

Letter 25

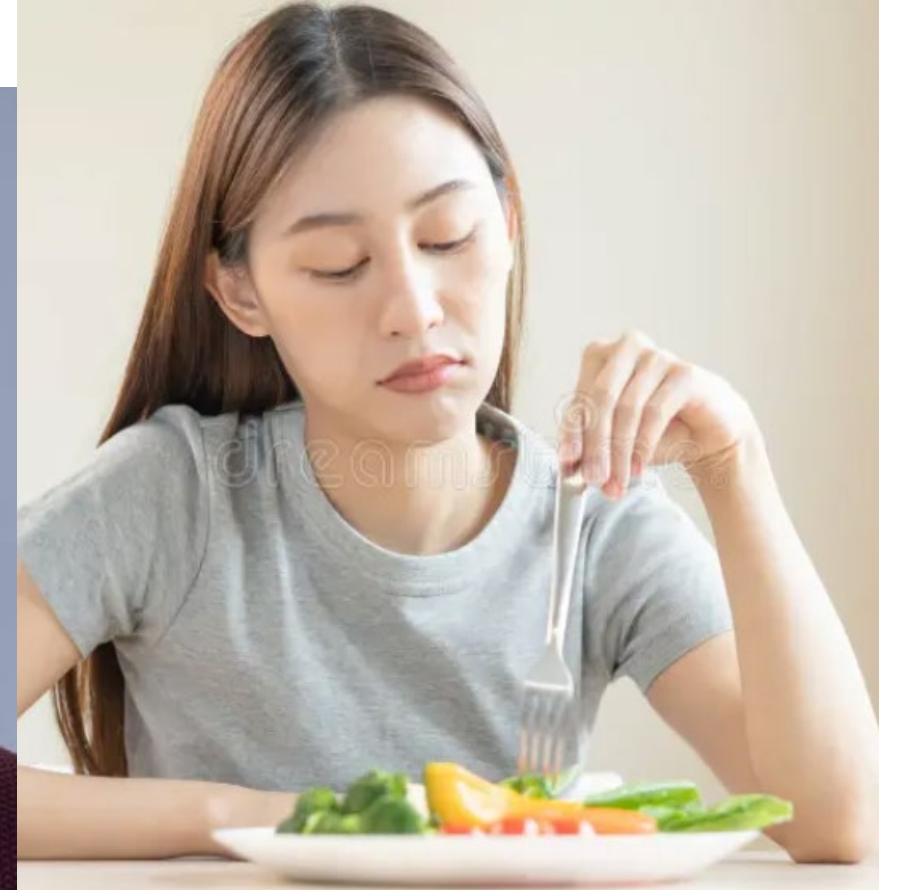
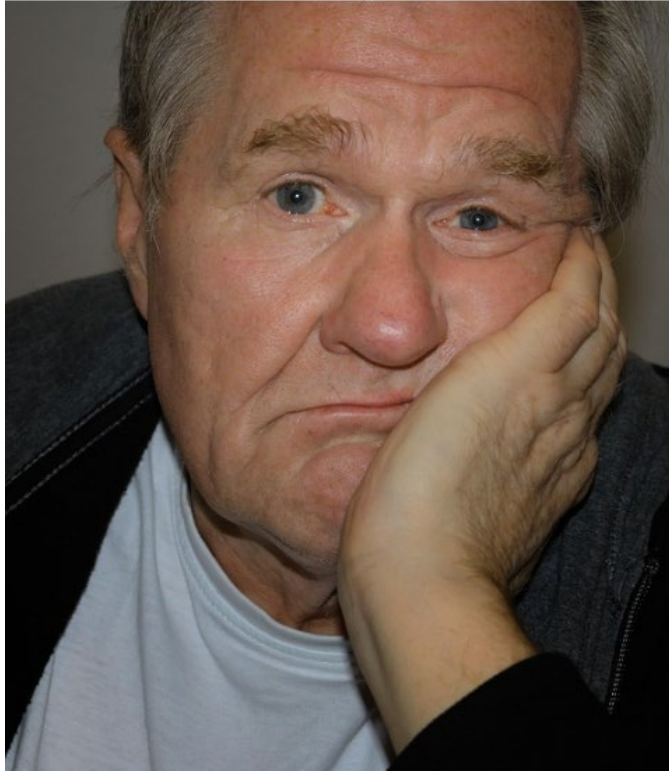
“The Same Old Thing”

Discussion

- *If we serve char siew bow for dinner everyday, what will you say to the cook?*
- *What do you think if our church sings the exact same worship songs every Sunday?*
- *Does it bother you if you have to wear the same formal attire to church every Sunday?*

Do you see a common theme in the discussion questions?

The Same Old Thing!



REVIEW:

The Characters in Letter 25

The Characters



Screwtape

Elder/Senior Devil
(Hell's Temptation Department)
Wormwood's Uncle



Wormwood

Junior, inexperienced Devil
(Hell's Training Academy)
Screwtape's Nephew



Patient

British man in his 30s
Taking care of mother
He is Wormwoods' first assignment



Enemy

God

LETTER 25 (Excerpts)

My Dear Wormwood,

The **real trouble** about the set your patient is living in is that it is **merely** **Christian**. They all have individual interests, of course, but the **bond remains** **mere Christianity**.

