

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

If you live in Nigeria

And a friend that you haven't seen in a while
Comes up and says, “My, you're fat!”

Don't be offended . . . it's a compliment!

In Nigeria, being well-fed is a sign of the “good life,”
And it's considered attractive
To carry a few extra pounds.

Well, that being the case
We Americans are quite an attractive bunch!

Yet, in our “good life,” eating disorders abound.

Food has become a problem in the US.

2/3s of Americans are overweight. More than half of them – or 40% of all adults – are obese with about 6% of the entire population being morbidly obese. This . . . results in development of chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, mobility problems or even mental issues

~~

Food is a basic human need.

It is also a sensual pleasure.

We enjoy eating . . . and nothing wrong with that!

~~

Jesus enjoyed eating too.

Much of his ministry occurred around the table.

Gathering around the table

Is an important social function.

Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a banquet or feast.

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

But just because we live on food
Doesn't mean we should live for food.

Because when we look to food
To satisfy some deeper unfilled need
We end up a glutton.

And the early church leaders
Ranked gluttony as #2 of the 7 deadly sins.

But how can the enjoyment of food
And a few extra pounds be considered a sin?

Isn't there a lot worse stuff going on
We should be concerned about . . .
Than worrying about our midriff?

That's the question before us today.

~~

As I have said before
The 7 deadly sins are not other people's sins
They're yours and mine.

They're deadly because anyone of them
Can lead us down a path of self-destruction.

They are the roots of many sins.
They affect you, the people around you
And ultimately, the world in which we live.

But if we're serious about our walk with Jesus
And if we truly desire a meaningful life
Than we need to address some of this stuff.

~~

We don't read too far into the Bible before we get to food.

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

Diet was one of the first things God considered
When God created humankind.

1) Genesis 1:29 (CEV) I have provided all kinds of fruit and grain
for you to eat.

In the very beginning then
God designed human digestive systems
To eat fruit, grain, and vegetables.

It was only later after the Noah and the flood
God gives humankind permission to eat meat:

2) Genesis 9:2-3 (NLT) . . . I have placed them [all the animals of
the earth] in your power. ³ I have given them to you for food, just
as I have given you grain and vegetables.

~~

God provided food for our nourishment.

Yet, from the very beginning, food was our downfall!

Humanity's fall from grace
Was eating the forbidden fruit.

Food was the first bait Satan used
To tempt humankind

And the relationship between food and people
Have never been the same since.

~~

Let's be clear gluttony is not just the act of overeating.

In essence, like lust, and greed
Gluttony is the worship of something other than God.

It is misdirected and misguided affection.

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

Food, as with the other things

We tend to be gluttonous about is not bad . . .

It’s how we use it.

3) Augustine of the 4th Century said, *in all matters of this kind, it is not the nature of things we use, but our reason for using them, and our manner of seeking them, that make what we do either praiseworthy or blamable.*

Gluttony according to the website Faust

4) *[Is the] thoughtless waste of everything, overindulgence, misplaced sensuality, uncleanness, and maliciously depriving others. Marked by refusal to share and unreasonable consumption of more than is necessary, especially food or water. Destruction, especially for sport. Substance abuse or binge drinking. “excessive love of pleasure”*

~~

Paul says in the Philippians passage

5) Philippians 3:19 (NRSV) Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

Frederick Buechner says *a glutton is one who raids the icebox for a cure for spiritual malnutrition.*

The refrigerator becomes our temple

Food our object of worship.

As with all God-given gifts

The excessive use of which

Has an escalating addictive aspect to it.

~~

As odd as it may seem

Our personal appetites have global consequences.

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

Gluttony affects more than just the glutton.

When a person consumes more food than his fair share
Heck . . .

When a person consumes anything more than his fair share
It becomes gluttony
Whether it's food, water, or fossil fuels

~~

I read an article in this month's Christianity Today
On the US's gluttonous consumption of fossil fuels.

The author quotes from an earlier article
Written in the 80s in the midst of the energy crisis
By then president of Moody Bible Institute.
George Sweeting was worried
The world was going to run out of oil.

We buy things that are convenient. We eat more than we need. Expensive packages and containers become trash. As victims of an easy lifestyle, we have unthinkingly perpetuated a problem that is fast becoming a crisis. Somehow, we have to convince ourselves that even though things seem right, something is very wrong.

Then later on the author quotes Sweeting again. *Wasting energy is as much an act of violence against the poor as refusing to feed the hungry.*

~~

For those of you who grew up Brethren
Dan West is a familiar name.

Dan West initiated a program in the late 40s
Eventually called Heifer Project.

The goal was to send heifers to the war-torn areas

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

Of Europe following WWII.

My understanding is that the first heifer
Actually went to Castaner, Puerto Rico.

A story circulates that as Dan West went around
Promoting Heifer Project

In the homes of fellow Brethren
Or at banquet tables around the world

He would always refuse dessert saying: *“I cannot eat cake when
others in the world do not have bread”*

There’s an saying attributed to Gandhi
The Brethren like to toss around.

6) *“Live simply so that others may simply live.”*

We claim the simple life as part of who we are.

Our tagline says as much . . .
Continuing the work of Jesus, simply, peacefully, together.

The fact is, the earth does not have the resources
For everyone to sustain a gluttonous lifestyle.

Someone somewhere will suffer for it.

George Sweeting the former president of Moody
Whom I had quoted earlier
In this month’s Christianity Today

Argued that the church is God’s *living, small-scale demonstration of
the world as it should be (CT p. 37).*

The church is be a model on how to live.

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

We are to treat the world’s resources

Food, water, energy, for what they are . . .
God’s good gifts.

We are to treat these God-given resources

With reverence rather than abandon (CT p. 37).

We should strive to reduce the impact

We have on the environment
And reject a gluttonous lifestyle

For our own good, for the good of others
And as an example to be emulated.

Our satisfaction in the more simple pleasures of life.

Should be a public testimony to our faith in God.

~~

When it comes to a gluttonous lifestyle

Self-control is freedom.

I know . . . it seems like a contradiction.

To be gluttonous seems to mean you’re free

To eat whatever you want
Whenever you want
And however much you want.

But in actuality, gluttony is bondage.

We become slaves to our stomachs.

Paul has something to say about this.

7) Galatians 5:13-15 (NRSV)

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law

“7 Deadly Sin: Gluttony”

is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁵ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

~~

Simply put, a gluttonous lifestyle
Is not a lifestyle that reflects love of neighbor.
It reflects the self-centered, self-gratifying worldview
Of a consumer-driven society.

~~

Today we come to the Lord’s Table
To share the bread and cup of communion.

Communion symbolizes that food is not an end to itself
But reminds us of our need for God.

It also symbolizes our need for one another.
A simple, common meal shared together.

Jesus says we do not live on bread alone
But on the very word of God.

Maybe in some ways, we are to view eating in general
Much like the way we view Communion.

Maybe in some ways
We should approach every meal
Like we approach Communion

In reverence and in gratitude
Aware of God’s good gifts
And aware of the needs of our neighbor.

8) Psalm 34:8 (NRSV)
O taste and see that the Lord is good.