

Letter 27

“Answers”

Discussion

- **Prayer One:**

Father in Heaven,

I have lost my job and my family is going through a very difficult time. I pray that you will help me win the lottery so that I can buy a house, a new car and provide a comfortable lifestyle for my family .

Amen

- **Prayer Two:**

Father in Heaven,

I have lost my job and my family is going through a very difficult time. If it's your will that I continue to work to support my family, I pray that you will open up new job opportunities for me so that I can take care of the basic needs of my family.

Amen



“The People
Who Pray”

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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

My dear Wormwood,

You seem to be doing very little good at present. The use of his 'love' to distract his mind from the Enemy is, of course, obvious, but you reveal what poor use you are making of it when you say that the whole question of distraction and the wandering mind has now become one of the chief subjects of his prayers. That means you have largely failed.

LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

When this, or any other distraction, crosses his mind you ought to encourage him to thrust it away by sheer will power and to try to continue the normal prayer as if nothing had happened; once he accepts the distraction as his present problem and lays that before the Enemy and makes it the main theme of his prayers and his endeavours, then, so far from doing good, you have done harm. Anything, even a sin, which has the total effect of moving him close up to the Enemy, makes against us in the long run.



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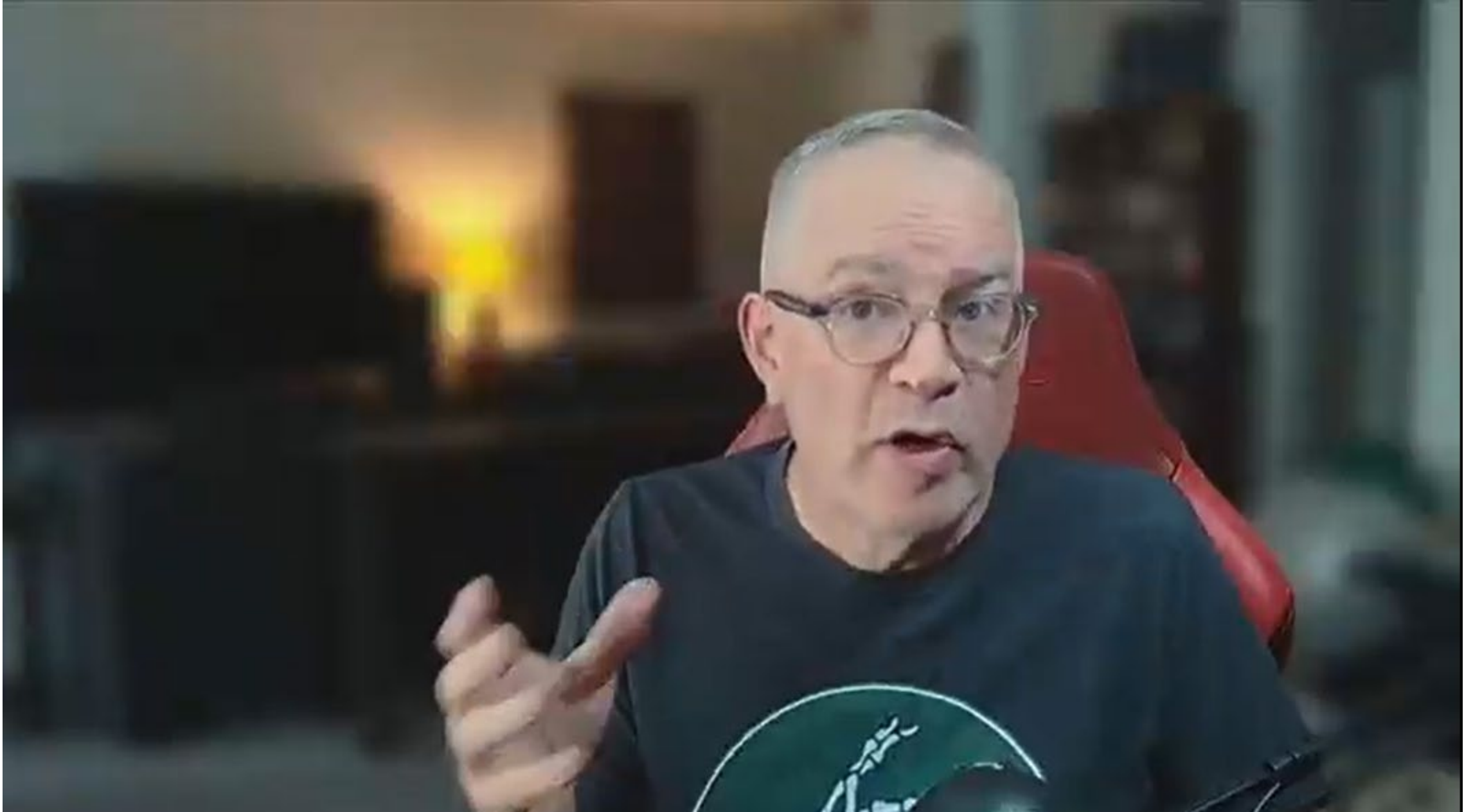
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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

A promising line is the following.

