

Gluttony - Part 1: Defining Gluttony

PAUL MATTHIES, *November 5, 2006*

Good evening. My name is Paul Matthies. I'm the membership pastor here at the Village Church. Matt is away on vacation. He has asked me to fill in for him, and I am excited about sharing what the Lord has put on my heart this week and next. In tonight's sermon, I come to humbly confess something to you tonight. That honest confession tonight and what I'm about to say is not a punchline to a joke, but I struggle with the sin of gluttony. For my entire life, I have always been a big guy. And my weight has often been a real source of shame for me. I endured a lot of teasing growing up. I hated gym class and I rarely played sports because I didn't want to be made a spectacle in the locker room. I still hate swimming. And it didn't matter to me growing up, no matter how well liked or successful or smart I was, because my weight always felt like a trump card. It always felt like I reasoned to myself, "Well, who cares if I'm well liked? I'm still fat. And in May of 2005, I weighed in at 292lbs. And on average, I was sleeping around 12 hours a day, including frequent naps. I was eating fast food every day for lunch. Three to four nights a week, I would go get fifteen wings, a large fries and ranch dressing at Wing Stop. I was waking up in the middle of the night to make runs to get candy and sodas. And I was drinking three to five sodas a day. And at the time I was serving as community missions pastor here at the Village when Josh and Matt approached me about my weight issue, and they made a deal with me, they made a proposition. They said, "Paul, if you would begin to take this weight seriously, we will personally pay for you to get a gym membership." Now, let me tell you something. I was honestly offended at first. That is not something you want to hear, and being big is something that I had come to accept. And actually, it was a source of constant humor for me. And you may remember such sermon classics as "Heaven is my only chance at abs" or wanting to be "pinch-an-inch" but being "grab-a-slab" or my personal favorite, shopping in the "one size fits Paul" section. Those are good. You can laugh at those. So I honestly resisted their initial offer to get a gym membership. And it was after much love and persistence that finally I accepted their offer and I went down to Lifetime Fitness in Flower Mound and I talked with a representative there about finally getting a membership there. And they put me on the scale, and the scale read 292lbs. And I had no idea that I had gotten that large. I was so close to 300lbs that I began crying. And I cried and I cried. I guess my whole life, I've always used generic terms whenever referencing my weight. Maybe I would say that I was big boned or that I had a weight problem or I had some sort of eating disorder, but to be honest with you, those were euphemistic terms for a deeper issue.

You see, that night, God broke me and He showed me that I had a much deeper issue than merely a weight problem. I had a heart problem. And I don't mean like an arteries clogged heart problem; I mean a spiritual condition, and that spiritual condition is called the sin of gluttony. Now that phrase is one we like to avoid in America. The sin of gluttony. We probably like that term even less than the word "fat." And in fact, the word gluttony may be offensive in a culture where that sin is largely accepted. And I don't feel like I need to read off sociological statistics here. I can just reference you to documentaries like "Supersize Me," that will reveal what is a growing sin here in America. Food and large quantities of it are available to us at any point of the day. And as I was preparing for this sermon, I read a passage in Ezekiel concerning Sodom. And if you remember, Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities that God judged in Genesis 19 due to their wickedness. And Ezekiel reveals the sins of Sodom in chapter 16, verse 49. He says, "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy." Another translation reads, "Sodom's sins were pride, gluttony, and laziness, while the poor and needy suffered outside her door." (New Living Translation) And to be honest, when I read that, I began praying for our country.

Because I believe now more than ever in the history of our country, it can be said that we as Americans are guilty of

pride, laziness and gluttony. But I didn't come here to announce God's pending judgment on America. I came here to share the testimony of God's grace in my life regarding this issue. Because in May of 2005, I accepted Matt and Josh's offer to go to that gym, and for a month, I just walked on a treadmill. And then in June of that year, I ended up joining a program called "Boot Camp" under the supervision of a godsend named Michelle Kesterson. So for the next five months, I woke up at 4:00- 5:00AM and worked out with her. And in a matter of nine months, I joined "Team Weight Loss," where I met another nutritionist named Kristen Harris, who was another godsend to me, who taught me about proper eating. Then God brought into my life Eric Gunn, who is a tremendous personal trainer and cage fighter who helped me in overcoming my sin of gluttony. And I stand before you because God has used these individuals and more. And by God's grace, I stand before you today having lost over 65lbs. Thank you.

