



# CONSUMED

## *Consumed Church Pack – Devotion*

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Allow yourself half an hour to reflect upon the following passages of Scripture and questions. You may want to write in a journal or play the suggested song as you enter a time of prayer.

### *Scripture*

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Proverbs 14:30 “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”

Proverbs 11:28 “Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.”

Hebrews 13:5 “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Luke 12:15 “Then he said to them, watch out! Be on guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

1 John 2:16 “For everything in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world.”

Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

### *Reflection*

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They are everywhere in Scripture, warnings against trusting in our riches and against being envious of what others have. Instead, we are called to contentment and to trust in God. As part of the Consumed Campaign we have been calling consumerism the great idol of our age, but really in one way, shape or form consumerism has been the idol of every age. Gloria Furman, contributor on the “Desiring God” blog said,

*“Satan has offered everyone the same lie, from the patriarchs of Israel to Jesus and his disciples. Satan is not innovative. The devil knows that the Creator designed us with needs, so he works to get us to feast on things other than God. Satan is the architect of the course of this world, that gravitational force designed to reinforce the pagan delusion that life cannot possibly amount to more than food and clothing. That only idiots forgo treasure on earth for treasure in heaven. That the real fool to be pitied is the one who does not worry about tomorrow. That those who seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness will be sorely disappointed. So the invitations keep coming to participate in the drama of consumerism instead of the drama of redemption. If the consumer is trained to consume temporary fillers, she will keep grasping for her next fix. If the consumer can collect the tokens that tell him that he embodies what the images promise him, he’ll be satisfied for the time being. We emulate the idol – desperate and starved. The dark irony of consumerism is that we are the ones who are being consumed.” (Ref.)*

The purpose of the Consumed campaign is to try to help Christians better understand what the good life is, to embed their thinking of the good life in a theological framework, to provide actions that will break people from the grasp of consumerism, and to create solutions to some of the problems of consumerism.

For some of our consumption, it is a matter of learning about something and then adjusting our behaviour. For example, learning about ethical fashion and then choosing to purchase from companies that have made a commitment to produce clothing in an ethical way. However, when you dig deeply into why we as consumers seem to be trapped in a never-ending cycle of buying more, experiencing more, and being more two questions consistently pop up:

- a) Am I loved for who I am?
- b) Am I enough?

It seems as though, at least in part, our consumption habits are symptoms of having these two questions unanswered in our lives or forgetting the answers that we may have once found. Where are you seeking your answers?

- If not goods for status, then maybe shopping for that endorphin hit of buying something new.
- If not success and achievement, then maybe likes on social media so you feel alright with yourself.
- If not fashion, then maybe food to shove those feelings down a bit further.

-If not experiences and holidays, then maybe people and their flattery for your own gain.

-If not busyness so you never have time to feel lonely, then maybe alcohol so you can drown out those bad thoughts.

Now we know that God has something to say about these questions of am I loved and am I enough, but I wonder if as Christians we have really let the truth of the gospel sink in to our lives. I wonder why we don't seem to be living that much differently from our non-Christian friends and neighbours when it comes to the ways that we consume? We seem to still be seeking our answers in other things. Maybe we aren't sure that God is really trustworthy; we have heard what he says about us but we don't trust it. Maybe we see ourselves through the lens of shame rather than the lens of forgiveness and grace. Shame is definitely a feeling that we will want to squash. Maybe we are operating with a mindset of scarcity and are accumulating things to make us feel secure when God has already promised to meet our needs.

The hard thing about consumerism is that most of the things we are consuming are not bad in and of themselves. It's the reason why we consume it, or the way we consume or the amount we consume that are the problems. David Goetz in his book *Death by Suburb*, talks about "immortality symbols" (originally from Ernest Becker's work, *Escape from Evil*). Goetz says, "*An immortality symbol is not really about the thing...it's about the glory the thing bestows upon me.*" For some people, their immortality symbol is looking good. They consume the latest fashion because they want to look good. There is nothing really wrong with this, but it becomes an immortality symbol when it becomes about one's own glory. For some it is success at work, for some it is a high paying job, for some it is their kids doing really well at school or in sport, for some it is a house in the right neighbourhood. The list goes on and on. All things that become answers to am I loved and am I enough when God wanted to be the one to answer those questions.

### *Questions for reflection and prayer exercise*

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Suggested song to play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qmni7W1RufY>  
"My Dream" by Sara Groves

What is your immortality symbol? What are you building your identity on? What would happen if it was taken away? Would you be ok with yourself? Would you rest in knowing that you are loved and you are enough?

Are you happy with the way that you consume? Is there something about your consumption that you need to bring back into alignment with what God says about the good life?

During the song, you may want to close your eyes and reflect on one of these questions. As the song is playing, envision yourself inviting Jesus Christ into that space. Perhaps there is a need that you are trying to fill with something other than Jesus Christ. As Sara Groves sings, try to imagine yourself in the moment of need and turn to Jesus waiting for you and then running towards you. Repent of the ways that your consumption of goods, food, people, accolades, experience, whatever it may be, may not align with what God has for you. I invite you to imagine His abundance and provision meeting you in that place.

### *Closing*

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We have a Saviour that waits for us and when He sees us, he runs to meet us with his love, grace, and abundance.

Will you proclaim the gospel into the darkness of consumerism?

Will you announce that God has come in Christ and a whole new world has begun?

Where there is emptiness in peoples' lives, will you proclaim fullness?

Where there is sadness, will you proclaim healing?

Where there is anxiety and depression, will you proclaim "Jesus is Lord"?

Where there is greed, will you proclaim that Jesus is enough?

When the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy, will you proclaim that Jesus came so that people may have life and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

Furman says,

*"The gnawing pain of wanting stuff cannot destroy you, because Christ crushed your idol of consumerism on his cross. You and your children will suffer no lack when you trust him. Christ's mission to glorify himself is your mission, and he delights in freeing us from idolatrous consumerism so we can show the world that he is enough."*