



## SEVEN • Gluttony

### What Do I Need to Know?

The problem of gluttony is a complex one. There can be physiological illnesses, environmental issues (parents can overfeed their children making eating a lifelong problem), and spiritual causes that feed the problem (no pun intended). The study is not attempting to dismiss these other factors, but does limit itself to the spiritual dimension of the problem.

Clearly, there are other sins that have more far reaching moral effects on others than gluttony. Nevertheless, gluttony is sin. It is a perversion of God's design for eating: turning to food to meet needs that God and others were meant to meet. The reliance on food for comfort and security is a role the Holy Spirit is meant to fill in our lives. Furthermore, allowing our desires to overflow their boundaries is never God's will, and often leads to a lack of self control in other areas.

Ephesians 5:17-20: This passage deals with the root spiritual issue involved in gluttony, though it is dealing with the problem of excess drinking. The background to the verse is this; the Ephesians were over-drinking and being led, directed, and empowered by alcohol, instead of God's Spirit. Furthermore, their over-drinking was leading to debauchery – a term used for excessive living. In other words, over-drinking was also leading to other excesses of passions like overeating, lust, etc. This is often the pattern of cross addictions; satisfying the lusts of the body in one arena leads to excessive living in others.

So what's the answer to being controlled by alcohol and our passions? Being filled or empowered by the Holy Spirit. Just as one turned to food for comfort or security, they are now to turn to the Holy Spirit and rely on Him to meet their needs. As one turned themselves over to alcohol to be led by its dictates, so now they are to turn the control of their life over to the Spirit's leading and directing.

Over-eating and over-drinking, can actually be a tutor for the dynamic of the Spirit-filled life. All of the trigger mechanisms that led to over-drinking or eating, may remain trigger mechanisms (loneliness, anxiety, etc.,) but now they should trigger a turning to God and the community of Christians to meet these needs.

### What's the Big Idea?

Gluttony has become an overwhelming problem in this country. The study will look at the root spiritual cause of gluttony as well as a biblical solution: being filled with the Holy Spirit.



This side of heaven, all of our emotional and mental needs will never be met. We, as well as our world, are in a fallen state. Yet, God is making us Holy, and one of the greatest steps we take in this process, is learning to turn to Him with our needs, rather than other things, such as food.

### What if There's a Problem?

All foreseeable issues are dealt with in "What Do I Need to Know?"

## What Are the Answers?

1. Have the group share. (Make sure you have the group read through all of the Web quotes and Bible passages that are on the study. Their content is essential to the flow of the study.)
2. Allow the group to share.
3. Discuss/share.
4. A few reasons might be: Food is so easily accessible, wealth, and we've lost connection with God.
5. Self-control is keeping our passions under control. When we feed our desires in one area, it often leads to a breakdown in self-control in other areas, and our passions, in general, begin to blaze out of control.
6. Yes, it is a perversion of God's design for eating, by turning to food to meet needs that God and others were meant to meet.
7. Food has become the organizing and directing principle of our days rather than the Lord.
8. Debauchery is a word for excessive living: overeating, overdrinking, oversleeping, etc.
9. The reliance on food for comfort and security is a role the Holy Spirit is meant to fill in our lives.
10. Allow group to share. You do want to at least communicate that when one becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes and indwells our lives. He is the presence of God within us.
11. A few might be: comfort, relationships, security, and peace.
12. Discuss.
13. Discuss.
14. Discuss. Maybe ask a more mature Christian in the group to explain it further.
15. Allow the group to share what wisdom they have on the Holy Spirit.

## What's Our Response?

The application of the study is an introduction to the idea of Spirit-filled life. There are three major issues that effect a person's empowerment by the Spirit. First, choosing to rely on Him to meet our needs. Second, allowing the Holy Spirit to give direction in all of the different areas of our life (this is often called Lordship). Third, confessing our sin as soon as we realize that we have been side-tracked by it.

These concepts are dealt with in the *Holy Spirit Booklet*. A good way to end the study is to give a summary like the one here, and hand out the booklets, asking the group to read it over themselves.

As the last study in the series, you will want to close with some opportunity for members to be further involved with a small group Bible study. Or you might ask who would be interested in continuing the discussion group on a new topic.