And while I count it a victory to have lost that weight, I believe that the internal work that God has done in me in this process is just as valuable if not more valuable to the body of Christ. Because I believe that overcoming gluttony is not just a matter of eating right and working out; it is a matter of prayer and spiritual battle. I'm excited this week and next because I feel like God has given me some spiritual insight, and I want to share my personal testimony. But let me clarify something. I am still on this journey. I am not a finished product. In fact, I believe that this battle with gluttony will be a lifelong battle for me, especially in the culture in which we live. And pastorally speaking, I don't think that we're very much helped out by what's available out there in Christian bookstores concerning this issue. I don't know if you've ever been to the weight loss section of a Christian bookstore, but when you go there, it seems like every pastor in America now has written a book about proper eating and how to lose weight, and it accompanies some sort of workout video. And if you look at the models on the front of these books and these workout videos, you know that they look the exact same as the models that you see on the magazines in the gas stations. You know what I'm talking about. It's the guy with like 12 abs wearing biker shorts and the supermodel in the bikini. But this time, the only difference is they're holding up a sign with Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And so, you're looking through these workout videos and you're looking at this material, and I'm sitting there thinking to myself as I'm staring at Johnny Abs, I'm asking myself, "Are these the only bodies that glorify God?" For these next few weeks, I did not come to sell you a workout program or a new diet. I'm not coming to talk about "What would Jesus eat?" Instead, I want to open the word of God, and I want to ask the Holy Spirit to show us the truth concerning the sin of gluttony and to empower us in a deep way to overcome the sin in our lives.

But let me start off by saying that gluttony is a sin. Sometimes we treat food and weight like it's a purely external issue. And sometimes we treat the sin of gluttony like it's some type of cosmetic issue to be corrected instead of a self-centered sin that needs to be repented of. And there's a common misunderstanding in American culture that people struggle with their weight because they just don't love themselves enough. And people think that weight issues are related to lack of self-esteem, that people just don't love themselves enough and they just assume, "Wow, you must not love yourself. Because if you loved yourself more, you'd pay more attention to your weight, you'd pay more attention to your image, you would care more about yourself." But I'm here to say a glutton isn't someone who loves himself too little, he's someone who loves himself too much. You see, a glutton is someone who stuffs food in their face without thinking of others. It's someone who crams food down his throat without stopping to acknowledge and thank God who provided that food. It's someone who crams food down their throat while at the same time, wishing that more people would pay attention to them. You see, self-pity is just another form of pride. Arrogant pride is a type of pride that says, "Look at me. Look at me. Look at how wonderful I am." But self-pity is that form of pride that says, "Man, I wish more people would understand how wonderful I am." But at the end of the day, whether you're arrogant or you're living in self-pity, you're still living in pride. And so for someone like me, my weight was not a reflection that I loved myself too little; the problem is I love myself too much. And on the days I'm struggling, I've come to realize that I don't need a self-esteem pep rally; I'm in need of repentance.

But in order to know how to defeat this sin in our lives, we first must know how to define it. We have to understand what it

is if we want to know what we're truly up against in our lives and expect to recognize it in our own lives and in the lives of others. We need to know what it is so we can adequately repent of it and hold one another accountable. So this week, I'm going to focus on how to biblically define the sin of gluttony and it's going to be largely technical and teaching oriented. And next week, we're going to talk about how to biblically defeat the sin of gluttony and it will be more practical and observation based. And this week, I will be seeking to defend and explain the following definition that I have written concerning gluttony that says this: Commonly seen in eating, gluttony is a lack of faith in God that expresses itself through excess and expects total satisfaction from some idol of choice at the expense of community, responsibility and trusting worship of God.

We are going to be spending our entire time discussing what this definition entails, and I'm going to seek to defend it. But before I do that, I'd like to pause for a moment with prayer. "Father, I come before You now, we come before You now in need of You. And Father, I know that this is a sensitive topic for many. And Lord, many of us are living under guilt and condemnation and legalism that brings death when it comes to this issue. But Father, I thank You tonight that we don't come before You as finished products, we don't come before You perfect. Because Lord, we don't approach Your throne based on our own righteousness, but tonight we come before Your throne because of Christ's righteousness. And Father, I no longer live but He lives in me. And Father, I thank You that we can come before You now and ask You for grace because of Christ. So would You fill us with hope and grace and truth? And would You, by the power of Your Spirit, reveal to us the truth concerning the sin of gluttony? And Lord, give us the courage to repent of it in our lives. And we ask this now in Jesus' name. Amen."

