

GLUTTONY



Negative Connotations

- “Overweight”
- “Slim”, “slender”
- “Chunky”, “stout”, “heavy”, “chubby”, “plump”
- “Skinny”, “gaunt”, “scrawny”, “bony”
- “Fat”, “fatso”, “fat and lazy”, “fat slob”
- “Bean-pole”, “like a rail”
- And many more that are far worse ...



The Christian, Food, and Gluttony

- ❑ Negative Connotations
- ❑ Challenges in Our Society
- ❑ Resulting Weight-related Problems
- ❑ Misconceptions about “Gluttony”
- ❑ What the Bible says about Food
- ❑ Contexts and Definitions for “Glutton”
- ❑ Related General Principles
- ❑ Resulting Applications
- ❑ Bible Examples
- ❑ Warning Signs
- ❑ How to Overcome Food-Related Temptations



Eating Challenges in Modern Society

- ❑ Easy access (home, supermarkets, restaurants)
 - Extra large portions
- ❑ Embedded throughout our culture
 - Ads, snacks at work, holidays
- ❑ Engineered to appeal to our senses
 - “Calorie dense” and enhanced with fat, sugar, flavoring
- ❑ Somewhat sedentary lifestyles
 - Office work, leisure time, TV/Video games



And As A Result...

- ❑ \$66B spent on dieting, weight loss surgery, etc.
- ❑ Rising concerns over healthy food, GMOs
- ❑ Psychological problems with body image
 - Anorexia (obsessing about weight and what eaten)
 - Bulimia (binge/purge)
- ❑ “Obesity epidemic” ~34% adults, ~17% children
 - Heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.

