

The Screwtape Letters

Letter 7

Strategies of the Devil

- Satan usually keeps himself hidden. This strategy keeps Satan from directly attacking and terrorizing people. However, it helps because one way Satan keeps people out of 'Enemy' (God's) territory is keeping them from believing in anything other than what they can see or touch. The ideal strategy is to have them believe in 'Science' or 'Life' or 'Nature.' Then people will believe in something bigger than themselves, but they don't believe in God.
- Satan wants to get the patient to take an extreme position on anything, in this case the war. This will help the patient to think of himself as part of a small group rather than as a part of the whole church. Then Satan wants him to believe that his position is the most important part of his religion.
- Satan wants the patient to see his position (pacifist or patriot) as the most important thing. Winning his position becomes more important than following Christ. If that happens then Satan has him.

Questions

- Would you feel awkward at work saying you believe in the devil or devils? Why or why not?
- When people say they believe that science or technology will save us or solve our problems, what do you think they mean? Why would they be wrong?
- Why might some people believe that it's good to be 'spiritual, but not religious'?
- Do you know anyone who's very vehement or intense about a subject? Is he or she able to talk about that issue or is his or her intensity make it hard to be balanced? If you disagree with that person, how might he or she treat you?
- How can being intense or feeling strongly about any issue unbalance your faith? How can it hinder spiritual growth?