Well, in seeking to defend this definition of gluttony, I'd like to talk about the common misconceptions regarding gluttony in today's culture, and I believe there are three of them. The first misconception is that gluttony is the act of overeating. Sometimes we assume that every time we sit down and eat everything on our plate, we've just committed the sin of gluttony. Have any of you ever gone to the couch and loosened your belt after a long meal and sat down and thought, "Whoa, I just committed gluttony." And the question is: Is gluttony simply defined as overeating? Is it eating more than we should after we're already feeling full? Or let me put it in more relevant terms. Is Thanksgiving sinful? Some of you are really concerned right now that pastor Paul is about to ruin your holidays, and you're wondering, "Is it a sin to eat so much turkey that I fall asleep during the Cowboys game?" Well let me be clear here because the Bible draws a distinction between what it calls gluttony and what it calls feasting. You see, God commands His people frequently in the Old Testament to gather together in feast. Israel was commanded to celebrate several feasts a year including the Feast of Unleavened Bread, of Weeks, Ingathering, Passover, Booths, Purim and more. And these feasts would last up to seven days. Listen to God's command concerning the Feast of Tabernacles in Numbers 29:12. "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days." Did you hear that? God just commanded His people to stay home from work, to sit around and eat all day and keep on eating for seven days. Some of you are thinking, "I need to read the Old Testament more." But you see, we cannot define gluttony simply as the act of overeating, because that would include feasting, and God commands His people to feast. And God does not command His people to sin. Job was considered a righteous man, but he feasted frequently with his sons and daughters. Jesus was actually accused of being a glutton in Matthew 11 because of His frequent feasting. In Matthew 22, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a wedding feast. And Revelation 19 calls heaven the marriage supper of the Lamb. Did you realize that your eternal destiny is an eternal buffet? And the point of all this is that it is possible to eat a lot and do so righteously. In fact, God commands His people to get together and feast and orders them to do so lest they die.

But we must make several observations here which will help us better understand the difference between feasting and gluttony. First of all, Israel feasted at the appointed times. For the most part, Israel lived a life of hard work and moderation. They stored up food, and they rationed. They lived a life of self control, and they gave to the poor and

needy. And it's true that when God appointed feasts, they were allowed to eat to their heart's content, but here's the catch. Just because they were appointed days of overeating, that does not mean they lived a life of overeating. So we understand that the Israelites walked in moderation vs. excess because their life was not characterized by overeating. But one might point out here that in America we biggie-size not because it's a feast to God but because it's lunch. And many of us are eating three to five times the number of calories we need in a given day not because we're celebrating the goodness of God but just because it's available and we can. It's important to understand that it's not always a sin to overeat, but it is sinful to live a life characterized by overeating.

Secondly, notice that their feasting was mainly done in the context of community. They gathered together for the purpose of praise and worship of God. It is not overeating done in isolation, but again in America, we often go through the drive-thru and we biggie-size and we've downed the fries before we've left the parking lot, with no regards for God or others, just to indulge our own appetites. But God designed feasting to be enjoyed with others. Isn't it ironic that when we're lonely we overeat?

God has designed community to counteract loneliness, not food. But the enemy convinces us that food will give us what only people can: love, acceptance and relationship. But isn't it funny that once we begin to overeat alone, we start to feel bad about ourselves and we start thinking to ourselves, "Look at me. Look at how gross I am, how fat I am. How could anybody ever love me like this?" So we go back to the idol of food, hoping that one day it will give us what we think it's promising, the blessing of relationship. And so we get in this terrible cycle because we need relationships but our idol of food keeps us from relationships because we think that food can give us love and acceptance. Have any of you ever been to your refrigerator trying to find love and acceptance? You know, there's actually a very poignant scene in the movie "The Nutty Professor" that I really identified with. And you know I've reached an all time low when I'm quoting Eddie Murphy as Sherman Clump. But Sherman Clump is speaking with his teaching assistant, Jason, regarding his desire to be in a relationship, and this is what he says to him, "It's funny how you get used to certain things in life. You get used to being overweight. I know I did. You even get used to people making fun of you. Somewhere along the way, I got used to being alone, and I just don't want to be alone anymore." You see, the sin of gluttony has a tendency to isolate us from others. We turn to food because food is less threatening and more manageable than relationships with real people. And we keep going back and back and back, hoping that it will one day deliver what we think it's promising, which is love and acceptance. But it can't provide that because food isn't human, and food can't give us what only community can.

