

Letter 15: Past, Present, Future, and Eternity

But we want a man hag-ridden by the Future—haunted by visions of an imminent heaven or hell upon earth—ready to break the Enemy's commands in the present if by so doing we make him think he can attain the one or avert the other—dependent for his faith on the success or failure of schemes whose end he will not live to see. — Screwtape

1. What's one thing you hope will happen before you graduate high school or college? If it doesn't, how will you resist the temptation to be bitter about it?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** – Screwtape says it is far better to make humans live in the unknown future rather than the glory days of our past. What fears of the future distract you the most in your daily life?

- a) Who should I date?
- b) What happens when I graduate?
- c) How will I pass this class?
- d) What if _____ does not like me?
- e) Other _____

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3. Screwtape says that God wants all humans focused on two things: eternity and the present. Why?

4. How would your plans for today change if you knew you were to die tonight? How about in twelve months? How do you defend yourself when Satan starts attacking you with those fears?

5. **Bible Study Questions** – What do Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34 tell us about our preoccupation with the future?

Letter 16: Churches

Surely you know that if a man can't be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighbourhood looking for the church that "suits" him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches. – Screwtape

1. What is your criteria for choosing a church to worship?
How many different churches have you attended?

2. **Screwtape's Game Plan** – Screwtape suggests sending the patient all over the neighborhood to find a church that suits him. "Church hoping" or "youth group hopping" is common in today's church. Discuss some of the ways below you have seen churches, or youth groups, cater to the consumer mentality of the church hopper?

- a) Flashy preachers and feel-good messages.
- b) Music that is similar to live concerts.
- c) Youth group rooms that look like arcades.
- d) Modern facilities with the latest technology.
- e) Come as you are mentality (flip flops, shorts, etc.).

3. While God wants us to attend a biblically-based church, what non-spiritual issues can we become critical of in a church that we are attending? How can this be damaging to your faith?

4. Screwtape prefers the "clique" church where members have shared interests, but are generally closed to outsiders. What do you think Screwtape might like about your church or youth group? What "cliques" might he be most pleased with?

5. **Bible Study Questions** – In an effort to avoid church disagreements, what does Paul say our responsibility is as Christians in Romans 14:19-21?