



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

What's your go-to way to unwind after a long day?

READ

Matthew 4:1–4
Ecclesiastes 6:7
Luke 21:34

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

Today, we turn our attention to **Gluttony**, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where our desires have become disordered—and to lead us into the freedom of **Temperance**.

The Vice: Gluttony

Gluttony is not simply about eating too much. It is a pattern of overindulgence—turning to created things for comfort. It says:

- “I need this now.”
- “This will make me feel better.”
- “Just a little more...”

Gluttony shows up in many forms:

- Overeating or using food for comfort
- Constant distraction (phones, media, noise)
- Busyness that avoids stillness
- Shopping, consuming, or indulging to cope

At its core, gluttony is reaching for something good & making it ultimate. Unchecked, it numbs our souls & keeps us from deeper life with God.

The Virtue: Temperance

Temperance is not about restriction—it is about **freedom**. It is learning to enjoy good things without being ruled by them. Temperance looks like:

- Paying attention to your inner life
- Saying small, intentional “no’s”
- Creating space for God in silence and stillness
- Receiving God’s gifts with gratitude, not dependence

Gluttony says, “I need this.”
Temperance says, “God is enough.”

Reflective Questions

Qu: What do you most often reach for when you feel stressed, tired, or overwhelmed?

Qu: Which of these resonates most with you:

- distraction (phone, media, noise)
- comfort (food, entertainment)
- busyness (staying constantly active)
- control (overworking, over-optimizing)

Qu: How comfortable are you with silence or stillness? What makes it difficult?

Qu: What might it look like for you to practice temperance in a small, practical way this week?

Christ-centred Reflection

In the wilderness, Jesus was hungry—yet he refused to let hunger rule him. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus reveals that beneath every craving is a deeper hunger—one only God can satisfy. He does not just show us restraint—He shows us **trust**. Where we grasp, He trusts. Where we reach, He rests in the Father. And now He invites us into that same life.

Put it into practice this week

- Notice what you reach for when you feel overwhelmed or tired.
- Create a small space each day (5–30 minutes) without noise or distraction.
- Practice one intentional “no” to something good—but not necessary.

PRAY

- Confess where you’ve been reaching for things instead of God.
- Ask God to reveal deeper hunger beneath your cravings.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to reshape your desires.

Closing Prayer

Jesus,
You know our weaknesses and the places we turn for comfort — that we often turn to things

that cannot truly satisfy. Thank You that You meet us with grace. Help us to see clearly what has been shaping our desires. Teach us to turn toward You. Give us the courage to say no to what cannot satisfy, and the faith to say yes to You. Holy Spirit, reorder our loves.
Amen.