



**EVERY NATION**  
CHURCH • G T A

# Vices & 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

- When have you felt comparison quietly steal your joy? Your peace? Your gratitude?

## READ

Psalm 73  
Philippians 2:3–4

## REFLECT &amp; 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 Envy, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where our love has gone astray and to draw us toward the virtue that restores us in Christ.

**The Vice: Envy**

Envy is resentment toward the good of others. It is not simply wanting what someone else has — it is feeling diminished by their flourishing.

- “God has not been fair.”
- “Why them and not me?”
- “I’ve been overlooked.”
- “God has shortchanged me.”

Unchecked, envy grows into resentment toward others — and quietly questions God’s goodness. *It poisons our ability to enjoy the life we have.*

Common areas where envy appears:

- Achievement & career
- Family & relationships
- Appearance & health
- Lifestyle & possessions

**The Virtue: Charity (Love) & Contentment**

If envy resents the good God gives to others, charity trains us to rejoice in it. Love does not envy (1 Cor 13:4). Contentment learns to trust God in every circumstance (Phil 4:11–13).

Charity looks like:

- Rejoicing in another’s success
- Celebrating without comparison

- Resting in God as your portion

Envy says, “I lack.”

Charity says, “God is enough.”

**Reflective Questions**

*Qu: Where do you see envy shaping our culture?*

*Qu: In what areas do you most struggle with “Why them and not me?”*

*Qu: How might envy be subtly questioning God’s goodness in your life?*

*Qu: What would it look like to rejoice in someone else’s flourishing this week?*

**Christ-centred Reflection**

In Psalm 73, the turning point comes with one word: “Until.” “Until I entered the sanctuary of God...” Envy distorts our love by centring life around comparison. But in God’s presence, love is reordered. God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Jesus exposes envy not to shame us, but to free us. At the cross, we see the ultimate proof that God has not withheld good from us. “He who did not spare his own Son... how will he not also graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32)

**Put it into practice this week**

- Notice when comparison arises. Pay attention to your internal reaction.
- When you see something in someone else’s life that stirs comparison, choose immediate happiness for them. Choose gratitude.

**PRAY**

- Confess where comparison has shaped your heart.
- Acknowledge any resentment toward others or toward God.
- Thank God for His generous grace.

**Closing Prayer**

Jesus, we bring You the places in us where comparison has shaped our hearts.

We confess that we often measure our lives against others and question Your goodness.

## REORDERING OUR LOVES

*Wk 2: Envy*

Thank You that You meet us not with  
condemnation, but with mercy.  
Because of Your cross, we stand before You  
loved and secure.  
Holy Spirit, realign our loves.  
Teach us to rejoice in the good You give to  
others.