

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Vice

Talking about sin makes us uncomfortable. We can identify and try to avoid the “bad ones.” It’s easy to see in the lives of our neighbors. And evil is clearly at work out there in the world beyond us. But what about the sin and evil that arises from our own hearts? What about our own propensity to sin; those bad habits, tendencies, or traits that we would rather *not* be reminded of? Join us this Lent as we reflect on the historic seven vices in order to identify a multitude of mundane, everyday sins that can cling too closely.

Message Description:

We can all agree that greed is prevalent in our world today; its presence and impacts are far-reaching. It does not take much to prove its sinfulness. But when we consider our own personal habits when it comes to money, do we recognize any unhealthy attachments to our things or a desire to have more? Avarice, the vice best described as an excessive desire for wealth or gain is a tricky one. How do we know when enough is enough? Is my own avarice impeding my ability to love God and love my neighbor?

Key Scriptures

*Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
See if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*
Psalm 139:23-24

Additional Resources:

- For more information on a daily practice of self-examination, check-out: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>
- For a prayer practice that will lead you through study and examination, check-out <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/> or download the app, lectio365!

Questions Related to This Week's Teaching:

1. When you think about greed, what images come to mind?
2. Have you ever heard of the vice, avarice?
3. How can greed impact our journey of discipleship? Have you ever experienced your own desire to keep or collect to have a negative impact on your neighbor?
4. What are some every day, mundane things you can do to begin practicing letting go?

Going Deeper:

Read Luke 12:13-21 and Matthew 6:19-21

- Where did the rich man go wrong? Was it in making a lot of money or crop, or in keeping it all for himself?
- In light of the reading in Matthew 6, what could he have done with his surplus crop instead?
- What do you think it means to be rich toward God (Luke 12:21)?
- Jesus is speaking to two brothers about their inheritance in the story from Luke 12. What temptation does the desire to split their inheritance now reveal? What is significant about the mention of inheritance considering this parable? What is our true inheritance?

Living Simply:

In his book, *Freedom of Simplicity*, Richard Foster offers readers a countercultural vision of life, one grounded in seeking first the kingdom and trusting that all the rest will be added. Such a view of God and our possessions engenders the following practical habits:

- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status.
- Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you.
- Develop a habit of giving things away.
- Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry.
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them.
- Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation.
- Look with a healthy skepticism to all “buy now, pay later” schemes.
- Obey Jesus’ instructions about plain, honest speech.
- Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others.
- Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God.

[Acquired in Glittery Vices by Rebecca DeYoung]

- Which of these habits challenges you?
- Which of these habits intrigues you or speaks to you as a way to begin letting go of possessions?
- Which of these habits might you start this week?

For Personal or Group reflection (questions from Rebecca DeYoung)

Consider journaling or reflecting on the following questions:

1. What is your picture of a secure and comfortable life in which your needs and desires are met? What possessions and purchasing behaviors fit that picture? What sorts of desires and fears drive your saving and spending?
2. How could you cultivate gratitude and generosity in your own life as a regular practice?