

The Tapescrew Letters

My Dear Woodworm,

It has come to my attention that your client, Jeremy, is seeking to reform his ways! Central Intelligence has informed me that he has begun to pray and is on the verge of confessing his "sins" to the Enemy. My slithering nephew, this must be stopped immediately. Our Father Below will tolerate no such repulsive behavior. You must do all in your infernal power to keep your prey in our camp.

From previous conversations I remember that Jeremy is a chronic thief. Since childhood he has had the delightful habit of stealing things that belong to others (candy, money, homework, reputations, time, office supplies, business expenses, income tax, etc.). But now I learn that the despicable Spirit from Above is making him believe these actions are "wrong!" In the name of Satan, this must be rectified lest he seek the Enemy's help and go over to the other side. Listen closely to my counsel, my dear slime ball, and try these tactics. They have been effective in the past to bring many to our father's mansions below and I trust they will serve well in this situation also.

1. Suggest to Jeremy that stealing is written into his genetic code, part of his DNA. He can't help it. He was born this way. In stealing he is simply expressing his authentic self. Make him think that if he doesn't steal he is denying his true identity.
2. As long as Jeremy uses words that imply that theft is "wrong" we lessen our chances of success. So help him to develop a whole new vocabulary. For example, when he shoplifts an article from the store, suggest to him that this is not "stealing" but rather making a "non-monetary purchase." When he cheats on an exam, he is merely "sharing" the results of the classroom experience. Lying on his expense report at work is helping the company to pay him what he is "really worth." You get the idea.
3. When others confront Jeremy and tell him that his behaviors are wrong, make him think that these people are using "hate speech." Encourage him to see them as narrow-minded bigots bent on denying the rights and freedoms of others. Lead him to associate with other thieves so that they become a group of persons proud of the fact that they have "come out" of the closet and now boldly practice this "alternative lifestyle."
4. The capstone of our strategy occurs when thievery is given religious sanction! Don't keep Jeremy away from church. Rather lead him to one that prides itself on being "inclusive," affirming those who practice a lifestyle of stealing. With a little demonic luck, Jeremy himself may decide to go into the ministry!

Your affectionate uncle,
Tapescrew

*In the tradition of C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, I am borrowing Lewis' format (a senior devil, Screwtape, writing to his nephew, a younger demon tempter named Wormwood) but inserting my own content and misnamed characters. If you like my work, you can thank C. S. Lewis. If you don't... you can be sure I thought of it all by myself. - Pastor Stan