

# Small Group Guide: Gluttony

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## Sermon Overview

This week's message addressed gluttony—not just as overeating, but as any disordered appetite that takes the place of God in our lives. We explored how gluttony is the beginning of addiction, how our culture sets us up for excessive consumption, and how Jesus modeled a balanced life of both fasting and feasting.

**Key Scripture:** Ezekiel 16:49 - "Sodom's sins were pride, gluttony, and laziness."

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## Discussion Questions

### Understanding Gluttony

1. Before this sermon, how would you have defined gluttony? How has your understanding changed?
2. Pastor Clay said, "Gluttony is a disordered appetite, but addiction is an enslaved appetite." What's the difference? Why is this distinction important?
3. Read Ezekiel 16:49. Why do you think God identified gluttony (excess of food and prosperous ease) as one of Sodom's primary sins, even before mentioning sexual immorality?

### Modern Applications

4. Beyond food, what are some modern forms of gluttony we face today? (Consider: social media, entertainment, shopping, sleep, caffeine, etc.)
5. Pastor Clay mentioned that we live in a culture of "pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease." How do you see this playing out in American culture? In your own life?

6. Which of these types of gluttony do you struggle with most?
- Food gluttony (eating past fullness for pleasure)
  - Drink/substance gluttony (caffeine, alcohol, sugar for emotional reasons)
  - Entertainment gluttony (endless scrolling, binge-watching)
  - Material gluttony (accumulating possessions)
  - Emotional/experiential gluttony (constant need for highs or affirmation)

## **The Four Lies**

7. Pastor Clay identified four lies that fuel gluttony:
- The world can give you lasting pleasure
  - We should seek comfort and pleasure above everything
  - One more won't hurt you
  - The Lord is not enough

Which of these lies do you find yourself believing most often? When?

8. Read Philippians 3:18-19: "Their destiny is destruction. Their God is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things." What does it look like practically when our stomach (appetites) becomes our god?

## **Biblical Perspectives**

9. Discuss the contrast between Numbers 11 (Israelites craving meat) and Ephesians 5:18 (be filled with the Spirit). What were the Israelites willing to trade for temporary satisfaction? What are we sometimes willing to trade?
10. The Israelites left the camp (God's presence) to satisfy their cravings. What does "leaving the camp" look like in our daily lives?
11. Psalm 106:15 says, "He gave them their request, but He sent leanness into their soul." Have you ever experienced getting what you wanted only to feel empty afterward? Share if comfortable.

## **Jesus' Example**

12. How did Jesus model balance between fasting and feasting? What can we learn from His approach to food, celebration, and self-control?

13. Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). How can we practically "feed our spirit first" before feeding our physical appetites?
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## Key Takeaways

1. **Gluttony is about what we unite ourselves to**—it's not primarily about body weight but about a gaunt soul seeking fulfillment apart from God.
  2. **Our appetites should be our servants, not our masters**—only the Holy Spirit should control our lives.
  3. **Suffering and struggle are normal parts of the Christian life**—comfort and ease are not our ultimate goals; intimacy with God, maturity of character, and influence in the world are.
  4. **God provides everything we need**—we must learn to be content with His provision rather than constantly craving more.
  5. **We have two choices**: Stay in the camp and be filled with the Spirit, or leave to satisfy our cravings and experience spiritual death.
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## Practical Applications

### Personal Reflection Questions:

- What is consuming your thoughts most often? (Food, entertainment, possessions, experiences?)
- Is your desire to consume whatever gives you pleasure taking precedence over the good of others?
- How is your consumption contributing to or taking away from God's specific call on your life in this season?

## Action Steps:

1. **Fast from something** (not necessarily food—could be social media, TV, shopping) and replace that time with prayer, Bible reading, or worship.
  2. **Practice gratitude before meals.** Before eating, thank God specifically for His provision and ask Him to help you eat to His glory.
  3. **Set boundaries** around one area of consumption (screen time, spending, eating late, etc.). Write down specific limits and share them with an accountability partner.
  4. **Identify your "quail"**—what are you willing to leave God's presence for? Confess it and ask God to break its power over you.
  5. **Memorize a key verse:**
    - Ephesians 5:18 - "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."
    - Psalm 37:4 - "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart."
    - Matthew 4:4 - "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
  6. **Create space for the Holy Spirit.** What do you need to empty out of your life to create more capacity for God's presence?
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## Prayer Time

### Group Prayer Focus:

1. **Confession:** Invite people to silently confess areas of disordered appetite or enslavement to God.
2. **Surrender:** Pray together, surrendering specific things that have taken God's place in your lives.
3. **Filling:** Ask the Holy Spirit to fill the spaces left by what you've surrendered. Pray Ephesians 5:18 over each other.

4. **Empowerment:** Pray for self-control (fruit of the Spirit) and the wisdom to know when to feast and when to fast.
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## **Additional Scriptures**

### **1. Warnings Directly Addressing Gluttony**

- Proverbs 23:20–21
- Deuteronomy 21:20
- Philippians 3:18–19
- Titus 1:12

### **2. Self-Control vs. Overindulgence**

- Proverbs 25:16
- Proverbs 25:27
- Proverbs 23:1–3
- 1 Corinthians 9:25–27
- Galatians 5:22–23
- 2 Peter 1:5–6
- 1 Corinthians 10:23–24

### **3. Gluttony as Idolatry (Appetite as a God)**

- Philippians 3:19
- Colossians 3:5
- Romans 16:17–18
- Exodus 32:6
- 1 Corinthians 10:6–7

### **4. Biblical Examples of Overindulgence**

- Numbers 11:4–34
- 1 Samuel 2:12–17, 29
- Daniel 1:8–16
- Luke 15:13–16
- Luke 12:19–21

### **5. Sobriety & Watchfulness**

- Luke 21:34
- 1 Thessalonians 5:6–8
- 1 Peter 4:3–4
- 1 Peter 5:8

## **6. The Body as God's Temple**

- 1 Corinthians 6:12–20
- Romans 12:1
- 1 Corinthians 3:16–17

## **7. Fasting & Spiritual Discipline**

- Matthew 4:4
- Matthew 6:16–18
- Joel 2:12
- Isaiah 58:6–7
- Acts 13:2–3

## **8. Greed, Excess & Lack of Restraint**

- Ezekiel 16:49
- Proverbs 28:7
- Ecclesiastes 6:7
- James 5:5
- 2 Timothy 3:1–4