

Screwtape

A stylized graphic of a screwdriver. The handle is a dark, smoky, cloud-like shape at the top, with the word "Screwtape" written in a glowing orange script font. A bright, glowing orange and yellow stream of light or smoke flows downwards from the handle, resembling a screwdriver's shaft and tip. The entire graphic is set against a solid black background.

Letter 4 - Ethereal Utterances

Quote ▾

"This is exactly the sort of prayer we want; and since it bears a superficial resemblance to the prayer of silence as practiced by those who are very far advanced in the Enemy's service, clever and lazy patients can be taken in by it for quite a long time" (Lewis 16).

Blurb ▾

I found this particularly jabbing because I didn't really consider my own posture when I am praying and this was particularly contradictory to me. It didn't even cross my own mind that it might be bad prayer (according to CS Lewis) if I didn't watch my posture. Even though this chapter was about praying to things other than God and everything that could and would distract us from that, this off remark about posture caught me by surprise.

Application

Now that I am more awake of what could be distracting during prayers, I will take additional steps to ensure that not only my mind is ready to pray, but my bodily posture as well.

Letter 11 - Positively Fantastic Recoveries

Quote ▾

"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. A thousand bawdy, or even blasphemous, jokes do not help towards a man's damnation so much as his discovery that almost anything he wants to do can be done, not only without the disapproval but with the admiration of his fellows, if only it can get itself treated as a Joke" (Lewis 55-56).

Blurb

This quote was quite interesting because it shows how harmful jokes can be. It also shows multiple sides of the same problem, like how without making it into a joke people will see and treat you differently. It definitely makes me aware of what I should and shouldn't be joking about.

Application

This makes me more cautious about what I'll joke about and possibly rethink what I have joked about in the past.

Letter 17 - Past pseudo-satisfactions

Quote

"The woman is in what may be called the 'All-I-want' state of mind. *All* she wants is a cup of tea properly made, or an egg properly boiled, or a slice of bread properly toasted. But she never finds any servant or any friend who can do these simple things 'properly' -- because her 'properly' conceals an insatiable, palatal pleasures which she imagines she remembers from the past; a past describe by her as 'the days when you could get good servants' but known to us as the days when her seenses were more easily pleased and she had pleasures of other kinds which made her less dependent on those of the table" (Lewis 88-89).

Blurb

This quote stuck out to me because I normally find this kind of behavior very stuck up and Karen-like, but this time I found it oddly relatable. It was probably the simplicity of the items she was requesting but failed to obtain that made me sympathize with her on some level. Although I still despise the behavior the expects other people do act and work for you, I still feel like there is something I can learn from this incidence.

Application

This makes me look out more for occasions where I may be expecting something when I don't really have the right to expect such things from other people. I think you can never have enough reminders to be humble and accepting.

Letter 26 - Two manners make resentment

Quote ▾

"A woman means by Unselfishness chiefly taking trouble for others; a man means not giving trouble to others ... Thus while the woman thinks of doing good offices and the man of respecting other people's rights, each sex, without any obvious unreason, can and does regard the other as radically selfish" (Lewis 142).

Blurb ▾

I've never thought about how trying not to cause trouble for other people could lead to people viewing others as selfish. Although this doesn't really fully make sense to me, I think it is something interesting to think about regardless. It stuck out to me because I didn't expect two positive things to come together and produce a negative response.

Application

This leads me to want to be able to read the room better and understand if what I am doing really is causing less trouble or if just makes the other person more annoyed or think that I am selfish.

Letter 29 - A false hope

Quote ▾

"By building up a series of imaginary expedients to prevent 'the worst coming to the worst' you may produce, at that level of his will which he is not aware of, a determination that the worst *shall not* come to the worst. Then, at the moment of real terror, rush it out into his nerves and muscles and you may get the fatal act done before he knows what you're about" (Lewis 163).

Blurb ▾

Application

This stuck out to me because my pastor constantly warns me (and the whole church) not to trust in earthly possessions and to instead trust in the Lord. It seemed oddly familiar and this was exactly opposite that. It shows that no matter how much you prepare, there is always something that can go wrong.

This teaches me that no matter how much I prepare for the worst, I should still expect the worst, but also trust in the only thing I know will not fail: God.

Letter 30 - Delayed sneak attack

Quote ▾

"Keep him comforting himself with the thought of how much he will enjoy his bed next night. Exaggerate the weariness by making him think it will soon be over; for men usually feel that a strain could have been endured no longer at the very moment when it is ending, or when they think it is ending" (Lewis 166-167).

Blurb ▾

This stuck out to me plainly because of how strategic it is. The thought that something is soon coming to an end definitely amplifies the want for the end to arrive -- if the circumstance is unfavorable. It makes good sense on how we should approach problems, and aligns with my own beliefs: that the habits you make along the way are infinitely more important than just the goal.

Application

This reinforced my belief that habits are more important than the end solution, as then an attack on the anticipation of something would be completely ineffective as the end was never the goal, the habits were.