You know, we might just stop here to briefly discuss what are some acceptable times for us as believers to gather together for the purpose of feasting. Because we're not Jewish and we do not honor the Jewish feasts. So when are some times that we can get together as believers for the purpose of feasting? And I would like to make some helpful suggestions to you. I believe that any opportunity for us as believers to get together, to celebrate the goodness of God, as long as even that is done in moderation, is perfectly acceptable and righteous. Christmas day is a wonderful opportunity to get together with friends and family and feast and celebrate the birth of our Lord. Easter is a wonderful opportunity to get together and feast and celebrate Christ's victory over death on the cross. Weddings are a great opportunity to get together and celebrate the gospel. Jesus Himself went and feasted at weddings. Birthdays are a great opportunity to celebrate someone who you love that you thank God for. I have a friend that says her birthday begins on Monday and ends on Sunday and she proclaims a seven day birthday feast. That's fine as long as it's done for the purpose of celebrating God. And let me get back to something. Thanksgiving, if it's done for the purpose of getting together to praise God, is not sinful. In fact, Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity to thank God for all the blessings in your life. But here's the catch. It can't just be about getting together to eat and watch football. It should be a time where we get together to truly give thanks. But I have to be honest here. All that Halloween candy you ate last week, that was pure gluttony. So gluttony is not simply just the act of overeating. Gluttony is overeating that is done at inappropriate times at the exclusion of community. It is the practice of excess over moderation, and it is the practice of

isolation over community.

But you know, there's another misconception. And the next misconception is the assumption that just because someone is overweight they must be a glutton. And on the opposite end of that, we assume that just because someone is slender they aren't a glutton. But that's a very superficial view of gluttony. You see, there is no command of Scripture anywhere that says, "Thou shalt be skinny and pretty." It's just not in there. We have to take in account impossible cultural standards of beauty. And aren't we an abundant contradiction in America that we have on one hand Hollywood which is an impossible tailored form of beauty and on the opposite end we have fast food available on every corner of the street. And we live in an apparent contradiction, but we have to understand that America is trying to impose upon us a cultural standard of beauty that is just is not biblical. But we also have to take into account things such as age, genetics, health concerns, the effects of child bearing, all of which can have the appearance of being overweight but none of which necessitate that someone is sinning or struggling with gluttony. You see, the Scripture actually teaches us that the fruit of gluttony has little to do with body size or shape but it has everything to do with slothfulness and laziness.

In Proverbs 23:19-21, we read, "Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags." You see, the fruit here is not a certain body shape, it is slothfulness and laziness. And I'm here to tell you that I know some pretty handsome slugs out there and I know some really pretty gluttons. You see, God designed us to work. God designed us to be responsible. The fruit of gluttony is irresponsibility. It is sloth and slumber. It is trying to have the benefit of work without thinking you have to lift a finger. It's thinking you deserve something that everyone else has to work for on your behalf. The Holman Bible Dictionary explains, "Gluttony contributes to lawlessness because gluttony is excess, and that excess indulges the self and leads to a lack of self-control. The time or activity that one spends glutting himself takes away time from other things, and brings forth a life of irresponsibility. In order to justify the time spent on whatever consumes him, the glutton can't be wrong because that might infringe on the freedom to do what he wants. Therefore, when things go awry, everyone else is responsible for the problems. The glutton has to fill himself with what he wants to do to satisfy self, and this is usually done at the expense of others." You see, gluttony is irresponsibility in two ways. First of all, it's not doing what you're supposed to do because you're consumed with something that's trivial. And secondly, when everything goes wrong, you blame everybody else for it. Do you want to know what I've learned about the blame game? I used to play the blame game a lot when it came to my weight, and I used to think it's everybody else's fault. "It's my parents' fault that I'm over weight...people just don't love and accept me enough. It's their fault that I'm overweight." And I lived a life of irresponsibility, but do you want to know what's terrible about the blame game? Even if you win, you still lose, because you're stuck in your pride and sin.

