



EVERY NATION
CHURCH • G.T.A.

Vice & Virtue

REORIENTING OUR LOVES

Lenten Devotional Guide

AN INTRODUCTION: Reordering Our Loves

Lent is an invitation into the wilderness, not for punishment, but for reflection and formation.

This guide accompanies our Lenten series, *Vice & Virtue: Reordering Our Loves*. Over seven weeks, we examine the classic vices—pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust—and consider the virtues that heal them. The aim is not self-improvement, but transformation.

In our cultural moment, we see the effects of sin everywhere. Yet the language of sin has largely disappeared. When it does appear, it can sound harsh, judgmental, or irrelevant. At its core, however, sin is more than isolated actions. It is a pattern of disordered love.

The early desert Christians recognized that beneath visible sins lie deeper dispositions of the heart. The church later called them “capital” vices, meaning source. Think of a tree: pride is the root, the vices are the main branches, and everyday sins are the fruit.

These vices are often misguided attempts to secure good things—love, security, recognition, comfort, approval—on our own terms. In other words, we pursue genuinely good things, but in distorted ways. Our loves become disordered.

This guide invites us to take sin seriously. Yet sin is never the final word. God’s grace is. And grace calls for our participation. We cannot put to death what we refuse to name. Paul describes this pattern clearly:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made

new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:22-24)

And as the nineteenth-century Scottish minister Thomas Chalmers famously said:

“The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the power of a new one.”

Transformation—the process of naming, confessing, renouncing, and repenting of our sin—happens as we cooperate with the Spirit, reordering our loves and lives around Jesus Christ.

Use this guide personally and in community. May this season lead you toward deeper freedom and new life.

A Lenten Prayer

Father,

You see our hearts clearly and love us fully. Where our loves are disordered and pride has taken root, bring us into the light of Your grace.

Lord Jesus,

You walked the wilderness and humbled Yourself for us. Teach us to put off the old self and to follow You in faithful obedience.

Holy Spirit,

Search us and renew us. Give us courage to name our sin and power to grow in Christlike virtue.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, reorder our loves and lead us from wilderness to resurrection life.

Amen.

INTRO

- What is something you've accomplished that you're genuinely proud of?

READ

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (Mt 23:5a)

REFLECT & RESPOND

The gospel invites us into Christlike formation: *putting off* the old self, *being renewed* in our minds, and *putting on* the new self in Christ (Eph 4:22-24).

Today, we turn our attention to **Pride expressed as Vainglory**, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where our love has gone astray, and to form in us **Christ-centred humility**.

The Vice: Vainglory

Vainglory is the excessive desire for recognition, acceptance, and approval from others. For example:

- Managing our image to impress others
- Hiding weakness to avoid rejection
- Seeking compliments or affirmations
- Lying or exaggerating to impress others

The Virtue: Christ-centred Humility

Humility is rooting our identity and approval in God. It is freedom from obsessing over how we are perceived. It looks like:

- Faithfulness without recognition
- Receiving correction without defensiveness
- Giving credit freely
- Trusting God when overlooked

Reflective Questions

Q: Where do you see Vainglory at work in our culture?

Q: Where do you notice it in your own life?

Q: How do you perhaps justify the pursuit of recognition or image management?

Q: What resistance do you feel toward humility?

Q: What might trusting Jesus look like in this area right now?

Christ-centred Reflection

Jesus exposes sin not to shame us, but to free us. Pride distorts our love by centring life on ourselves. Vainglory expresses pride by seeking glory from others rather than from God. Jesus restores us by reordering our hearts to rest in the Father's love and live for His glory:

"Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."

You are already seen, known, and loved. At the cross, our need to construct a glorious image dies.

Put it into practice this week

- Pay attention to when you want to be seen or acknowledged. Notice your internal reaction when you are overlooked.
- Choose one act of goodness to do entirely in secret this week without mentioning it to anyone. Let it train your heart to live before the Father alone.

PRAY

- Confess where love has gone astray and shows up as vainglory in your life.
- Thank God for grace already given.
- Ask the Spirit to form Christlike humility in you.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, we bring You the places in us that need healing. Our loves are misdirected and our desires divided. Thank You that, because of Your cross, we stand before You not condemned, but loved.

Holy Spirit, continue Your quiet work within us. Reveal what needs healing. Restore what has been disordered. Shape our desires and strengthen our faith.

Father, complete the good work You have begun in us, conforming us to the image of Your Son.

Amen.