



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

- If every job paid the same, what would you choose to do for a living?

READ

Matthew 6:24, 19:16-25 & 1 Timothy 6:8-10

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 **Greed**, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where our love has gone astray, and to draw us toward a life of **Generosity** inspired by Christ.

The Vice: Greed

Greed (avarice) is a love of, and craving for, money and possessions. Possessions can change how we see the world, and put us in an attitude that is anti-God:

- **PRIDE:** All I have is my own, and I deserve it; I'm enough and I need no one.
- **SELFISHNESS:** What matters is what I get out of life. Others are to be used for my success.
- **IDOLATRY:** As long as I have "X", I can be content. A good life is a life of good "stuff".

The Virtue: Generosity

We are called to a life free of greed, so that we can be generous just as God is generous to us. Christ shows us a life according to generosity:

- **GRATITUDE:** All I have is from God, and He cares for me.
- **SERVICE:** Life's meaning is found in serving others, compelled by God's love for me
- **CONTENTMENT:** Life is not found in "stuff", but in loving God and people

Reflective Questions

Q: How does our culture promote greed as a good thing?

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

Q: How do we sometimes justify greed in our lives, making it feel reasonable or acceptable?

Q: What resistance do you feel toward a life of contentment with what you have right now?

Q: What resistance do you feel toward a life of generosity toward others?

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

Christ-centred Reflection

Greed is not just liking money a bit too much. It's a self-centred way of looking at the world that reduces people to things and that pushes God as far away from us as possible. What we need is not to simply like money less, but to submit all our possessions to Christ's logic of gratitude, trust, radical generosity, and contentment.

Put it into practice this week

- What messages do you receive daily that want to make you buy things? How can you tune out voices that get in the way of contentment?
- How can you be generous *right now*? What could be a first step towards *regular* generosity?

PRAY

Use these prompts to pray:

- Confess where Greed has shaped your heart and your decisions.
- Thank God for grace already given and for His care for you.
- Ask the Spirit to form Christlike generosity in you.

Closing Prayer

God our Father, we thank you for you have provided for us. Help us love you above everything else. Jesus, we pray that by your cross we will be delivered from greed to a life of radical generosity. Holy Spirit, empower us to be content and to serve one another as Christ has served us.