What does “Mere Christians” mean?

Christians in the simplest, purest sense and do not attach their Christianity to a modern cause or belief.

LETTER 25 (Excerpts)

My Dear Wormwood,

The **real trouble** about the set your patient is living in is that it is **merely Christian**. They all have individual interests, of course, but the **bond remains mere Christianity**.

What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of mind I call **“Christianity And”**. You know — Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians let them at least be **Christians with a difference**. Substitute for the faith itself **some Fashion** with a **Christian colouring**. Work on their **horror of the Same Old Thing**.

Can you think of some examples of “Christianity AND” mentality in our modern day society?

Watch Video on Contemporary List of “Christianity AND” mentality

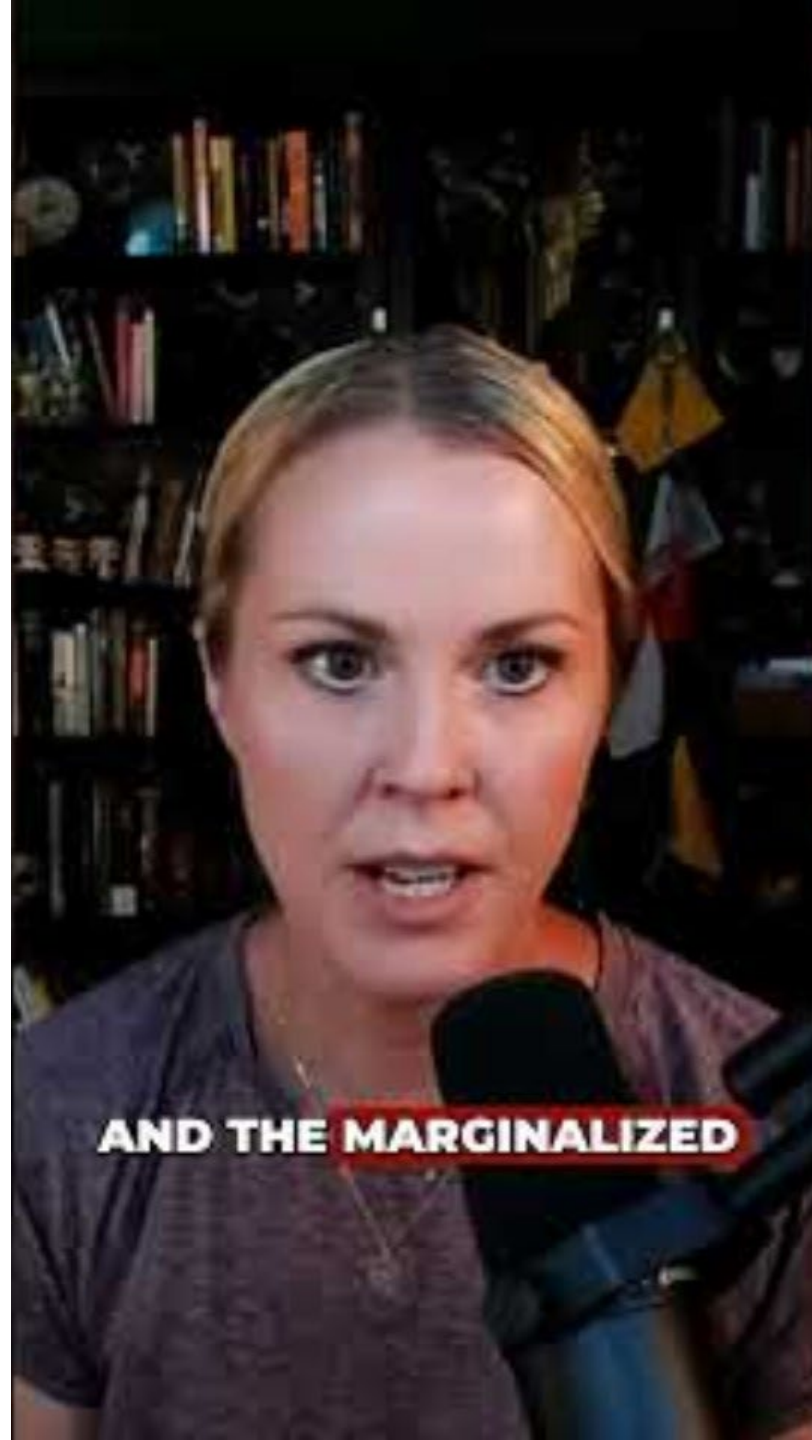
[Click on this Link](#)

Example:

Republican Christians

vs

Democratic Christians



AND THE MARGINALIZED

LETTER 25 (Excerpts)

The horror of the Same Old Thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart — an endless source of heresies in religion, folly in counsel, infidelity in marriage, and inconstancy in friendship. The humans live in time, and experience reality successively. To experience much of it, therefore, they must experience many different things; in other words, they must experience change.