Now that **he is in love**, a new idea of earthly happiness has arisen in his mind: and hence a new urgency in his **purely petitionary prayers**—about this **war** and other such matters.

Now is the time for **raising intellectual difficulties about prayer** of that sort.



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What is Cognitive Dissonance?

Is it a mental disorder?

Is it something we all have experienced at one time or another?

Example:

Cognitive Dissonance



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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

False spirituality is always to be encouraged.

On the seemingly pious ground that 'praise and communion with God is the true prayer', humans can often be lured into direct disobedience to the Enemy who (in His usual flat, commonplace, uninteresting way) has definitely told them to pray for their daily bread and the recovery of their sick. You will, of course, conceal from him the fact that the prayer for daily bread, interpreted in a 'spiritual sense', is really just as crudely petitionary as it is in any other sense.



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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

But since your patient has contracted the terrible habit of obedience, he will probably continue such 'crude' prayers whatever you do. But you can worry him with the haunting suspicion that the practice is absurd and can have no objective result.

Don't forget to use the 'heads I win, tails you lose' argument. If the thing he prays for doesn't happen, then that is one more proof that petitionary prayers don't work; if it does happen, he will, of course, be able to see some of the physical causes which led up to it, and 'therefore it would have happened anyway', and thus a granted prayer becomes just as good a proof as a denied one that prayers are ineffective.

■ **INTERCESSION** (Eph 6v18-19)

Pray for others. Pray for the salvation of your loved ones and friends. Pray for the church growth.

■ **CONFESSION** (1 Jn1v9)

Confessing and repenting to God for our weaknesses and sins.

■ **THANKSGIVING**

(Eph 5v20))
Thank God for what He has done for you, your family & the church.



■ **PETITION**

(1 Sam 1v27)
Ask God for peace & for your daily needs.

