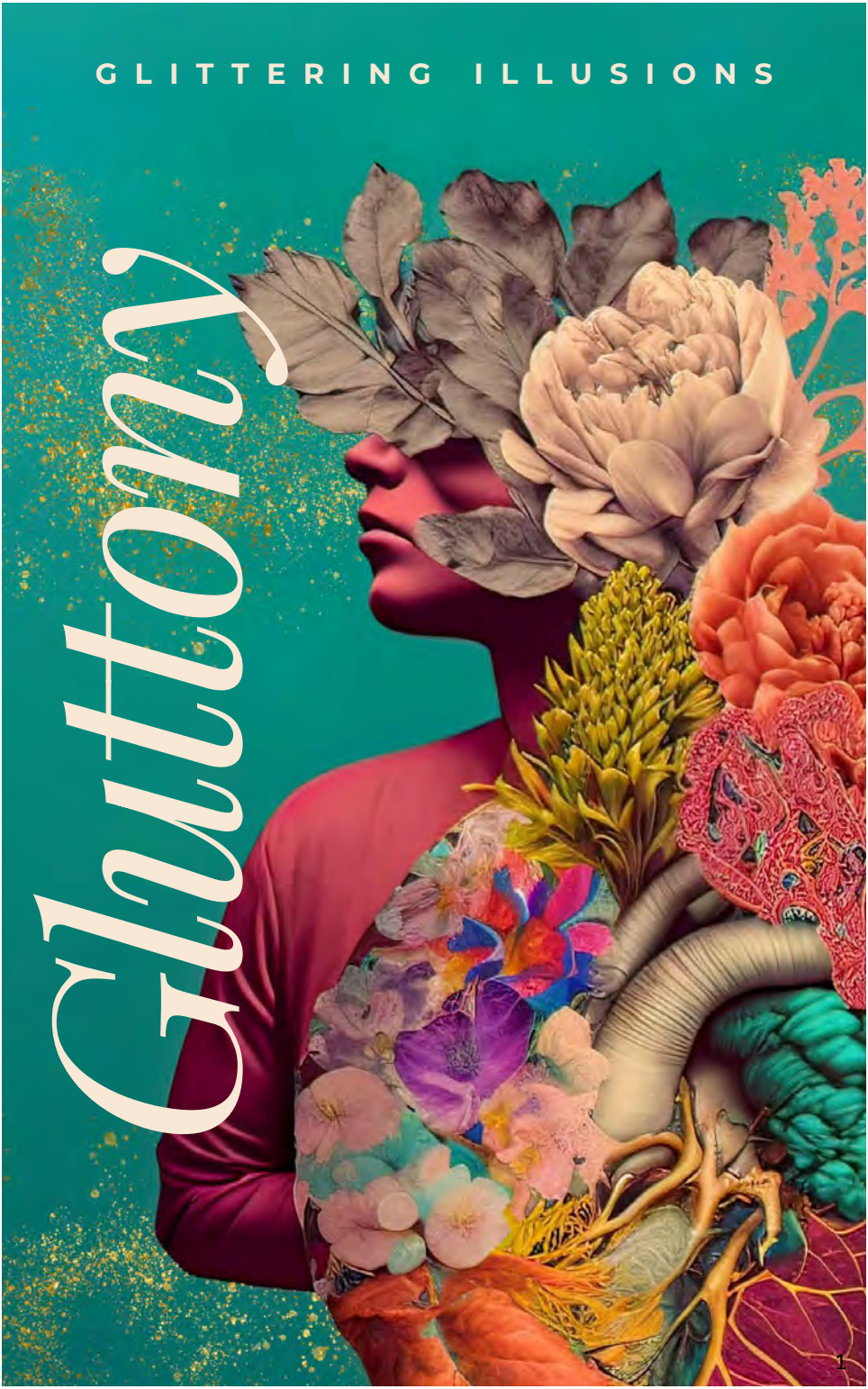
GLITTERING ILLUSIONS

Gluttony




Gluttony

SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:1, 19-25 + Luke 6:43-45

*Gluttony is "...the intemperate [excessive] **desire** to consume food, not the intemperate consumption of food."*

THOMAS AQUINAS

Gluttony engages in what author Grace Hamman describes as "thoughtless consumption"—viewing the world from the narrow perspective of satisfying our own longing for pleasure. Our inordinate desire to consume may affect "what" we eat: perhaps choosing foods based solely on taste with no regard for the effect on our well-being, or subconsciously ordering our day around our food schedule until everything else takes a back seat. At the same time, it might determine "how" we eat: eating "too hastily, too greedily, and too much," or demanding the pleasure of eating only certain types of foods, whether they be large portions or small, health foods or rich and sumptuous foods.

While Aquinas focuses his definition on food, gluttony's reach is far broader than food alone. And while we tend to identify gluttony by outward behaviors and appearances, as we've discovered with each of the Glittering Illusions, the root lies inward. Whatever the object of our desire, gluttony "degrades us into being mere self-satisfaction seekers." Whether through food or other pleasures, the impulse to answer our every whim stems from the illusion that we can comfort and satisfy ourselves. In our pursuit of physical pleasure, we can lose sight of our deeper spiritual and emotional hunger, forgetting the God who is the giver of all good gifts and the One who fulfills us both physically and spiritually.

