

# Fr. Tom's Celestial Musings

## The Screwtape Letters- by C.S. Lewis

### Part 11: Marriage<sup>1</sup>

A grandmother overheard her 5-year-old grandson playing “wedding.” As the little boy marched the bride down the aisle, the wedding vows went like this: “You have the right to remain silent, anything you say may be held against you, you have the right to have an attorney present. You may kiss the bride!”

Apparently, even 5-year-olds know how challenging marriage can be! Maybe it is because marriage is so challenging that C.S. Lewis dedicated three chapters to it in this book, The Screwtape Letters. In these chapters, Screwtape talks to his nephew, Wormwood, about how unity gives life to marriage.

The very first thing that Screwtape points out to his nephew is that God Himself is unity—Three in One. The demons find this reality outrageously disgusting. Evil boasts of the qualities of division and aloneness, so unity is utterly despised. Screwtape’s hatred for the unity of God naturally flows into a hatred for the unity that God calls human beings into through marriage and family. Screwtape explains God’s plan, writing, “Things are to be many, yet somehow also one. The good of one self is to be the good of another. This impossibility [God] calls *love*... can be detected under all He does and even all He is.”<sup>2</sup>

One way for demons to attack the unity of marriage is to reduce the sanctity of marriage to merely an *emotion*. Rather than married couples understanding the dignity and unity of marriage as stemming from mutuality, chastity, and generativity, they are led to believe that marriage is about *feeling* in love. In Screwtape’s own words, “[Human beings] regard the intention of loyalty to a partnership for mutual help, for the preservation of chastity, and for the transmission of life, as something lower than a storm of emotion.”<sup>3</sup>

Marriage, by virtue of the fact that it is modeled on the inner life of unity found in the Trinity, requires that the husband and wife become one through mutuality, chastity, and generativity. In their mutuality they will be friends, willing to lay down their lives for one another; in their chastity they will be lovers, desiring only what’s best for the other; and in their generativity they will be parents and/or benefactors, letting their love burst forth beyond the two of them.

In our world today, there is an unprecedented attack on the sanctity of marriage. Divorce is at an all-time high; husbands are ignoring their call to be the spiritual leaders of their families; wives are demanding that their husbands fill a void in their hearts that only God can fill; countless men are struggling with an addiction to pornography that their wives either do not know about or do not understand; countless wives are beginning to remember the sexual abuse that they went through in their childhood and their husbands either do not know about it or do not understand.

While our minds seem to know that marriage is a very difficult vocation, many couples’ hearts are sapped of the courage, hope, perseverance, and selflessness necessary to build and maintain a healthy, holy, and life-giving marriage. It is not enough for just one partner to have these gifts; both have to desire the mutuality, chastity, and generativity that is inherent in Christian marriage. Let us pray for married couples, that they will experience the awesome life, love, healing and unity that Satan so desperately wants to steal from them!

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is part eleven of a twelve part series that I am writing on C.S. Lewis’ The Screwtape Letters.

<sup>2</sup> The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis, HarperSanFrancisco, 2001, pg. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 97.