

Encouraged reading:

CULTIVATING COMMUNION

MARCH 15, 2026



SHARE



Book: The Weight of Glory By CS Lewis

Read: “Membership” and “The Inner Ring”

The Screwtape Letters, Letter 13, 18.

Audio book: “CS Lewis essential audio Library” (has these 2)

Extra: **The Pilgrim’s Regress**, Ch 7 & 8.





from consumption to
COMMUNION

1 Peter 1:22-25  Page: 1728

1 Peter 1:22–25

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth unto sincere brotherly affection, love one another fervently, from a pure heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, ‘All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.’”





PARTAKING VS. CONSUMING

COMMUNION (*pos*) to “*partake*” in fellowship.

A fundamental joy taken in savoring God’s provision in thankfulness and communion.

Jesus was thought a “drunkard and a glutton” by some.

Consumption (*neg*) to “*devour*”: is the worldly system of gratifying the flesh and making consumption a god *at the expense* of love.



2 PETER 1:5 REVERSAL

Faith
Virtue
Knowledge
Self-control
Perseverance
Godliness
Sibling Affection
Love

Fear
Pragmatism
Avoidance
Gratification
Reactivity
Worldliness
Heartlessness
Exploitation



STRUCTURE OF PLEASURE



Unhindered love

Dead and resurrected

Virtue/identity

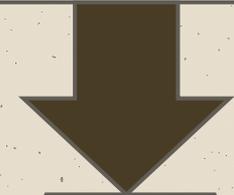
Spiritual/transcendence

Moral/the good

Aesthetic/sentimental

Visceral/Sensual

Devouring
Objectification
Disposability



Youth/
Immature/
Stunted

(All of these have a counterfeit too.)



STRUCTURE OF PLEASURE



Unhindered love

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Visceral/Sensual

Faith
Purification
Affection

Maturity

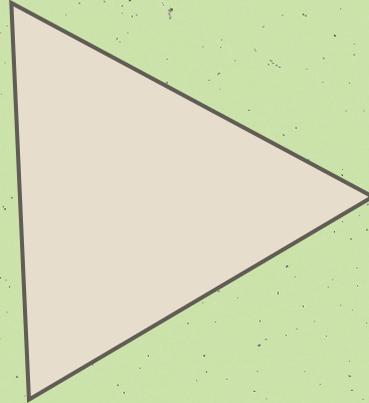
(This can happen “irreligiously” & “naturally”- to an extent.)

PURSUIING AFFECTION

Abide in Jesus
through the cross
and resurrection.

Act for Love:

1. Worship
2. Obedience
3. Generosity & service
4. Membership & Fellowship



Pursue Pure
heart:

1. Temperance
2. Forgiveness
3. Love truth
4. Honor others
5. Be content



Sacrifice, through service and generosity,
is the total enemy of devouring, disposal
and exploitation.

Mark 10:42-45 NIV84

“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your **servant**, and whoever wants to be first must be **slave** of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be **served**, but to **serve**, and to **give his life** as a **ransom** for many.’”



SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY

Serving

To use an asset that I am personally present to offer to another

Giving

To give an asset that can exist separate from me and another can take stewardship of.



SACRIFICIAL GENEROSITY

Serving

1. Hospitality
2. Responsibility
3. Risk
4. Time & energy
5. Ability/expertise

Giving

1. Money
2. Clout & status
3. Relationships
4. Belongings
5. Opportunity



BIBLICAL GIVING

1. Local church

- a. Worship and discipleship- “ministry”
- b. Global Mandate- “missions”
- c. Poor and needy- “mercy”

2. Good and godly enterprise

- a. Para Church
- b. Civic good



PARTNERSHIPS

This is for those that are doing 1-3. Offerings are part of the joy of generosity.



HOW TO BE SACRIFICIALLY GENEROUS

With Affection...

1. It must be *your choice, chosen in joy and given cheerfully.*

2 Corinthians 8:2-4, 9:7 NIBO

“Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.”



HOW TO BE SACRIFICIALLY GENEROUS

With Affection...

2. Do it spiritually.

With all you heart, soul, mind and strength. For Jesus, For the Gospel and Kingdom, to experience death and resurrection, to place your heart close to God (since your heart is always with your money Matt 6:21/Lk 12:34)



HOW TO BE SACRIFICIALLY GENEROUS

With Affection...

3. It must be a sacrifice. You must *feel* it.

If you don't give to the point of pain, you are paying off God, not giving to him. If there isn't real sacrifice, it's a "go away" gift. There also won't be joy. Nothing died and nothing rose. There was no transfer of affections and hope.

(This refers to your total generosity—not each individual gift)



HOW TO BE SACRIFICIALLY GENEROUS

With Affection...

4. Do it because it's noble in itself.

To be for Jesus and his Kingdom it has to be a rebellion against death, devouring, disposability, exploitation, addiction, sin, the Flesh, Hell...

It is just, merciful and in God's will.



