)

Week 1: Prefaces and Chapter 1

Week 6: Chapters 10, 11, and 12

Week 2: Chapters 2, 3, and 4

Week 7: Chapter 13 and 14

Week 3: Chapters 5, 6, and 7

Week 8: Chapter 15

Week 4: Chapter 8

Week 9: Chapter 16

Week 5: Chapter 9

Week 10: Chapters 17, 18, and 19

Tips to reading The Screwtape Letters:

1. Each chapter was written as if it were a letter from a senior tempter instructing a junior tempter on how to ruin a person's (Christian) life.
2. Remember as you read that it was intentionally written from a diabolical point of view²
3. The devil and his followers are master liars. Keep that in mind as you read this book.
4. Each letter reveals how our enemy, the Devil, hopes to render us ineffective in our Christian life, and ultimately to ruin/destroy us.

Read each chapter out loud as a group, after each chapter take time to review and discuss the questions below that relate to that chapter, and other questions that surface from your reading. When the group has completed one chapter move to the next. You may not, likely will not, get through all the chapters or questions. That's OK. Reminder: The goal isn't to complete the questions but to follow the Holy Spirit as He moves and speaks in and through those in your group.

Questions from Chapter X (10)

¹ C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters, 1982 Edition, Touchstone book: Simon & Schuster, New York.

² On writing The Screwtape Letters, 'Though I had never written more easily, I never wrote with less enjoyment ... though it was easy to twist one's mind into the diabolical attitude, it was not fun, or not for long. The strain produced a sort of spiritual cramp. The work into which I had projected myself while I spoke through Screwtape was all dust, grit, thirst, and itch. Every trace of beauty, freshness, and geniality had to be excluded. It almost smothered me before I was done. It would have smothered my readers if I had prolonged it.'"

1. Screwtape writes, "I was delighted to hear from Triptweeze (another tempter) that your patient has made some very desirable new acquaintances."
 - Do you believe that Screwtape is right when he counsels Wormwood that certain "friends" can actually cause trouble for a person and harm or ruin their Christian faith?
 - Does this agree with 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals'"?

2. When we spent most of our time with friends who do not have the same convictions we have is there a temptation to be "silent when we ought to speak and laugh when we should be silent?"
 - Why might this happen? Discuss. If you do not think this happens, give reasons and examples.
 - Screwtape says, "All mortals tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be." Have you seen this happen in your life or in the lives of others? How can a person keep from turning into what they are pretending to be?
 - Jesus ate meals with, spent time with, people who did not share his understanding of God or how to live a holy God-honoring life. Do you? Is it important for you to spend time with those who do not believe as you believe and live their lives as you try to live your life? Why or why not?

3. Screwtape speaks about the patient becoming comfortable living "two parallel lives; he will not only appear to be, but will actually be, a different man in each of the circles he frequents ... He can be taught to enjoy kneeling besides the grocer on Sunday just because he remembers that the grocer could not possibly understand the urbane and mocking world which he inhabited on Saturday evening; and contrariwise, to enjoy the bawdy and blasphemy over the coffee with these admirable friends all the more because he is aware of a 'deeper,' 'spiritual' world within him which they cannot understand." He becomes one person when with his non-church friends, and a different person with his non-church friends.
 - What kinds of potential problems could this create for a person, for a Christian?
 - How long could you keep this up, and at what cost to your relationships with others, with God, with yourself?
 - Reads **Psalm 119:113-114** "I hate the double-minded, but I love your law. ¹¹⁴ You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word."
 - **Read James 1: 6-8** "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Questions from Chapter XI (11)

1. Screwtape writes, that all the new friends of the patient "are thoroughly reliable people; steady, consistent scoffers and worldlings who without any spectacular crimes are progressing quietly and comfortably towards Our Father's house."
 - How can a person, without any spectacular sins, be in danger of hell? Is it, at times, easier for someone who is well aware of BIG sins in their life to seek Jesus, or is it easier for someone with modest and manageable sins to seek Jesus?
 - Consider Luke 15, the parable of the Prodigal Sons.

- The younger son knows he has messed up and that he is in a desperate place, he realizes he is at the mercy of his father. He returns home.
 - The older son feels he has worked hard for his Father, given up everything, and gotten very little in return. He remains outside the home and refuses the invitation of his Father.
2. Screwtape writes about the different causes of human laughter. He states, "What that real cause is we do not know. Something like it is expressed in much of that detestable art which the humans call music, and something like it occurs in heaven."
- How would you define the four following causes of human laughter Lewis writes about? Which of these types of humor serve the purposes of God? Are there some that do not?
 - Joy _____
 - Fun _____
 - the Joke Proper: _____
 - Flippancy: _____
3. Why do some, even Christians, laugh less as they grow in years? Is there a remedy for this? Discuss.
4. Are there times when a putdown, a criticism, a mean comment is accepted (although it should not be) because it is turned into a joke?
5. Do you agree with Screwtape that, "mere cowardice is shameful; cowardice boasted of with humorous exaggerations and grotesque gestures can be passed off as funny. Cruelty is shameful - unless the cruel man can represent it as a practical joke."
- What happens to the jokester, and to the object of the jokester's attack, when the jokester uses humor to tear a person down.
 - How should Christians use humor?
 - What is the purpose of humor? Why did God create us with a desire for, and the capacity for, humor?

Questions from Chapter XII (12)

1. Screwtape writes about the benefit (for devils) of a person retaining the external habits of Christian life even after they are living in a way that is taking them farther and farther from God. Do you think this is possible? Why would devils encourage this type of approach to Christian faith?
2. Why do some people "hate every idea that suggests Him (God), just as men in financial embarrassment hate the very sight of a bankbook"?
 - Respond to this quote, "A few weeks ago you had to tempt him to unreality and inattention in his prayers: but now you will find him opening his arms to you and almost begging you to distract his purpose and benumb his heart. He will want his prayers to be unreal, for he will dread nothing so much as effective contact with the Enemy (God)."
 - Why does this happen?

- What is the remedy when this begins to happen?
3. Screwtape writes, "You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy (God). It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed, the safest road to Hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."
- Do you agree that small sins can be as deadly as big sins? (Frog in the Kettle)
 - How have you seen this lived out in your life and the life of others?

If you have any questions or comments, if you need help with this study, with members of your group, or with technology, please call (248-7940 x114) or email (curt@yakimagrace.com)

10-15-2021 CM