And since they need change, the Enemy (being a hedonist at heart) has made change pleasurable to them, just as He has made eating Pleasurable. But since He does not wish them to make change, any more than eating, an end in itself, He has balanced the love of change in them by a love of permanence.

LETTER 25 (Excerpts)

He has contrived to gratify both tastes together on the very world He has made, by that union of **change and permanence** which we call **Rhythm**. He gives them the **seasons**, **each season different yet every year the same**, so that spring is always felt as a novelty yet always as the recurrence of an immemorial theme.

What does this mean?

God is Good!

Screwtape writes that the **Enemy designed the world** to be in a pattern of constant **change and permanence**.

This is seen in how **days turn into nights** which then turn into days again, or how **seasons** change throughout the year but keep repeating this change in the same order forever.

This **natural rhythm of change and permanence** is naturally **pleasurable** and **reassuring** to humans.

Change and Permanence – “RHYTHM”



LETTER 25 (Excerpts)

Now, just as we pick out and exaggerate the pleasure of eating to produce gluttony, so we pick out this natural pleasantness of **change** and twist it into a demand for absolute **novelty**. This demand is entirely our workmanship.

This demand is valuable in various ways. In the first place it diminishes pleasure while increasing desire. The **pleasure of novelty** is by its very nature more subject than any other to the law of diminishing returns. And **continued novelty** costs money, so that the desire for it spells avarice or unhappiness or both. And again, the more rapacious this desire, the sooner it must eat up all the innocent sources of pleasure and pass on to those the Enemy forbids.

Watch Video on “Novelty”

[Click on this Video Link on Novelty](#)

Screwtape Letter 25 (Excerpt)

Finally, the desire for novelty is indispensable if we are to produce Fashions or Vogues. The use of Fashions in thought is to distract the attention of men from their real dangers.

Watch Video on Fashion

[Click on this Video Link on Fashion](#)

Screwtape Letter 25 (Excerpt)

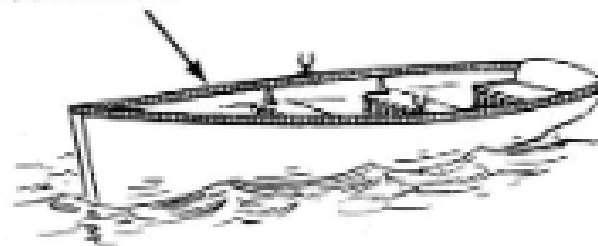
The **game** is to have them **running about with fire extinguishers** whenever there is a **flood**, and all **crowding to that side of the boat** which is already nearly **gunwale under**.

Gunwale



Top edge of the hull of a ship or boat

GUNWALE



Watch Video on Dangers and Devil's Distraction

[Click on this Video Link on Danger & Distractions](#)

Science: Threat to Christianity?



Screwtape Letter 25 (Excerpts)

But the greatest triumph of all is to elevate his horror of the Same Old Thing into a philosophy so that nonsense in the intellect may reinforce corruption in the will.

The Enemy loves platitudes. Of a proposed course of action He wants men, so far as I can see, to ask very simple questions; is it **righteous**? is it **prudent**? is it **possible**?

Now if we can keep men asking “Is it in accordance with the general movement of our time? Is it progressive or reactionary? Is this the way that History is going?” they will neglect the relevant questions.

Watch Video on Relevant Questions to Ask

[Click on this Video Link on Relevant Questions](#)

**Christianity:
Conservative or Liberal?**



Screwtape Letter 25 (Excerpt)

For the descriptive adjective “unchanged” we have substituted the emotional adjective “stagnant”. We have trained them to think of the Future as a promised land which favoured heroes attain — not as something which everyone reaches at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is,

Your affectionate uncle

SCREWTAPE

Watch Video on Summary of Balance of Change & Permanence

[Click on this Video Link on Final Summary](#)

What is the Demonic Strategy in Letter #25?



Screwtape's Diabolical Strategies:

Using the “Christianity AND” mentality to create a desire to become a “Christian with a difference”.

Convince the Christian that mere Christianity is too traditional and dull. It needs to be “Now” and “Relevant”.

Humans are naturally geared towards permanence and change. Strategy is to instill in their minds the “Horror of the Same Old Thing”.

Lure them into “Fashion & Vogue” and the desire for “Novelty”.

Distract them from asking the relevant questions before they adopt the changes.

Divine Strategies To Practice

Pray and Meditate upon Scripture:

If you think back to 1 Corinthians or Galatians, the issue was always Christianity AND following the right apostle or Christianity AND following the Jewish law or Christianity And Spiritual Gifts. None of the ANDs are wrong necessarily, they simply are not the essentials. Think about the “And” in Paul’s letters and think about the “And” in the American church.

When I came to you, brethren . . . I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. . . and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Divine Strategies To Practice (Cont'd)

2. Reflect upon the ways Change & Permanence impact your life:

- a. Examine your heart and reflect upon how you view change.
- b. How much time do you think about trying to achieve new fads, novelties or political or social status?
- c. Do you ask God the relevant questions before you make that change?
- d. Are you hyper-fixated on certain political or social issues so that they become a topic of discussion everywhere you go?
- e. Are you constantly bored with your life and seeking changes?