HOW TO BE SACRIFICIALLY GENEROUS

With Affection...

5. Do it for them.

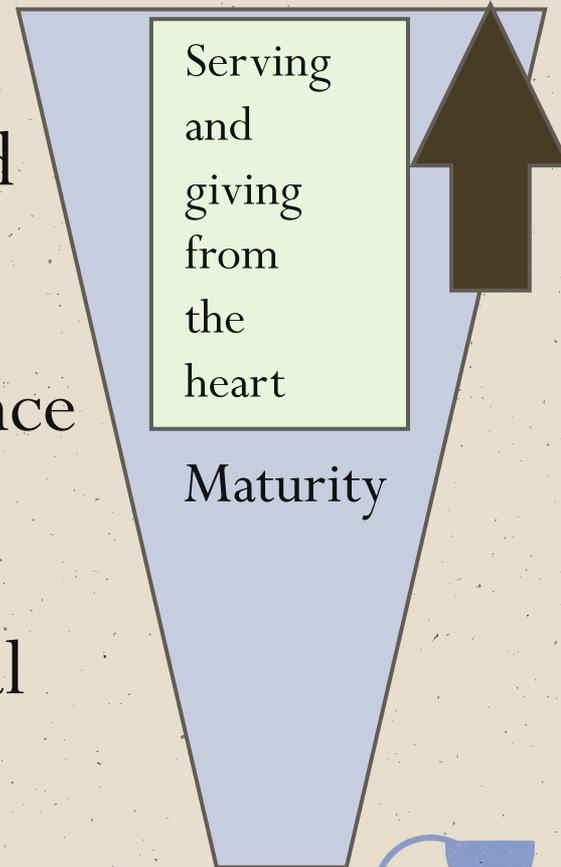
It's not just about God, it's about the real people that he loves that you don't yet. He wants you to share in his affection for them. He wants you to love Him in loving them.



STRUCTURE OF PLEASURE



Unhindered love
Dead and resurrected
Virtue/identity
Spiritual/transcendence
Moral/ the good
Aesthetic/sentimental
Visceral/Sensual



(This can happen “irreligiously” & “naturally”- to an extent.)

Luxury



Decay, weakness,
self-hatred

Greed



Slavery, loneliness,
spite





PILGRIM'S REGRESS

C.S. Lewis

Luxuria



“They resumed their journey, John lagging a bit. I dreamed that the witch came to him walking softly in the marshy ground by the roadside and holding out the cup to him also: when he went faster, she kept pace with him. ‘I will not deceive you,’ she said. ‘You see there is no pretense. I am not trying to make you believe that this cup will take you to your Island. I am not saying it will quench your thirst for long. But taste it, none the less, for you are very thirsty.’ But John walked forward in silence. ‘It is true,’ said the witch, ‘that you never can tell when you have reached the point beyond which there is no return. But that cuts both ways. If you can never be certain that one more taste is safe, neither can you be certain that one more taste is fatal. But you can be certain that you are terribly thirsty...’”



“...But John continued as before. ‘At least,’ said the witch, ‘have one more taste of it, before you abandon it for ever. This is a bad moment to choose for resistance, when you are tired and miserable and have already listened to me too long. Taste this once, and I will leave you. I do not promise never to come back: but perhaps when I come again you will be strong and happy and well able to resist me—not as you are now.’ And John continued as before. ‘Come,’ said the witch. ‘You are only wasting time. You know you will give in, in the end. Look ahead at the hard road and the grey sky. What other pleasure is there in sight?’ So, she accompanied him for a long way, till the weariness of her importunity tempted him far more than any positive desire.”





PILGRIM'S REGRESS

C.S. Lewis

The Northern Dragon

(Slaying the “cold” sins, personified in Greed)



“Then suddenly John heard a dry, rattling sound in front of him, and a little above. He got a better grip on his sword, and took one pace towards it, listening intently. Then came the sound again: and after that he heard a croaking voice, as of a gigantic frog. The dragon was singing to himself:





‘Once the worm-laid egg broke in the wood.
I came forth shining into the trembling wood,
The sun was on my scales, dew upon the grasses.
The cool, sweet grasses and the budding leaves.
I wooed my speckled mate. We played at druery
And sucked warm milk dropping from the goats’
teats.

‘Now I keep watch on the gold in my rock cave
In a country of stones: old, deplorable dragon,
Watching my hoard. In winter night the gold
Freezes through toughest scales my cold belly.
The jagged crowns and twisted cruel rings
Knobbly and icy are old dragon’s bed.





‘Often I wish I hadn’t eaten my wife,
Though worm grows not to dragon till he eat worm.
She could have helped me, watch and watch about,
Guarding the hoard. Gold would have been the safer.
I could uncoil my weariness at times and take
a little sleep, sometimes when she was watching.

