

Letter 5: War

When I see the temporal suffering of humans who finally escape us, I feel as if I had been allowed to taste the first course of a rich banquet and then denied the rest. It is worse than not to have tasted it at all. – Screwtape

1. What is Screwtape's attitude toward war? Does it surprise you?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** – Screwtape believes war provides opportunities to tempt humans in certain ways. To what temptations might you experience under each of the following serious conditions? Why?

- a) A parent losing their job.
- b) A deadly illness of a family member.
- c) A terrorist attack in your community.
- d) A shooting at your school.
- e) Watching your house burn down.

3. U. S. Military Chaplain William Thomas Cummings in a field sermon during the Battle of Bataan in 1942 is quoted as saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Think of it in the same terms as, "There are no atheists during final exam week." What does this saying mean? Would Screwtape agree or disagree and why?

4. Screwtape tells Wormwood that the "real business" that he is to be about is "undermining faith and preventing the formation of virtues" in the patient. What does this mean?

5. **Bible Study Question** - Read Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 5:10; and James 1:2-4. Do you normally think of suffering as beneficial? How does God use suffering in the life of a Christian?

Letter 6: Focus

He wants men to be concerned with what they do; our business is to keep them thinking about what will happen to them. -

Screwtape

1. How does Satan win by keeping us anxious and concerned about things that may never happen?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** –Screwtape tells Wormwood to create anxiety and fear about the future with the patient. When you face uncertainty, how do you tend to react?

- a) By praying.
- b) By worrying about what might happen.
- c) By talking to parents, friends, or a youth leader.
- d) By becoming irritable with others.
- e) By tackling it head on.
- f) Other _____

3. "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself." This famous line used in the first inaugural address of Franklin D. Roosevelt was given during the depths of the depression in 1933. Why does Screwtape encourage Wormwood to divert the patient's mind "from the thing feared to fear itself?"

4. What burdens and challenges do you carry because you are focused on future hope or fear? What do you do to stop worrying?

5. **Bible Study Question** - Read Mark 4:18-19. How does worry and anxiety affect your spiritual growth?

Letter 7: Extremism

Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. – Screwtape

1. What advantages do devils gain by making their presence known? What advantages do devils gain by hiding their existence?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** – Pacifism and patriotism were the chief opportunities for turning Christianity into a means to incite extreme behavior at the time of World War II. Which event would likely incite extreme behavior among the teens you know?

- a) Witnessing a bullying situation.
- b) Terrorist attack in your hometown.
- c) Weapons being found at school.
- d) City-wide teen curfew at 8 pm.
- e) Strict school dress code being enacted.

3. Screwtape tells Wormwood that when the patient starts suspecting the existence of demons, Wormwood should place comic figures and cartoon illustrations of devils in his minds. What illustration of the devil do you associate with the most?

4. Do you think the church plays a role in extremism today? If so how? From a Christian perspective, is there any extremism to be desired?

5. **Bible Study Question** - Read Ecclesiastes 7:18-20. What does Solomon say about avoiding extremes?

Letter 8: Troughs and Peaks

Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys. – Screwtape

1. What has been the highest point of your life in the past several years? What has been the lowest?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** – Screwtape describes the “Law of Undulation” as a series of peaks and valleys—the highs and lows, that play out through every human life. How do you respond to the highs and lows in your life?

- a) I do not enjoy the highs because I'm constantly worried about the lows that are coming.
- b) I enjoy every high as a gift from God and do not worry about the lows.
- c) I take each situation as it comes regardless of a high or low.
- d) I try to avoid any possible low point.
- e) Other _____

3. Screwtape is disgusted by the fact that God wants to fill the universe with "little replicas of Himself who voluntarily choose to love and serve Him." What is the difference between voluntarily choosing to love someone as opposed to being made or bribed to love someone?

4. Have you ever thought it would be easier if God just protected His followers from every bad situation? Explain the pros and cons of being fully protected.

5. **Bible Study Question** - Read James 1:2-4 and Romans 5:3. Why does God rely on the "valleys" or trials even more than on the "peaks" in our lives?