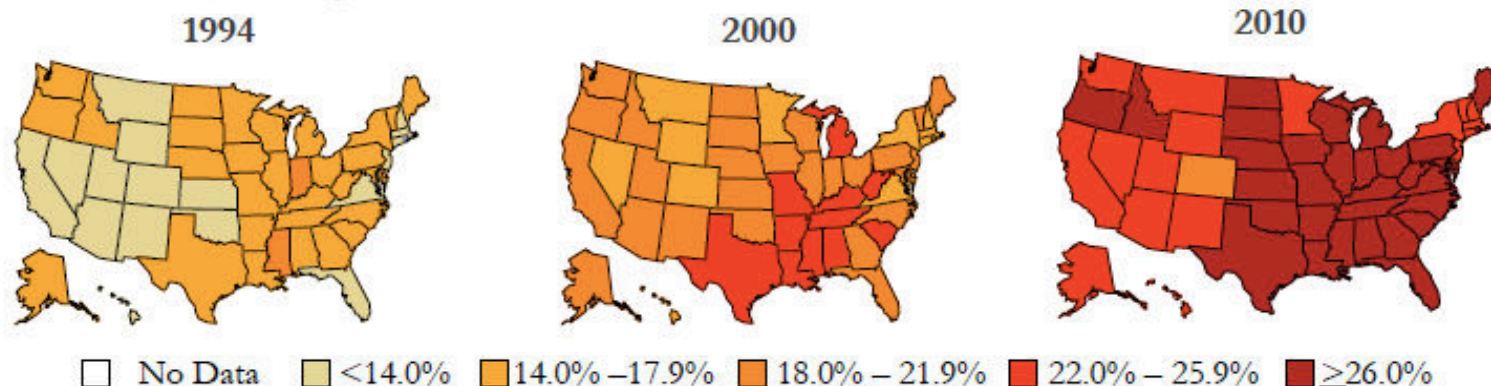
AMERICA'S
OBESITY
EPIDEMIC



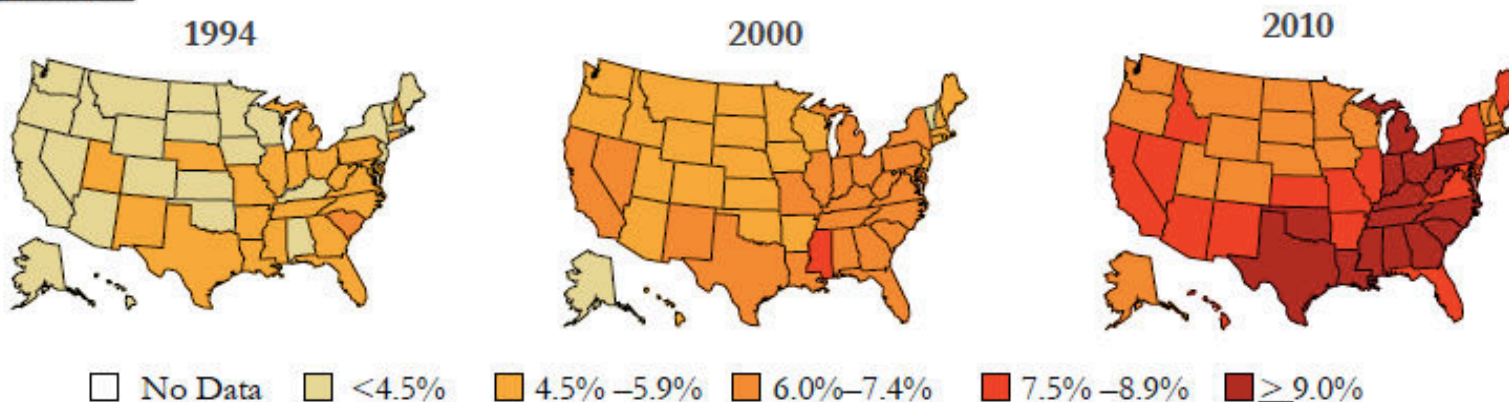
From the Centers for Disease Control

Age-Adjusted Prevalence of Obesity and Diagnosed Diabetes Among U.S. Adults Aged 18 years or older

Obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²)



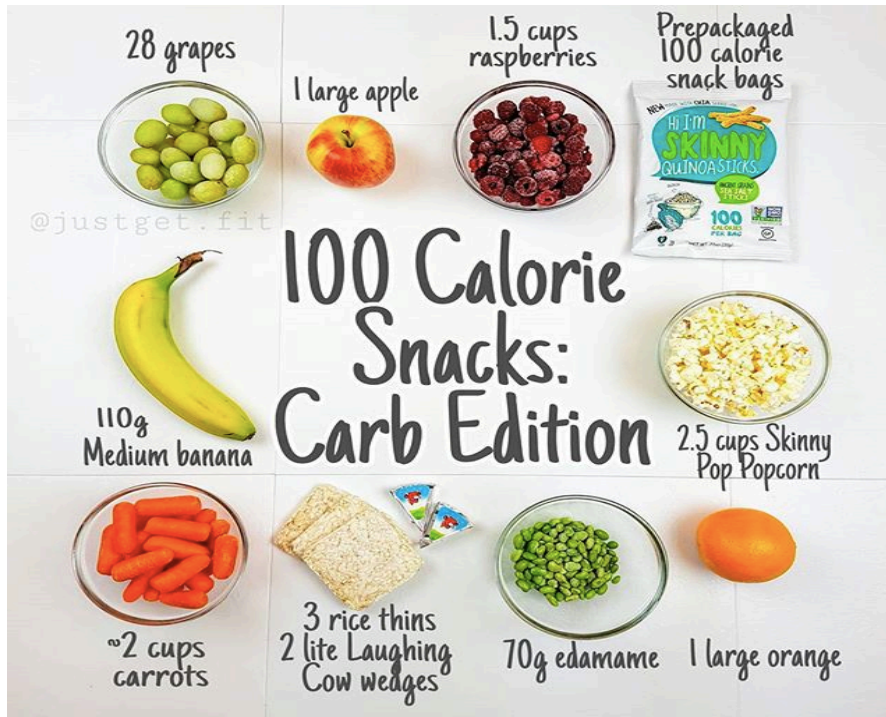
Diabetes



CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation. National Diabetes Surveillance System available at <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/statistics>



An Easy Trap to Fall Into



- ❑ “It is only 100 calories”
- ❑ Let’s run the numbers
- ❑ 100 extra calories per day
- ❑ 36,500 extra calories per year
- ❑ ~3,500 calories per pound of fat
- ❑ ~10 extra pounds per year
- ❑ ~50 extra pounds in 5 years!