But it's important to know here that gluttony is also not just about food, is it? It also can surface in other areas of our life. Consider this from an online source that says, "Physical appetites are an analogy of our ability to control ourselves. If we are unable to control our eating habits, we are probably also unable to control other habits such as those of the mind (lust, covetousness, anger), and unable to keep our mouth from gossip or strife. We are not to let our appetites control us, but rather we are to have control over our appetites." To put it biblically, in Proverbs 16:26 it says, "A worker's appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on." A worker's appetite works for him. We are to be in control of our appetites, not let our appetites control us. We are not to be mastered by our appetites, instead we're supposed to master our appetites. And our appetites should not keep us from other, more important, God-given responsibilities. In the instance of food, gluttony can keep you from working hard. And in my own life, my weight struggles led to constant tiredness, it lead to other health concerns that kept me from doing things like working hard and playing with my niece. And people ask me all the time, they say, "Are you happy now that you've lost all that weight?" No. Losing weight did not make me happy in and of itself. Losing weight made me healthy, healthy enough do the things that make me happy. Do you see the difference there? Losing weight in and of itself doesn't make you happy; it healthy, healthy enough to do the things

that God commands you to do, that He says will bring you "great joy." And some of you may be obsessive shoppers or excessive video gamers. And maybe this is keeping you from honoring your parents or loving your neighbor or serving the body.

But God designed us to take satisfaction in taking responsibility and keeping his commands. And I'm here to say, if you're appetites are keeping you from loving God with all that you are and from loving your neighbor as yourself, you need to repent of the sin of gluttony regardless of your body shape. And I also want people to know that we should never judge gluttony based on external looks but the external fruit of slothfulness and laziness. This is not a big person's issue; this is all of our issue if we are given to appetites that keep us from being obedient to what the Lord has asked us to do.

A final misconception that we have to deal with is the idea of total self-denial, which is the idea that enjoying food is sinful. The question is: Is enjoying food sinful? There are monastic colonies in America that actually teach that if you enjoy the food you're eating, you're sinning. They will only serve bland food to you because they teach that if you actually enjoy the food you're eating, you're committing a worldly sin. May I never join that monastic colony. So is God most glorified when we eat gross food? Is enjoying our food sinful? Well I think this idea really misses the picture because it assumes that food is intrinsically evil. But I'm here to say that gluttony has little to do with food and everything to do with your hearts. In fact, it is possible to enjoy God through eating good food. Have any of you ever praised Jesus for a good steak? I got some "amens" on that one. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The point is it is possible to eat and drink in such a way that glorifies God. But listen to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 8:8. "Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do." In other words folks, food is not the issue. Instead, the issue is in Romans 14:23 that says, "But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." So we glorify God when our eating is done and rooted in worship of God. It does not matter if you're eating a rice cake or a real cake. The important thing is: what is your heart in doing that and where is your faith? You know, the goal of eating is the worship of God through the enjoyment and provision of food. It is eating and drinking to the glory of God vs. eating and drinking while indulging only self. It is eating and drinking to the glory of God vs. going to food in place of seeking God. Have any of you ever gone to your refrigerator instead of seeking God? Have any of you ever been wrestling your emotions and instead of going to your knees in prayer, you instead went to your refrigerator to look for comfort and joy that only God can provide? That is called a failure to eat from faith. You see, enjoying food is not the problem. It's where our heart is at in the process. Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 sums it up when he says, "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?" Did you hear that? It is possible to eat apart from God. What does it mean to eat apart from God? It means eating in such a way that you do not acknowledge Him in your eating and worship Him for your eating. It's eating in such a way that you do not acknowledge Him while you're eating and worship Him for your eating.

And how does this play itself out in our lives? Well, food that is not eaten in faith can quickly become one of three things. First of all, it can become a sign of rebellion. It can become a thing where you say, "I'm going to live for myself and only myself and I'm going to go to this food to find an enjoyment that I can't find in God." and you eat as much of it as you can in place of seeking God. It's not eating from a dependent heart upon God, but eating from a rebellious spirit independent from God. It's believing that food can give you something that God can't. Or secondly, food can become a means of control. It's eating from an attitude that says, "I'm going to manage my own life." And this has been my biggest struggle when it comes to gluttony, because food becomes a means of control for me. Because I've notice that another area of my life is spinning out of control, so I reason to myself, "Well, I can control how much I eat on my plate...So I can't control that accident, but I can control my food. And so God, You can have that area of my life, but I can't

trust You with this area. So I'm going to eat as much as I can right now because it makes me feel like I'm playing God." Thirdly, our failure to eat from faith provides another failure to give thanks to God. It's eating from an attitude that says, "I want this food more than I want God." It's eating from an attitude that says, "I deserve this food, I am a self-made man and I will eat what I want, when I want and however much of it I want." And we fail to give thanks to God who has provided it to us for our enjoyment and acknowledge Him and worship Him in our eating.

