

# CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 14, 2021 • WEEK 14



## SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND CIVIL SERVANTS

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### *Verse of the Week*

1 Cor. 10:31

*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

## Gobbling Up Gluttony



JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS for my sins and yours at 3 PM on Good Friday afternoon about 2,000 years ago. Last week, we saw Governor Pontius Pilate conclude that Christ had been delivered up for crucifixion “because of envy” (Matthew 27:18). Envious sinners constantly accused the perfect Son of Man of evil all throughout His sinless life. One of the many inscripturated accusations against Christ was “Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!” (Luke 7:34). The Bible accurately and truly records this lie<sup>1</sup> about the Christ—that Jesus was a glutton. Did the Son of Man really have issues with food?

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*(This study is adapted from an earlier series by Rev. Gauthier, 1960–2020.)*



## INTRODUCTION

One out of every three Americans has problems with food, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (a branch of the National Institute of Health). In one study, it says one-third of all Americans are overweight.<sup>2</sup> The Son of God on earth was fault-free regarding failures with food. He was a shining exception to the rule of human food failures. Almost all people have trouble rightly relating to the God-given gift of food.

### 1. THE GOD-GIVEN GOODNESS OF FOOD

Gluttony, like all sins, finds its roots in the rich and perfect soil of the green garden paradise of Eden. Gluttony is surely sin. More accurately, gluttony is the sinful expression of the otherwise holy human appetite for God's great gift of good food.

#### A. First Foods

The first use of the word “food” in the Bible is in the first of its 1,189 chapters. On history's sixth day, God made man in His image, gave him dominion over His earth (Genesis 1:28), and created a vast food supply.

*Genesis 1:29-31*

*Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; **it shall be food for you;**<sup>30</sup> and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so.<sup>31</sup> God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.<sup>3</sup>*

God created our perfect primordial parents in perfect peace, in a perfect place, and with perfect palates for His “very good” creation called food. This brand-new spinning planet was heavily weighted with trillions of tons of food, good food, God's food for the sustenance of men and women—and for their pleasure. We even see the beautifully pleasing nature of food and the happy nature of eating at the fall.

*Genesis 3:6*

*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*

Food—a wonderful gift. Did you pray this as a child?

**“GOD IS GREAT, GOD IS GOOD;  
LET US THANK HIM FOR OUR FOOD.”**

#### B. Fun Foods

We should be thankful indeed for the goodness of food. Food is good and pleasant, and created not only for our sustenance, but also for our



pleasure. Israel's wise political leader King Solomon wrote simple, sage advice about the joy of eating.

*Ecclesiastes 2:24-25*

*There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. <sup>25</sup>For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?*

God created humans to need and enjoy food with Him in mind. Really, life apart from God, "under the sun," is so short-lived and has minimal meaning.

*Ecclesiastes 5:18-19*

*Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. <sup>19</sup>Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.*

All throughout the Bible, we see people celebrating life with loved ones through food and feasting. It is just natural in God's created order. People know that. God knows that life is filled with labor as part of the Dominion Mandate (in Genesis 1:28). Yet, God so enjoys the celebrations of His people with food and feasting that He commanded Israel to observe a minimum of three national feasts every year.

*Exodus 23:14-17*

*Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. <sup>15</sup>You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread... as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. <sup>16</sup>Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. <sup>17</sup>Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.*

Likewise, in the New Testament, food draws us nearer to God and is a vital part of Christian living. The lives of the first disciples included their constant participation in the sacramental meal of Communion. Healthy Christians also continually gave themselves to fellowship meals. Note it as one of the following four areas of dedication in the lives of the baptized:

*Acts 2:41-42*

*So then, those who had received [Peter's preaching about salvation] were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup>They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Food is good and based in God's goodness, yet one woman said her favorite exercise was "chewing." Sadly, she was a pea in the pod with the man saying:

**"MY FAVORITE SPORT IS THE BUFFET LINE SHUFFLE."**





## C. Faith and Food

On Maundy Thursday Christ washed the disciples' feet in preparation for the Last Supper. That night's Passover meal was part of one of the three national festivals of Israel—the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When God delivered Israel, the death Angel “passed over” all those homes protected by the blood of a lamb (a foreshadowing of the coming Lamb of God). Jesus Christ was “the Lamb of God” whose death would take away the sins of the world.<sup>4</sup> The night before His death, Christ used that Passover meal to illustrate and introduce the New Covenant. In less than 24 hours, Jesus would submit Himself to the shedding of His blood and breaking of His body (but not His bones) on the cross. From that day to this and until He comes again, believers give an audio-visual sermon about Christ's death through that meal.

*1 Corinthians 11:26 (The Living Bible)*

*For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are retelling the message of the Lord's death, that he has died for you. Do this until he comes again.*

Before Christ's death, He called Himself the Bread of Life,<sup>5</sup> to be taken “normally” but not “literally,” as the Sustainer of our lives and energy. Humans must have food to live. We will die without a steady diet.

### I AM ON A SEAFOOD DIET. I SEE FOOD, AND I EAT IT!

Man cannot live on communion wafers alone (as revitalizing as the memorial meal is to the soul). We also need seafood and all varieties of food. We need thousands of calories per week. Miss Piggy of *The Muppets* said, “Never eat more than you can lift!” A vital fact about faith and food follows:

*1 Corinthians 10:31*

*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

We are to live for God's glory. Our chief end is to know and enjoy Him forever.<sup>6</sup> Part of our enjoyment of God on Earth is knowing that He wants us to glorify Him even in our daily dietary duties with the fun of feasting and the food of fellowship. A desire for food is not gluttony. Food is good—VERY good.

