Introduction
Welcome to our Bible study on the Seven Deadly Sins.

We recognize that every sin is deadly because every sin we commit is a violation of God’s law. With every sin we become lawbreakers, thus falling short of the glory of God. But throughout the history of the Christian Church these sins have been recognized as being especially insidious. They are all too common and all too easy to fall into. They are “besetting sins,” that is they can easily entrap and entangle us in an attitude or a lifestyle that is very hard to change.

Today we consider the sin of gluttony. The Latin word for gluttony is related to a verb meaning to gulp down. The Greek words for glutton in the Bible have to do with eating (phagos) or the stomach (gasteres). The Hebrew word for glutton has the sense of being thoughtless, lavish, or wasteful. These words are used only a few times in Scripture, so how did gluttony become classified as one of the deadly sins? Because behind it lies a desire for purely physical satisfaction over spiritual fulfillment.

Consider and discuss the following points:

- How do you understand the word gluttony?
- How does our culture talk about food?

Gluttony—not just a stomach problem
A sin is a sin not merely because it may hurt us or others. Sin is ultimately sin because it misses the mark of God’s holy and perfect will. At the same time, when God gives commands, they are not arbitrary. Rather, they are for our own good because God is a loving God. The sin of gluttony can fit under the 5th Commandment as it deals with the harm it may cause to our own bodies or in certain cases it may cause us to neglect our neighbor’s needs. It also fits under the 1st Commandment as a gluttonous heart can turn food into an idol.

Harm to self

Proverbs 23:1-4 – When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, 2 and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony. 3 Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive. 4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.

Proverbs 23:19-21 – Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path. 20 Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, 21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

Proverbs 23:29-32 – Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? 30 Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. 31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! 32 In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 – Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Harm to our neighbor

Amos 6:4-6 – You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. 5 You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. 6 You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.
1 Corinthians 11:20-21 – When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.

Consider:
• How health-conscious are Americans?
• How conscious are we as a society of those who lack food and other basic necessities?

A condition of the heart

John 6:26, 27 – “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.

What did the people who came to Jesus really want?

Exodus 16:3 – The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”

Luke 12:16-20 – “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

What was the rich man’s purpose in life?

Colossians 3:18 – For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.

What does it mean for one’s stomach to be a god?

Consider:
• What parallels do you see between gluttony and the other sins we’ve studied so far (greed and lust)? What differences?
• Agree or disagree: someone who struggles with the sin of gluttony can overcome the sin through self-discipline and the right diet.
• Evaluate: you can’t necessarily tell if someone struggles with gluttony base on outward appearance.

“Man does not live on bread alone…”

Are there times we have desired purely physical comfort and full bellies and nothing more? Have we ever simply worked for food that spoils and allowed ourselves to become spiritually malnourished? We must confess that we have and recognize that there is only one diet that fixes it.

Isaiah 55:1, 2 – Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

1 Peter 2:2-3 – Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

John 6:35 – “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”
Matthew 4:4 - Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

John 4:34 – “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

Consider: Think of specific examples of how Jesus showed concern for physical needs as well as spiritual needs.

**All in moderation**

We live in a world of extremes: There is the extreme of supersized portions and indulging without limit. Then there is the extreme of radical diets that claim to make you a new person. And yet, there is a middle ground called moderation. Enjoying the gift of food doesn’t have to be an insatiable gorging and moderation doesn’t have to be starvation. But where is the balance?

**Food, like wealth, is a gift from God. He gives it to us to meet a most basic need and to be considerate of others.**

**First of all, moderation in the life of a Christian isn’t purely a product of self-discipline; it’s a fruit of gospel freedom.**

**John 4:13-14 – Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

**Acts 10:15 – “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” (See also Colossians 2:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31)**

**Exodus 16:4 – Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.”**

**Philippians 4:12 – I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**

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**Psalm 145:15, 16 – The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. 16 You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.**

**1 Corinthians 11:33, 34 – So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. 34 If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.**

**James 2:15, 16 – Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?**

**Consider:**

- You enjoy a nice meal and even have a second helping. Should you feel guilty? Have you fallen into the sin of gluttony?
- Lutherans like food [insert potluck joke here]. We often closely associate fellowship with food. Is fellowship without food even possible? Does having a gathering with food and drink enhance our fellowship with other Christians?

**God even gives food for our enjoyment.**

**Matthew 11:18, 19 – For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’ But wisdom is proved right by her actions.”**

**John 2:1-11 – (Jesus turned water into wine).**

**Final though:** “Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”