

GLUTTONY

VBC

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Romans 12:1

Series: Seven Deadly Sins #5 - Gluttony

July 24-25, 2004

“To Hell on a Cream Puff”

INTRO

On the surface, gluttony is probably perceived as the more acceptable sin

- As one writer put it, “All gluttony does is make you soft and huggable. It’s the cute sin.”

But gluttony is not about appearance

- As one put it, “External dimensions are no predictor of internal rebellion.”
- There are skinny gluttons, and overweight gluttons

Gluttony is largely about the heart - about self indulgence

- An exaggerated longing, an over consumption of anything - but in particular the issue is food
- It is about “eating to excess”

This was in the minds of the early church fathers - who believed gluttony was one of the seven capital sins - the first sin to be faced in spiritual battles

- The evidences they listed for this sin included:
 - Gorging rather than savoring
 - Eating beyond appointed times
 - A longing to eat that eclipsed all other longings

Were those who put together these capital sins, alive today - they might look at American culture and say this is our deadliest sin

- For food is much of our conversation
- It has become our intoxicating pleasure

And so...

- We eat a lot - a lot more than we used to
- 300 pounds a year more than we did just 30 years ago
- Mix that with a sedentary culture - and it is a recipe for disaster

I've tried to do some scientific research this week - using two teenagers (whose names I will leave anonymous) - and it explains the problem

- Average calories burned vs. average calories consumed on an average summer day

- Burned
 - Turn over in bed -3 calories (one per turn)
 - Chatting on line - 480 calories (2 calories per minute for 2 hours)
 - Play video games - 53 calories
 - Watch TV - 35 calories
 - Walk to kitchen - 99 (11 x 9 calories each)
 - Order take out pizza over phone - 1 calorie
- TOTAL - 671 calories burned

- Consumed
 - 1 Can chili – 660 calories
 - 1 Grilled cheese sandwich – 505 calories
 - 1 Pizza – 1480calories
 - 2 Sodas – 300 calories
 - 1 Bag chips – 420 calories
 - 6 Cookies – 270 calories
 - 1 Popcorn (large movie with extra butter) -1640 calories
 - 1 Bag M&M's -240
- TOTAL - 5515 calories consumed

You get the picture

The problem wouldn't be so significant if it was merely aesthetic

- But excess consumption takes a terrible toll - as National Geographic reports:
 - It is associated with 400,000 deaths a year
 - The total medical tab annually - \$117 billion
 - And over consumption could soon surpass tobacco as the leading cause of preventable death

But it is more than an appearance issue, more than a physical one - it is spiritual

- Appetites that get out of control may be a sign of something disordered in the soul

So what are we to do?

- Start on an Atkins, inject leptin and other promising hormones?
- Maybe something more radical - gastric bypass surgery - jaw wiring?

Actually, these don't not go far enough - something far more severe is necessary

- Paul speaks to it in Romans 12:1 - (Read)

1 - WE MUST GIVE OVER TO GOD WHAT WE TOO OFTEN REGARD AS OUR OWN (EXCHANGE OWNERSHIP)

- Having given this lengthy treatise on God's work of mercy to undeserving failures like you and me – Romans, chapters 1-11
- Outlining everything God has done - giving His Son to die for us
- Paying the price for our sin
- Sending us His life giving Spirit

- In predictable fashion—Paul gives his application
- In view of all of this—here is your “duty of gratitude”
- **RELEASE YOURSELVES TO GOD—GIVE HIM YOUR HEARTS**
- Actually - more specifically - **PRESENT YOUR BODIES!!**

- In one statement-God declared the importance of our bodies to Him – and for good reason
 - It's not only this - that just about everything we do involves the body
 - The body belongs to Him
 - He made them - Genesis 1
 - He has liberated them, purchased them - that He might indwell them
 - I Corinthians 6

- Our body is not just a physical system
- It is inhabited by the real presence of Christ
- It is, as I Corinthians 6:13 notes - meant for the Lord and the Lord is meant for the body

- It is His to do with as He pleases
 - And what ultimately pleases Him is to showcase His glory through our bodies
 - “You are not your own - you are bought with a price - therefore honor God with your body” - I Corinthians 6:20