## 2. THE GROSSNESS OF GLUTTONY

One of the greatest preachers in the first 500 years of the church was John of Antioch, who was said to have preached to over 100,000 under his charge. Due to his eloquence, he became nicknamed Saint John Chrysostom, which means “golden mouth.” He graphically identified the sad symptoms of gluttony:

Discharge, phlegm, mucus running from the nose, hiccups, vomiting, and violent belching.... The increase in luxury is nothing but the increase in excrement.<sup>7</sup>

If these are its symptoms, exactly what is gluttony?



## A. Gluttony Defined

Gluttony is simply a desire for *too much* food. That seems like one for “the duh file,” but we must define *too much* by God’s Word and not merely think about the quantities of food eaten. Often bodily symptoms, including obesity, are telling of one’s indulgence in this seventh deadly sin (sorry Miss Piggy!).

However, we must be careful in our judgments and assumptions about others “pigging out” in gluttony. For instance, just because someone has great wealth does not make her greedy. She may have inherited big bucks and may be very generous. Also, just because someone loves sleep and enjoys vacation does not make him slothful. He may work twice as hard as a person who gets less sleep and never takes vacation. Similarly, just because someone is heavier than we are (or heavier than we *assume* he should be, which is probably none of our business) does not mean he is gluttonous. There is not a one-to-one correlation.

### **GLUTTONY (A DESIRE FOR *TOO MUCH* FOOD) IS NOT NECESSARILY INDICATED BY BODY WEIGHT.**

English author Evelyn Waugh said, “Enclosing every thin man is a fat man demanding elbow room.”<sup>8</sup>

Also, medical factors, like thyroid problems, can contribute adversely to someone’s BMI (Body Mass Index). Furthermore, genetic issues and high metabolic rates can hide a glutton from our eyes. *The Muppets* character Cookie Monster is proportionally not as portly as Miss Piggy is, but he is constantly coveting cookies—at a gluttonous level. In addition, those with bulimia want overfull tummies in wrong ways, which may not show in fat rolls or paunch bellies due to their habitual cycle of bingeing and purging. They want *too much* food in that they want food *too badly*. They want to use it in the wrong way, going outside God’s clear will concerning food. Such a view of food, even viewed through the sunken eyes of a skeletal and bulimic person, is excessive—and in that sense, *too much*. Gluttons desire food—too much.

## B. Gluttony and Our Motives

Like so many sins, we often forget that the motive behind the action is just as important as the action itself. Actions such as lying are sinful, but we must be discerning enough to realize that sinful motives are part and parcel of anything that is truly sinful.

Lying is wrong, but it is not wrong (nor lying) to *misrepresent the facts* of your whereabouts to a thief by hooking up your bedroom lights to a timer during your vacation. Murder is wrong as prohibited by the Ten Commandments. However, killing with a motive of self-defense, just warfare, or capital punishment is not wrong. God Himself prescribed and modeled all three. In morality’s mix, motives matter. Just so, the English literary scholar C. S. Lewis said:

**“HE THAT BUT LOOKETH ON A PLATE  
OF HAM AND EGGS, TO LUST AFTER IT,**





## HATH ALREADY COMMITTED BREAKFAST WITH IT IN HIS HEART.”<sup>9</sup>

Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than one requires for appropriate sustenance or appropriate pleasure. An entire host of factors plays into why we wrongly relate to food, but all of us struggle with it. Just as surely as part of the mortal condition is the necessity of food for survival, it is part of the fallen human condition to turn food into an idol. Like all the things in God’s creation, food, as an idol, is a good servant but a cruel master. Therefore, eat food with faith<sup>10</sup> and have fun with those with whom you fellowship, remembering:

**“NOTHING IS BETTER FOR A MAN UNDER THE SUN THAN TO EAT AND DRINK AND BE GLAD.” – ECCLESIASTES 8:15 (NIV)**

### CONCLUDING HOPE & PRAYER

Dear Senator: I pray this Session’s mini-meals from God’s good Word have proven to be “soul food” and nutritious to your spirits. That is my motive as I labor on your behalf. Please know that it is your spiritual condition, and not your political position, that is my utmost and primary concern.

Pastorally speaking, and for your souls,

Rev. Perry M. Gauthier

### FOOTNOTES

1. *Accurate recordings* of Biblical events *neither affirm the truth* of the events (like statements and accusations by sinners and even Satan himself) *nor presuppose God’s approval* thereof (like the polygamous sins of the Old Testament patriarchs).
2. Francine Prose, *The Seven Deadly Sins: Gluttony*, The New York Public Library: Oxford University Press, 2003, pg. 77.
3. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible 1995 Update* unless otherwise noted.
4. [John 1:29](#) – “The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”
5. [John 6:35](#) – “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.’”
6. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* of 1647, Question #1.
7. John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of Chrysostom on 1 Timothy*, Homily 13.
8. Steven Schwartz, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, MacMillan: New York, 1997, pg. 137.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. 147.