So, how do we free ourselves from our preoccupation with satisfaction and learn to receive God's good gifts, finding our deepest fulfillment in Him?

Practice

FASTING + FEASTING
DAILY EXAMEN

The gifts of food and shared meals are part of remembrance and healing, and they provide a place where we build social bonds. Yet, "Loving the self and its desires does not always mean saying yes."

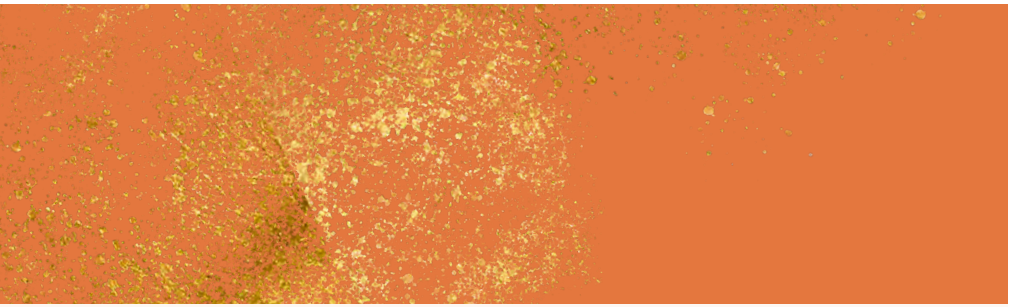
Before considering two ways gluttony can affect our lives, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. As we search our own hearts, we can trust His kindness to reveal what needs our attention. The enemy may try to turn that invitation into shame, but conviction draws us toward God, not away from Him.

If what you consume is having harmful effects on you, what might the Lord be inviting you to say no to, so you can experience more of the life-giving freedom found in Jesus?

If what you consume has begun to dictate the rhythms of your day, what might the Lord be inviting you to say yes to, so you can experience more of that same freedom?

FASTING

We need food to live, and in a world often driven by our wants, choosing to go without something we need—even for a time—can help us recognize our dependence on God. (If you are considering fasting from food, please seek medical guidance if you are unsure whether it is safe for you.) As Richard Foster observes, "Fasting reveals the things that control us."



Fasting can create space to notice what we reach for in moments of discomfort or lack and to rely on God's power and grace when our own strength feels insufficient. Fasting may also leave us feeling vulnerable; we may feel less energetic, and, honestly, our breath might not be the freshest (drink plenty of water)! But when hunger pangs strike, might it become an invitation to pause and turn our attention toward God?

Consider this simple prayer:
"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

Sit with this simple passage:
Mark 14:22—"Take, eat, this is my body." Create enough space to bring it before God before we act.

FEASTING

Dr. Dan Allender reminds us of the importance of tending to the "quiet parts," the hungers within that we often ignore, so we can listen to the One who speaks. As you fast and feast this week, pay attention at the close of each day to the inner "quiet parts" that drew you toward self-satisfaction or invited you to seek fulfillment in God.

- Enter the presence of the Lord. Picture Him pulling out a chair for you at His banquet table. As you sit with Him, look back over the last 24 hours.

- As you review your day, you may become aware of moments when you responded to emptiness, exhaustion, fear, or anger by reaching for food (or some other physical pleasure). If so, take a moment to notice how you felt afterward. Ask: *What was my soul actually hungry for in that moment?*
- If you recognize moments when you sought comfort or satisfaction apart from God, do not dwell in shame. Instead, hand those moments to Jesus across the table. Confess and acknowledge what you were reaching for, and invite Him into the deeper hunger beneath it. Hear Him say, *"You are still my invited guest."*
- Allow God to nourish your soul with His love and presence. Ask Him what spiritual "food" He wants to offer you. Notice what happens within you as you taste what He provides.
- What were the "sweet" moments in your day? Thank God for the specific gifts of the day—not just physical food, but moments of peace, a good conversation, or a beautiful sight.
- Commit to pausing when those deep hungers arise tomorrow, remembering that you are always welcome at

REVIEW THE PRACTICES



Revisit the practices that have nourished you throughout this series. This week, spend time feasting on God's Word by meditating on Hebrews 12, Psalm 23, Psalm 107:9 and Luke 4:1–4.

*Quotes taken from *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies* by Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung and *Ask of Old Paths: Medieval Virtues and Vices for a Whole and Holy Life* by Grace Hamman.

Pastoral Word

+ NEXT STEPS

"A blessed man is full of appetites, And in the Glory of his God delights."
—Thomas Traherne

In the Gospels, Jesus is almost always going to a meal, at a meal, or leaving a meal. Around a table we both remember a night where bread was broken and wine was shared for our sake and experience the profoundly powerful and intimate ways we are designed to share life together. Unfortunately, time together around the table has diminished, and our concern with what and when we consume is easily disordered. We are being trained to consume thoughtlessly, and we can easily become numb to anything but our cravings. This week, can we as a community reclaim the gift of eating together? This will require intentionality, and most likely saying "no" to a few things. If you accept this invitation, at the end of the week, ask those you shared a meal with what they thought. Perhaps this is something worth making our "new normal"?

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Do you have a trusted friend you can share with?
- Attend our Generational Healing Service November 15.
- Consider using the **Pause** app by John Eldredge to relinquish control to God throughout your day.
- Consider meeting with a Spiritual Director.
- Schedule a session with our Care and Prayer team using the QR code.



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