Misconceptions About Gluttony

- ❑ Being overweight
- ❑ Eating a big meal
- ❑ Eating food that is too “rich”
- ❑ Eating food that is too expensive or exotic
- ❑ Eating quickly and gobbling your food down
- ❑ Eating too “early”

- ❑ Often comes from the Middle Ages
 - One of the “seven deadly sins” per Catholicism
 - Associated with asceticism and denying the body (like the Gnostics and Stoics in the early church)

Reflected in Modern Definitions

□ Merriam-Webster

- "habitual greed or excess in eating...greedy or excessive indulgence".

□ Wikipedia

- (Latin: gula, derived from the Latin gluttire meaning "to gulp down or swallow") means over-indulgence and over-consumption of food, drink, or wealth items.

□ But what does the Bible have to say about Christians and eating, especially about “gluttony”?

A Blessing from God

- Sense of taste and smell, hunger and appetite
 - 1 Cor. 6:13 *Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food*
- Pleasing food (vegetarian and meat)
- Commands to enjoy (OT law Lev. 23)
- Eccl. 2:24; 3:13; 5:18
 - *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*
- 1 Tim. 4:3
 - *They ... order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.*

But With a Danger



- ❑ At the center of "the fall" in Gen. 3
 - Inordinate desire with lust of flesh, lust of eyes
- ❑ Associated with Sodom and Gomorrah
 - Ezek. 16:49 gluttony or "excess of food"
- ❑ Proverbs 23:2
 - *When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee. And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*
- ❑ Proverbs 25:16
 - *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.*
- ❑ Rom. 14 with matters of conscience

Contexts for “glutton” (1 of 2)

1. Deut. 21:20
 - *and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.*
2. Prov. 23:20-1
 - *Be not among winebibbers, Among gluttonous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty ...*
3. Prov. 28:7
 - *Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son; But he that is a companion of gluttons shameth his father.*
4. Matt. 11:16-19 (Luke 7:34)
 - *The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber,*
1. Associated with other things, but not defined
2. Ditto, but also associated with eating meat
3. Ditto
4. In contrast to John the Baptist

Contexts for “glutton” (2 of 2)

1. Tit 1:12
 - *One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons (KJV slow bellies).*
2. Phil 3:18-19
 - *For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*
3. Similar to Rom. 16:17-18
 - *... mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, ... For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly (some translations have *appetite*) ...*
1. “... a people whose only concern was the stomach, indolent through pampering their bellies. They themselves are called “bellies,” for that is the member for which they live”
2. “Who worship their own appetites; or who live not to adore and honor God, but for self-indulgence and sensual gratifications; whose supreme happiness lies in gratifying their sensual appetites”
3. 1 Cor. 15:32 (resurrection)
 - *If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

Bible Word Definitions

□ Strong's H2151 – *zalal*

- to shake (as in the wind), i.e. to quake; figuratively, to be loose morally, worthless or prodigal:—blow down, glutton, riotous (eater), vile.
- to pour out, to shake out, hence to lavish, to squander, be prodigal

□ Strong's G1064 – *gaster*

- 1. The belly
- 2. The womb, to be pregnant
- 3. The stomach; by synecdoche a glutton, gormandizer, a man who is as it were all stomach

□ Strong's G5314 - *phagos*

- Mat 11:19, Luk 7:34, Greek *phagos*, given to eating, gluttonous.

