

SUMMER OF SIN: GLUTTONY

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John 6:5-14

⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.”

⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” ¹⁰Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to

those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What comes to mind when you hear the word “gluttony”? What foods are the easiest for you to over-indulge in? (Review and reflect on the note “Defining Gluttony” below).
3. Jesus makes the hungry crowd sit down, takes the loaves, and gives thanks before distributing them.
 - a. Why does it matter that Jesus cares for their physical needs?
 - b. How does pausing to give thanks transform our

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relationship with what we consume?

- c. What are your favorite meal-time prayers or memorable prayers?

- 4. Gluttony often acts as a false pathway to comfort—using tangible things to fill a deeper emotional or spiritual void.
 - a. What voids do we try to fill by consuming more than we need?
 - b. In what other areas—such as technology, media, shopping, or attention—do we struggle with an insatiable appetite?
- 5. Later in John 6:25-27, we learn the crowd followed Jesus because of their immediate physical needs. Jesus then challenged them to care about their eternal nourishment. How do we distinguish between our legitimate physical needs and a spiritual hunger that we try to fill with food, entertainment, or shopping?
- 6. The ancients combatted gluttony with spiritual disciplines like intentionally fasting and feasting.
 - a. What would be the hardest food or drink (or meal) to give up and why?
 - b. Have you ever attempted a fast for religious or spiritual

reasons? What did you learn or discover?

- c. What feasts in your life take on meaning beyond just the food—from holiday meals to special celebrations?

- 7. This passage in John echoes the practice of the Lord's Supper (communion). How does communion re-train us on the meaning and possibilities of food and sharing everyday meals?

DEFINING GLUTTONY

Like each of the 7 deadly sins, we must be careful not to label good things (like food and drink) as inherently sinful. What these deadly sins attempt to explain is how good things (like food and drink) can be used in destructive, damaging, depleting, and demeaning ways. Additionally, gluttony is not about the medical condition of eating disorders or alcohol and drug addictions, which are best addressed and supported by medical professionals and treatment.

Gluttony is an excessive desire for pleasure, reducing human life to self-gratification. A glutton chases the feeling of being full or the taste of food more than other important things (like health, hospitality, or friendship). The ancients noted that one can be gluttonous in eating too much or too quickly *and also (perhaps surprisingly) eating too little, even conceitedly eating only what is considered "the best."*