

Grade Eleven: **Theology**
Course: **Christian Ethics**
Text: ***The Screwtape Letters***
Author: **C. S. Lewis**

The Screwtape Letters Study Guide

1. *The Screwtape Letters* is written as an epistolary novel. What reasons do you think Lewis had for giving his novel this form? In what ways do letters affect our reception of the concepts and arguments presented?
2. It can be disorienting to read a novel written from the perspective of someone you know to be untrustworthy and deceitful. Throughout the book, Screwtape inverts terms used by Christians, making them his own and giving them a new meaning. (“Our Father Below,” “The Enemy,” etc.) What do these inversions illustrate about the relationship between Heaven and Hell? Why does Screwtape use these inverted symbols and not his own?
3. Screwtape’s tries to disabuse Wormwood of the idea that he should influence his “patient” through argument and reason. According to Screwtape, what is wrong with this type of persuasion? How should Wormwood proceed instead?
4. On a related note, why does Screwtape warn Wormwood not to use science as a defense against Christianity?
5. Screwtape insists that Wormwood should keep his patient’s attention fixed on “real life.” What does “real life” mean to Screwtape? How does focusing on it keep the patient out of the hands of the Enemy?
6. According to Screwtape’s first letter, what is the “abominable advantage” The Enemy has over those trying to steer the patient to Our Father Below?
7. Wormwood often makes the mistake of assuming that the War---and all the pain and suffering that it causes---will lead the patient into the hands of Our Father Below. Why does Screwtape think that Wormwood is mistaken?
8. According to Screwtape, what advantage is gained by convincing the patient that Wormwood and the world he inhabits does not exist?
9. To which realm does true pleasure belong? Who created it and who has not yet been able to do so? Does this change our assumptions about how someone is led to Our Father Below?

10. In the same vein, is fun something that Screwtape encourages Wormwood to lead his patient to?
11. “The characteristic of Pains and Pleasures is that they are unmistakably real, and therefore, as far as they go, give the man who feels them a touchstone of reality” (p. 64). According to Screwtape, why are ‘Pains and Pleasures’ a bad thing for the patient to experience?
12. On several occasions, Screwtape discusses the ways in which religious communities can actually draw the patient away from The Enemy. How so? In what ways can organized religion lead the patient to Our Father Below?
13. How does Screwtape suggest Wormwood influence the patient’s understanding of love and sexuality? (See Letters 19 and 20.)
14. Screwtape says that “What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call ‘Christianity And.’” What is “Christianity And”? What is its opposite?