□ Strong's G2836 *koilia*

- ("hollow"); a cavity, i.e. (especially) the abdomen; by implication, the womb; figuratively, the heart:—belly, womb.

Combining Contexts and Definitions...

- Associated with food
 - Often associated with excess drinking/drunkenness (but not always)

- “Worship” and “serve” their appetites
 - “Given” to eating
 - Pampering themselves, excessive indulgence, addicted

- Phil 3:18-19; Rom 16:17-18
 - *whose god is the belly, ... For they that are such serve their own belly (some translations have appetite) ...*

Related General Principles...

- Matt. 6:25, 33
 - *“... do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink ... Is not life more than food? ... But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
- Rom. 12:1
 - *... present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, ... which is your spiritual service of worship.*
- 1 Cor. 6:19-20
 - *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit ... glorify God in your body*
- 1 Cor. 9:27
 - *I discipline my body and I make it my slave*
- Rom. 12:17
 - *... Respect what is right in the sight of all men.*
- Tattoos, piercings
- Smoking, drinking, drugs
- Coffee, soda, energy drinks
- Hair, makeup, jewelry, etc.
- Video games, hobbies, sports
- Work
- Sex
- Sleep
- Yes, and even food!

Resulting Multiple Applications

- ❑ Worrying about having enough to eat (Matt. 6)
- ❑ Obsessing about dieting and weight loss
- ❑ Anorexia
- ❑ Obsessing about “health food” (“orthorexia”)
- ❑ Allowing ourselves to gain weight that impairs health and harms our body
- ❑ Gluttony – “given” to eating, excessive indulgence
- ❑ Competitive eating contests
- ❑ Bulimia

“Worrying”, “obsessing”, “excessive” somewhat subjective.
Wise judgment needed to avoid extremes.

Examples (1 of 2)

□ Eve Gen. 3; Sodom & Gomorrah Ezek. 16

□ Esau

- Gen. 25:30-34; Heb. 12:16

- *And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ...*

□ Israel

- Num. 11:4-6; Psalms 78:17-18

- *And the mixed multitude that was among them lusted exceedingly: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all save this manna to look upon. 19*

Examples (2 of 2)

□ Sons of Eli

- 1 Sam. 2:12-17 Stealing the meat (including the fat) from the sacrificial offering

□ Rich man

- Luke 12:15-21 *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.*

□ Unfaithful servant

- Luke 12:42-46 *But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

Warning Signs (1 of 2)

- ❑ Time - excessive thinking about food
- ❑ Money - excessive spending on food
- ❑ Continued overeating despite growing problems with weight gain, blood pressure, diabetes, etc.
- ❑ Does it seem like your world revolves around food?



Warning Signs (2 of 2)

- ❑ Being overweight? Not necessarily.
 - Heredity/genetic predisposition
 - Parenting and the “clean plate club”
 - Medical conditions
 - ❑ Joint issues impeding exercise
 - ❑ Underactive thyroid, hormonal imbalance
 - ❑ Medication side-effects
 - Lack of sleep
 - Stress with hormonal changes
 - Aging and slowing metabolism
 - Lack of awareness resulting in slow “weight creep”
- ❑ But do we use these as “excuses” to justify enjoying lots of good food?



How to Overcome

- ❑ As with any temptation, habit, compulsion
- ❑ Be mindful
- ❑ Seek medical attention
- ❑ Avoid triggering situations
- ❑ Replace bad habit with another
- ❑ Prayer
- ❑ Encouragement from fellow Christians and so on



Conclusion

- ❑ Food & ability to enjoy it – a blessing from God
- ❑ But both can be abused
- ❑ Especially challenging in our affluent society
- ❑ Don't let your belly (appetite) be your “god”
- ❑ Similar to other areas of excess
- ❑ Need wisdom, judgment and balance to avoid extremes
- ❑ A matter of relative emphasis and priority – *seek first ...*
- ❑ But with help and God's grace, we can overcome!