‘Last night under the moonset a fox barked,
Woke me. Then I knew I had been sleeping.
Often an owl flying over the country of stones
Startles me, and I think I must have slept.
Only a moment. That very moment a man
Might have come out of the cities, stealing,
to get my gold.





‘They make plots in the towns to steal my gold.
They whisper of me in a low voice, laying plans,
Merciless men. Have they not ale upon the benches,
Warm wife in bed, singing,
and sleep the whole night?
But I leave not the cave but once in winter
to drink of the rock pool: in summer twice.

‘They feel no pity for the old, lugubrious dragon.
Oh, Lord, that made the dragon, grant me Thy
peace!
But ask not that I should give up the gold,
nor move, nor die; others would get the gold.
Kill, rather, Lord, the men and the other dragons
that I may sleep, go when I will to drink.’



As John listened to this song he forgot to be afraid. Disgust first, and then pity, chased fear from his mind: and after them came a strange desire to speak with the dragon and to suggest some sort of terms and division of the spoil: not that he desired the gold, but it seemed to him a not all ignoble desire to surround and contain so much within oneself. But while these things passed through his imagination, his body took care of him, keeping his grip steady on the sword hilt, his eyes strained into the darkness, and his feet ready to spring: so that he was not taken by surprise when he saw that in the rolling of the mist above him something else was rolling, and rolling round him to enclose him. But still he did not move...



...The dragon was paying its body out like a rope from a cave just above him. At first it swayed, the great head bobbing vertically, as a caterpillar sways searching for a new grip with half its length while the other half rests still on the leaf. Then the head dived and went behind him. He kept turning round to watch it, and it led the volume of the dragon's body round in a circle and finally went back into the cave, leaving a loop of dragon all round the man. Still John waited till the loop began to tighten, about on a level with his chest. Then he ducked and came up again with a jab of his sword into the under-side of the brute. It went in to the hilt, but there was no blood. At once the head came twisting back out of the cave...



...Eyes full of cruelty—cold cruelty without a spark of rage in it—stared into his face. The mouth was wide open—it was not red within, but grey like lead—and the breath of the creature was freezing cold. As soon as it touched John's face, everything was changed. A corselet of ice seemed to be closed about him, seemed to shut in his heart, so that it could never again flutter with panic or with greed. His strength was multiplied. His arms seemed to him iron. He found he was laughing and making thrust after thrust into the brute's throat. He found that the struggle was already over—perhaps hours ago. He was standing unwearied in a lonely place among rocks with a dead reptile at his feet. He remembered that he had killed it. And the time before he had killed it seemed very long ago.



Luxury



vigorous, unmired,
single minded

Greed



Liberty, fellowship,
joy



Colossians 1:29

“To this end *I labor*, struggling with **all his energy**, which so powerfully works in me.”



Hebrews 4:9–12

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, **make every effort to enter that rest**, so that no-one will fall by following their **example of disobedience**. For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”



Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



1 Thessalonians 4:3–12

“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, **not in passionate lust** like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter **no-one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him**. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. **Now about brotherly love** we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, **you do love all the brothers** throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers, **to do so more and more**. Make it your **ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands**, just as we told you, so that **your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.**”



“The characteristic of Pains and Pleasures is that they are unmistakably real, and therefore, as far as they go, give the man who feels them a touchstone of reality. Thus if you had been trying to damn your man by the Romantic method—by making him a kind submerged in self-pity for imaginary distresses—you would try to protect him at all costs from any real pain; because, of course, five minutes’ genuine toothache would reveal the romantic sorrows for the nonsense they were and unmask your whole stratagem. *But you were trying to damn your patient by the World*, that is by palming off vanity, bustle, irony, and expensive tedium *as pleasures*. How can you have failed to see that *a real pleasure* was the last thing you ought to have let him meet? Didn’t you foresee that it would just kill by contrast all the trumpery which you have been so laboriously teaching him to value? And that the sort of pleasure which the book and the walk gave him was the most dangerous of all? That it would peel off from his sensibility the kind of crust you have been forming on it, and make him feel that he was coming home, recovering himself? As a preliminary to detaching him from the Enemy, you wanted to detach him from himself, and had made some progress in doing so. Now, all that is undone.” — **Screwtape Letter 13, C.S. Lewis**



Week 1 main idea:

LOST TRUTH:

Real affection is the *result* of a pure heart and a *pre-condition* of real love.

Devouring consumption poisons our hearts into thinking God's image bearers are exploitable and disposable.



THE PROGRESSION OF GREED

1. **Hyper-consumer-** become a devourer
2. **Objectification-** Treat persons as things
3. People are **disposable and exploitable**
4. **Reactionary:** We become “Heartless cynics and wild sentimentalists”

(emotionalism without affection,
cynicism without temperance)



PURSUIING AFFECTION AND COMMUNION

1. Admit reality (wk 1)
2. Death and resurrection (wk 2)
3. Pursue a virtuous/pure heart (wk 3)
4. Do affection building practices of love (wks 4, 5, 6)

