

A Word from Woody. . .
“Screwtape Leverages Ida”

Dear Reader: The article below is a take off of C.S. Lewis’ book The Screwtape Letters, where an uncle demon named Screwtape writes to his nephew demon Wormwood on how Wormwood can best undermine the faith of a Christians—his “patient”--assigned to him. Thus the language is a bit backward—“our Father Below” is Satan, and “our Enemy” is God. I hope you gain insight from this “Word from Woody” as to how Satan can use Hurricane Ida for his distorted purposes in believers’ lives.

Dearest Wormwood:

To hear the way you chatter among your fellow demons, you apparently consider yourself something of a meteorologist who causes weather patterns. But if the vicissitudes of nature and weather are puzzling to our Father Below, then certainly underlings like yourself should refrain from such bombast. Admittedly, sometimes we forget that while our Enemy creates and establishes the laws of physics, we can do nothing of the sort. We can only introduce decadence into human beings and nature, and then enjoy watching the chaotic unraveling of both! Thus, the advent of Hurricane Ida has the potential for exhilarating victories for us, and you would do well not to miss these opportunities with your patients.

I have noticed that you have a patient who has repeatedly caused you problems. She has a disgusting habit of reading her Bible daily, praying to our Enemy, and even desiring to fill the earth with the Bad News of her feckless faith. The actual Good News is that your ineptitude in undermining her faith is about to make an abrupt turn for the better, if only you can manage it. The key here is to *disrupt* her with all the uncertainties brought by the hurricane. Bring to her mind the fact that her house may never be the same. Indeed, can she be confident that she still has a job? Also, the lack of electricity and potential structural damage to her home must remain her mental focus—as well as the unknowns as to who, what, and when help will arrive. Does she possess the internal fortitude to overcome this tragedy? Glory to our Father Below—make her doubt it! But I warn you, Wormwood, *never* have her look skyward to the Enemy. Keep her away from daily devotionals in the Bible and communication with Him. By all means, make her think she is far too busy dealing with the “reality” of her circumstances for her to take time with such idealistic, “pie in the sky” trivialities. We all know how unfair

He is, don't we? Once one of His frightened followers cries for help, He is there in an instant with the power to persevere. How He does this is a mystery. He has some kind of Spirit power from a source we have yet to find. But when we do find this source of power, all glory and dishonor will be ours! We will truly rule the universe and negate any further meddling from the Enemy. The most perplexing question, though, is why does He *love* these human vermin? Even their own Scriptures are puzzled here: ". . . what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:4). The Enemy must be about some subterfuge here. . .

There is also a patient of yours who, since he became a Christian, you have had defeat after defeat in thwarting the change of a core part of his character. I am speaking of course about the default part of who he is, the one area we have been developing for decades, that his only concern is for one thing: himself! How splendid our victory was in this area of his life! He was filled with a thoroughly pragmatic life philosophy that said, "If something doth not benefit me, I will pay it no heed". We never let the words "selfishness" or "self-centered" enter his mind. He was perfectly content in his self-absorption. You were indeed doing good work on him, until you became over-confident. You turned your attention to your own significance and grand achievements. That was when your patient somehow stumbled into a church and heard the hideous message of the Enemy dying for his sins and forgiveness being offered. Such rot! He left your clutches and found the embrace of the Enemy, who has apparently no self-respect and will accept anyone who will bend the knee to Him. Well, now this hurricane will help us turn the tables. Appeal to his own needs in this time of shortages. Does someone need a ride? Have him think of how difficult it will be to get gas. Is someone hungry and thirsty? Have him worry about where he is going to get his next meal. Does someone need help cleaning out debris left over from the storm? Have him excessively tired and overwhelmed about the debris in his own yard. Does someone need a listening ear and comfort? Have him so glued to his own schedule and needs that he refuses to answer his phone when the person calls or avoids the person altogether. Remind him that this is a time of crisis, so reality and his own survival must be his focus, not some poppycock notion of "love your neighbor as yourself". And if the Enemy ever has him think of that verse, engage your patient with the counter-thought, "Doesn't that verse imply that in order to love one's neighbor, one must *love oneself first*?" Now that's a winning strategy!

Finally, I understand one of your patients has an addiction problem. I really don't need to know the specifics here. Any addiction—whether to drink, pornography, or licit or illicit substances—will do quite fine. And there is nothing like a hurricane to exasperate him! Send him into evacuation far from those hapless Christians who would hold him accountable. Make him think that just *one* indulgence will do him no harm, and will actually do him some good. It will make him relax in his time of trouble. If you are able, convince him that a single indulgence is his reward for all he has been suffering. Moreover, have him believe that his previous success over his addiction is proof positive that he has this addiction mastered. Little does he know that he will soon become the fool subjected to his old master!

Wormwood, I admit that I have been disappointed in your low scores lately. Your patients don't seem to be willing to return home to us. But Hurricane Ida is a once in a generation opportunity! Do make the most of it for the Kingdom Below. If not, you do well to remember that fires of our furnaces are inhabited by those who were incompetent in our Father's work.

Affectionately,

Uncle Screwtape