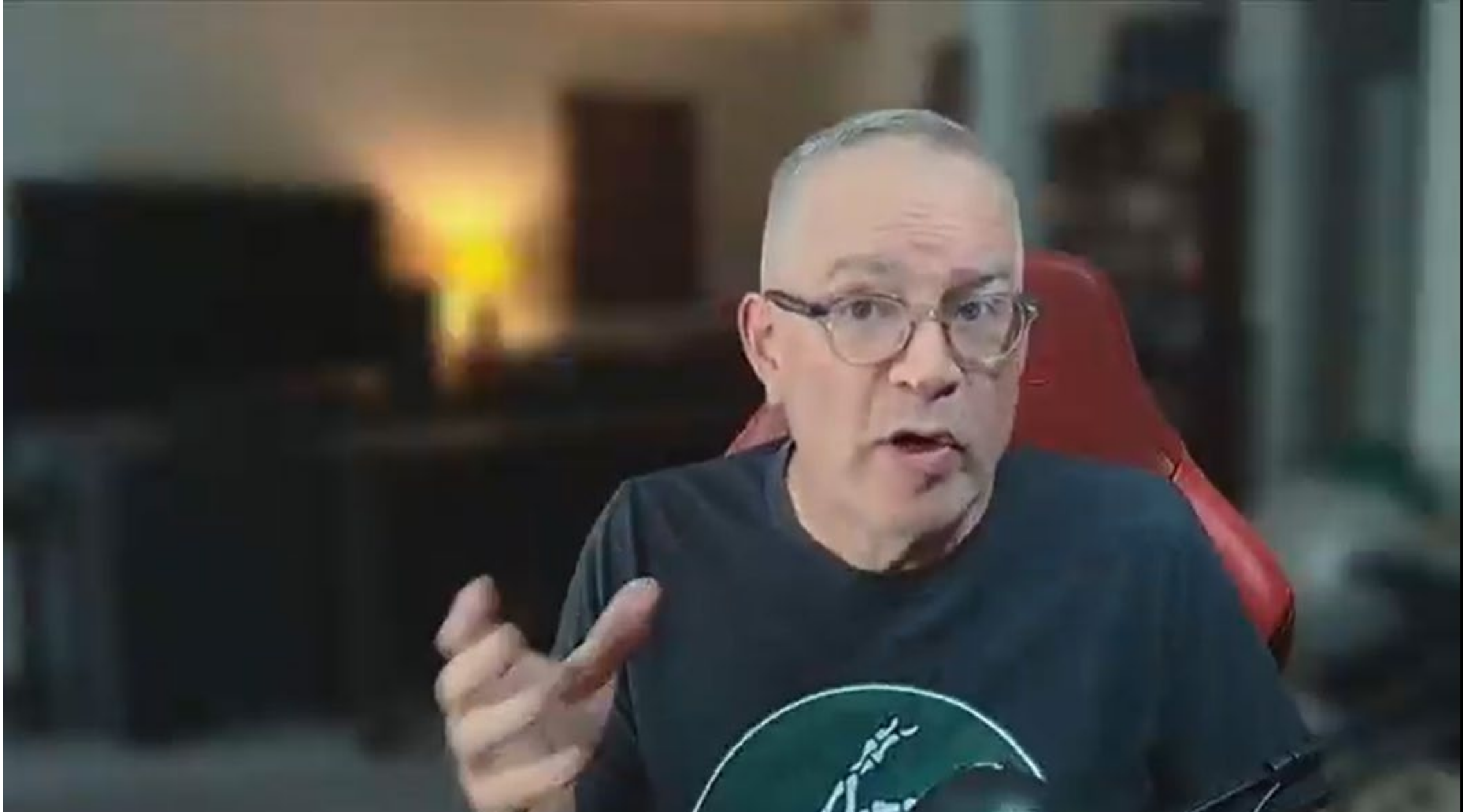


■ **PRAISE**

(Ps 146v1-2)
Meditate on God's attributes & praise Him for who He is.

Kinds of Prayers .

Types Of Prayers



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[Click here to watch: How Not To Pray Skit](#)

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How to Pray?

Matthew: 6:5-8

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Why Pray since God already knows what you need?

Why pray if God already knows what you're going to say?



TIME OF GRACE 

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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

You, being a spirit, will find it difficult to understand how he gets into this confusion. But you must remember that he takes Time for an ultimate reality. He supposes that the Enemy, like himself, sees some things as present, remembers others as past, and anticipates others as future; or even if he believes that the Enemy does not see things that way, yet, in his heart of hearts, he regards this as a peculiarity of the Enemy's mode of perception—he doesn't really think (though he would say he did) that things as the Enemy sees them are things as they are!

.....the Enemy does not foresee the humans making their free contributions in a future, but sees them doing so in His unbounded Now.



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Concept of Time to God and Man

1. Man lives within the constraints of Time.
2. Man has difficulty understanding any reality that does not include Time.
3. He sees the present, remembers the past, and anticipates the future.
4. God lives outside of Time.
5. When it comes to our prayer life, we can find it difficult to separate God from the restraints of Time.
6. Therefore, we limit our prayers to our reality rather than God's sovereignty.
7. We experience creation in a series of successive events, but God, as the Creator, operates at every point of space and time.
8. When we exercise our free will and petition God for some act in our future, God does not foresee it happening in the future; He sees it happening in real time.
9. God has the ability to see us in the future, the present, and the past at the same time.