- You begin to see that the body lies right at the center of the spiritual life
 - Therefore - present your bodies - is one of our central acts

- Until we acknowledge this - we will likely struggle with this sin
 - For at the heart of gluttony is a misunderstanding of ownership
 - It is treating this vessel as if it belongs to us

- However, the cure for gluttony demands far more than a releasing of ownership -

2 - WE MUST LAY BEFORE GOD WHAT WE TOO OFTEN MAKE TO BE OUR MASTER (EXCHANGE MASTERS)

- A - Gluttony - like a host of other sins - is about slavery - yielding to the body's demands
- Which is not a surprise - we have been trained to
 - Sin not only ruined the soul - the tendencies of self have settled into our flesh and perverted the role of the body
 - Originally created to serve us and God - our sin driven bodies demand we serve its passions, impurities, APPETITES!
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- The result - our bodies are set against God and His ways
 - There is a readiness in our members to act wrongly - Proverbs 6:17-18
 - Eyes to lust, stomach to consume, genitals to seek fulfillment
 - The tongue has become this untamable force - James 3:5
 - We speak before we act - we eat before we think
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- As a result - the body often becomes the primary barrier to conformity to Christ
 - We want to honor God - but we cave in to our bodies' demands
 - Gluttony is simply one of many habits the body urges us to give in to
- B - This is why Paul insists that we present our bodies on the altar
- It is a radical declaration of who now is the master of our lives
 - But it will not come without a daily fight
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- For while we have received a new heart in Christ - the outward flesh is still running on the old "program"
 - Old habits - old allegiances - old appetites, gratifications, are still at work in our bodies
 - Running ahead of our good intentions
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- We have idolized our bodies
 - Satisfying their pleasures is still our main work
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- Consider the struggle going on at this moment - the body is saying:
 - Sleep - give me sleep
 - Food - when will this be over?
 - Sexual pleasure - will my spouse be in the mood?
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- I would like to assume your spirits are intent on my every word
 - The reality is the body often takes precedence - we have been trained this way

- The solution - bring this frame to the altar daily
- Offer the parts of our bodies as instruments of righteousness -
 - Rom 6:13 - until every part is eventually inclined towards God
 - Our hands to present offerings
 - Our feet to walk His path
 - Our mouths to speak His truths
 - Our arms to embrace the lonely
 - Our appetites - in exchange for His appetites

- The cure for gluttony involves a release of ownership, a shift in allegiance - but there is one more thing

3 - WE MUST RESPECT WHAT WE TOO OFTEN TREAT WITH CONTEMPT (EXCHANGE HABITS)

- The reality is - gluttony is a sin against the body
- It is to treat it with a certain disdain, hatred even

- For gluttony is ultimately about misusing the body
- About disabling attachments that lead to despair

- It's more - it's about falling in line with the adversary
- Who too hates our bodies
- Given that they are God's property, owned and inhabited by Him
- The shrine in which He wishes to be gloried
- The vehicle through which God desires to advance His kingdom

- Is it any wonder Satan will do all he can to destroy it?
- Shorten its use for God's kingdom?
- Disable us externally for the challenges internally?

- Paul calls us to recognize our bodies as something different
 - As holy, pleasing to God
 - Something to be honored - not betrayed
 - Managed - not abused
 - Worthy of disciplines that will enable it to be maximized by Him
 - Rest, exercise, nourishment

CONCLUSION

Wiersbe - "Never minimize the care of your body - those who do, play into the hands of the destroyer."

- So - let's take some radical action
- Let's give over to God what rightfully belongs to Him

Prayer of Repentance

Gracious Father -

I have lived in this body since the moment of my conception.

At times I have loved it.

Loved it in the sense that I have served it - made it my master.

At other times, I have hated it.

Hated it by abusing it with habits and addictions -

Caving in to its never ending appetite for more.

At times, this has been nothing less than gluttony.

I am determining to do this -

To give this body of *mine* over to You. Regularly.

It is Yours, for Your glory - for Your service.

This is my sacrifice, so I expect it will cost me.

I am turning away from patterns that suggest otherwise.

While I will enjoy Your pleasures, I am recognizing this -

That my very best food is to do Your will.

Amen.