

Too Much

Avoid the Trap of Excessive Living

Shopping online, practicing a hobby, or just sitting down at a restaurant, do you ever feel tempted to go to the extreme? Maybe the call to buy everything, collect everything, and eat everything in sight is real for you. If so, this lesson is for you (and me). Going "too far" or indulging in "too much" was an accusation the religious leaders tried to take down Jesus with. He said, *"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds"* (Matt. 11:19). While we might understand the "drunkard" part, what is "gluttony"? Maybe you've got a simple answer, but let's dig deeper!

Gluttony Defined

- In the New Testament, the Greek word **φάγος (phagos)** — is translated as "glutton" twice (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34).
- Back in the Old Testament, though, the Hebrew word **זָלַל (zālal)** — gives a much broader sense. It means to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; fig. to be loose morally, worthless or prodigal. Blow down, glutton, riotous (eater), vile (Deut. 21:18-21; Prov 23:21; 28:7).
- That Hebrew word translated as "gluttons" in Prov. 28:7, in the Septuagint is the Greek word **ἀσωτία (asōtia)** — meaning luxury, recklessness, dissipation, wildness, debauchery, wastefulness (Eph. 5:18; Titus 1:6; 1 Peter 4:3-4).
- So, we get the sense that **gluttony isn't just about food**, it's about "too much" in our excessive living, wastefulness, and over-indulgence.

What We're Not Talking About

- It's not eating meals with others. Jesus even summarized his ministry by saying, *"The Son of Man came eating and drinking"* (Matt. 11:19).
- It's not one of the "seven deadly sins." That term isn't actually in the Bible!
- It's not even a topic that should get you to eat quinoa or chia seeds at lunch today. The problem of gluttony and excess goes deeper than a single meal.

Thinking about excessive living, let's take our cue in this lesson from Agur's wisdom in Prov. 30:7-9:

"Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God" (Proverbs 30:7-9).

The Big Idea: Gluttony, excess, and luxurious living pose a massive threat to our spiritual well-being.

What's So Bad About "Too Much?"

- Leads Us to Forget (Deut. 31:19-20; Luke 12:19). God's warning to Moses was that the people would enter the promised land and forget about God after filling themselves with food and

riches. We, too, can become self-sufficient and think that our luxurious living results from our accomplishments.

- Fosters a Worldly Focus (Phil. 3:19; Rom. 16:18; 1 John 2:16). A mind that's set on earthly things is misguided. Our appetites, cravings, and addictions take control, leading us to obey the lust of the flesh.
- Wastes What Others Could Use (Luke 3:11; 16:19-21). John's teaching led anyone with extra to help those who lacked — clothes, food, etc. How is that loving or helpful when we see others in need while sitting on a stockpile?
- Leaves Us Feeling Empty (Luke 15:13-14). A lavish and luxurious living will end, leaving us hungry and unsatisfied. It's hollow, empty, and though it feels good now, it will leave us lacking more than we ever consumed.

How Can We Avoid "Too Much?"

- Pray to God to Fill You With the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Like Agur, we should all pray that God would keep us from "too much." Rather than filling ourselves with food and drink, let's fill ourselves with God's Spirit.
- Discipline Yourself (1 Cor. 6:12-13; 9:24-27). Whatever your "vice" is, don't let anything dominate you. Take control and be sure you can say "No" anytime.
- Be Content With "Enough" (Matt. 6:11; Exod. 16:17-21). As God sent down what each person needed — bread from heaven — we ought to be happy with the "*daily bread*" we enjoy today.
- Find Satisfaction in the Lord (Psalm 73:23-26; Matt. 5:6). Can you honestly say, "*There is nothing on earth that I desire besides*" God?

Conclusion

Whew, we made it! There was a lot to cover — maybe too much — but hopefully, we've seen the danger in over-indulging and the need for restraint in our modern world of "too much." The big question for today: what is "too much" for you?