God's View of Time

Simultaneously aware of and KNOWS ALL that is past, present, and future

God's View of Time

Yvon Prehn & Bible805

Eternity Past

Creation & Paradise Lost

Old Testament History

New Testament History

Our Present Lives

Remaining Human History

Christ Returns & Paradise Regained

The Glorious Ages to Come

Human View of Time

We only truly know a point in time though we can imagine a past and a future

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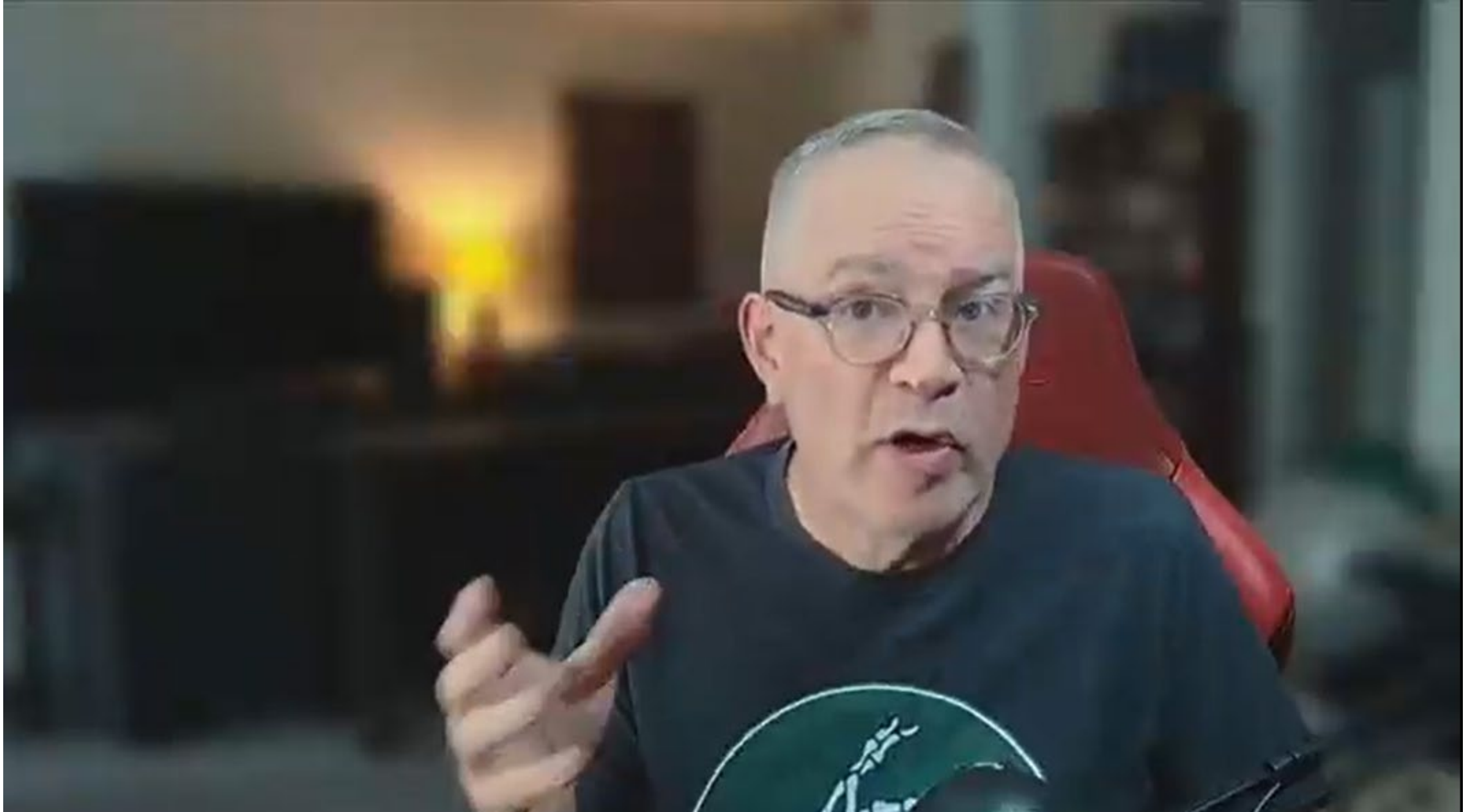
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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

Only the learned read old books and we have now so dealt with the learned that they are of all men the least likely to acquire wisdom by doing so. We have done this by inculcating the Historical Point of View.

The Historical Point of View, put briefly, means that when a learned man is presented with any statement in an ancient author, the one question he never asks is whether it is true.

He asks who influenced the ancient writer, and how far the statement is consistent with what he said in other books, and what phase in the writer's development, or in the general history of thought, it illustrates, and how it affected later writers, and how often it has been misunderstood (specially by the learned man's own colleagues) and what the general course of criticism on it has been for the last ten years, and what is the 'present state of the question'.



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LETTER 27 (Excerpts)

But thanks be to Our Father and the Historical Point of View, great scholars are now as little nourished by the past as the most ignorant mechanic who holds that 'history is bunk',

Your affectionate uncle
SCREWTAPE



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What is the Demonic Strategy in Letter #27?



Demonic Strategies

1. Encourage the patient to “thrust away” the distraction and try to continue normal, everyday prayers that are said with little sincerity.
2. Wormwood is to worry him with the haunting suspicion that the practice (of prayer) is absurd and can have no objective result.
3. The “heads I win, tails you lose” argument is designed to make the patient feel that his prayers are useless. If his prayers are answered, he will see some evidence that leads him to rationalize that it was going to happen anyway. If they are not answered right away, then this will confirmed his suspicions that asking God for things is absurd and that prayer has no impact whatsoever.

4. Take advantage of the difficulty we find in separating God from the restraints of time we experience. Therefore, we limit our prayers to our reality rather than God's sovereignty.

5. The "historical point of view" attitude keeps wisdom from being passed from generation to generation and manipulates the media to their own ends. Humans won't ask whether it's true or false but instead ask who the author was, what phase of history of development, or how it affected or influenced the later authors.

Divine Strategies To Practice

1. Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

“ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

Luke 18:1

Ask God to help you be persistent and faithful in prayer no matter how you are feeling. In this way, you will be obeying Jesus's command to always pray and putting yourself in a place to receive God's grace.

Divine Strategies To Practice (Cont'd)

2. Develop a habit of prayer:

- a. When distracted, bring the distraction to the Lord in prayer.
- b. Take some time to examine your prayer life.
- c. Do you view prayer as an obligation rather than an opportunity to communicate with God?
- d. Do you feel guilty when distracted during prayer?
- e. If so, are you able to take the distraction to God?

Movie Montage on Prayer

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Movie Prayer Montage



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What is Prayer?



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