You know, these types of attitudes are exemplified throughout the Bible. Remember when Satan tempted Eve? Do you know what he did it with? Fruit, he tempted Eve with food. And he sat down food in front of her and he told her a lie and he said, "God cannot be trusted, and this fruit can provide you what you really want." Have any of you ever had food in front of you and thought, "Well God's not giving me what I want, so maybe this food will." It's the same lie that was told to Eve in the Garden of Eden. And at that moment, it says the fruit became pleasing to her eyes, more pleasing than trusting God, and she ate from a lack of faith and the world fell. And isn't it funny that our worlds also fall apart whenever we go to food to get what only God can give? You know, the children of Israel also used food as a means of rebellion against God. In Numbers 11, they began complaining about the manna, and they began searching for things with which to indulge themselves. And Psalm 78 actually sums up this story and in verse 22, it tells us why Israel is so given to their appetites. It says, "Because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power." You see, their overeating was rooted in their lack of faith in God. They rationalized to themselves, "Well, I had better eat as much as I can today because I can trust in God to give me food today, but I can't trust that He's going to provide for me tomorrow." And they use it as an opportunity to rebel against God. Esau traded his birthright for what? A pot of stew. And in Genesis 25, he claims he's going to die unless he eats, so he gives up his promised inheritance. Have any of you ever walked into someone's room and gone, "I'm so hungry, let's just leave. If I don't eat, I'm going to die." And Esau walks into Jacob's tent and says, "I'm going to die unless I eat." And Jacob says, "Well, give me your birthright." And he says, "Absolutely." And in that moment, Esau wanted to eat food more than he wanted to enjoy the promises of God. And Philippians 3:19 would describe Esau as the type of man whose god was his belly. Is your god your belly? And in John 6, we cannot forget those who came to Jesus not to submit to Him as Lord but to get more bread. He had just performed a great miracle of multiplying the fish and the loaves and suddenly people are coming to Him thinking that Jesus is better than the neighborhood Luby's. And so, everybody comes to Him to get more bread, to get more food, and Jesus says to them in verse 26, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. You're coming to Me not because of the spiritual appetite but because of your physical appetite. And you would rather have the food than Me." In verse 35-36, He says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe." You know, all these instances and more point to humanity's attempt to enjoy food apart from God. Or even worse, it points to America's attempt to worship food instead of God. And gluttony at its heart is a lack of faith in God. It's going to food and gorging it down in hopes that it can provide you something that only God can. And when you believe that food can give you something that God can't, it's in that moment you reveal to yourself and to the world that you simply do not love Him like you should, and that is called sin.

I believe this now brings us to what is considered a more holistic biblical definition of the sin of gluttony. So in conclusion of today's study, I would like to revisit the definition I suggested at the beginning that says, "Commonly seen in eating, gluttony is a lack of faith in God that expresses itself through excess and expects total satisfaction from some idol of choice at the expense of community, responsibility and trusting worship of God." Again, this is over against the mere act of overeating. Gluttony is about a life of excess vs. a life of moderation. It's about a life of isolation vs. a life of community. But gluttony is more than overeating because we can feast and do so righteously. It's more than being overweight. This isn't about looks, and it's not just about food. It's about any area of our lives, any person of any body shape who finds themselves that their appetites control them. And it's more than about just enjoying food, because it's not about the food itself, it's about our hearts. And I'm hoping that this definition will prepare us for next week as we

discuss how to biblically defeat gluttony. And we're going to ask ourselves: What is a gospel centered, spirit-filled, grace motivated view of eating? And we're going to ask ourselves: What role does eating right and working out play in the life of a believer? And we're going to ask ourselves: What about the opposite of extremes of anorexia and bulimia? How do those play into something like this? And I hope to unpack this and more through ten Scriptural observations regarding our battle against gluttony next week in a message called "Defeating Gluttony."

And if you would now, join me as we close in a word of prayer. "Father, I come before Your body tonight confessing that I am a glutton. And Father, I come before Your church tonight to confess that there are still moments to this day when I love food more than I love Jesus. And Father, I pray that tonight You would show us the truth about this sin. Enlighten us. Father, through confession comes healing and through repentance comes freedom. Would You help us to confess and repent and experience the healing and freedom that comes from Your Son, Jesus Christ? Father, would You forgive us of the sin of gluttony and give us the courage to battle against it? And Lord, would You use this message and this definition to prepare our hearts for next week as we talk together about how to battle this sin in our lives and in the lives of others? And Father, we ask all of this in Jesus' name and for His glory. Amen."

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