

Teaching Virtue – Gaining Values

Introduction

Recently, it was commented during an adult class that we should not emphasize values in religious instruction; instead virtues are taught and demonstrated by the teachers through their lives. Some listeners expressed confusion and needed clarification. This lesson is designed to define, characterize, and validate the concept of virtues.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

The Problem with Values

The primary tool of Satan is distraction: That is, focus on something subjective (value) to the detriment of something objective (virtue). For example, you may value an inherited pearl necklace as priceless whereas a jeweler may know the pearls are cheap imitations; the value to you and he is very different.

Another example is you may believe printed currency has value when in reality it has no intrinsic worth; it is just a government-controlled mechanism of exchange. (Why do you suppose governments downplay barter systems by claiming they represent no value?)

Again, the philosophical crux of the *woke* color revolution and trans-activism is the idea of subjective reality. If we are convinced that identity and biology are subjective and a matter of perception, then what else can we be convinced of that is subjective and a matter of perception?

How about morality and conscience? If identity is a social construct, then surely moral compass is a social construct, too. And as leftists commonly claim, social constructs they don't like are "fascism." This is what the Pride movement is really all about: The creation of a morally relative society that treats right and wrong as *subjective* guidelines rather than ancient and inborn rules for life. And, in a morally relative society, collapse is inevitable.

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

What is a virtue?

A virtue can be defined as a good quality that you can adopt as part of your character to become the kind of person you have always wanted to be. It is a tendency to act right and do right by others. Virtue is more enduring than a behavior; instead of doing the right thing once or following a rule, being virtuous means that you **become** that kind person and one that follows the rules.

Every virtue has the potential of being a superpower. It can enable you to experience life in a magnificent way.

It is important to identify virtues that define, or underlay, the core values that are important to you as a person.

Philosophical listing of virtues – Aristotle

Aristotle is one of the best-known Greek philosophers and one of the greatest globally. In his work, he names morality and intellect as the main categories of virtues, which were further broken down into 12 important ones, according to him. He taught the need to emphasize each of the virtues in moderation to avoid deficiencies and excesses. His list of virtues includes:

- Courage – including valor and bravery
- Temperance – restraint and controlling one’s self
- Liberality – generosity to others
- Magnificence – spending great sums for honor’s sake
- Pride – ambition, worthy of great things
- Magnanimity – healthy belief in one’s own value
- Good Temper – keeping a level head, patient
- Friendliness – sociable to others
- Truthfulness – being straightforward and honest
- Wit – a sense of humor and joy
- Modesty – neither shy nor shameless
- Justice – having a fair mind and a sense of right and wrong

Philosophical listing of virtues – Confucius

Just like the Greeks, the Chinese also came up with a list of philosophical virtues that humans can adapt to live a better life while minding the needs of others around them. Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, focused a lot on morality and correctness in his work. He came up with a list of five virtues. These include:

- Ren – charity, and humility
- Yi – honesty
- Zhi – knowledge, and wisdom

- Xin – faithfulness
- Li – politeness, and propriety

Notice that both philosophers emphasized the need to **strike a balance** when adapting these moral principles. They both believed that having too much or too little of a virtue could be dangerous. For instance, too much magnificence can lead to vulgarity, while too little of it can cause pettiness.

Religious listing of virtues – Sikhism

Sikhism is a monotheistic religious practice that dates back to the 15th century. It advocates for five main virtues. These include:

- Pyare (love) – caring for all creatures
- Sat (truthfulness) – being just to others
- Daya (compassion) – empathy toward others
- Santokh (contentment) – happiness in yourself and God’s Will (Hukam)
- Nimrata (humility) – keeping the ego in check

Religious listing of virtues – Christianity

Commonly referred to as the *fruits of the spirit* in the bible, the list of virtues in the Christian context is broken down into 9 categories and considered gifts for mankind. These virtues are focused on keeping the believer just and moral in their thinking. These virtues include:

- Love – love for others and yourself
- Peace – calmness in yourself and God
- Joy – finding joy in the world and in God
- Forbearance – patience, and perseverance
- Goodness – be generous to others
- Kindness – having moral integrity
- Gentleness – humility, and grace in situations
- Faithfulness – being trustworthy to others and being faithful to your savior
- Self-Control – controlling desires

Virtues for Life

Trust, detachment, thoughtfulness, joy, kindness, courage, tranquility, focus, humility, wisdom, orderliness, generosity, justice, self-control, assertiveness, and integrity.

Virtues for Better Relationships

Helpfulness, modesty, peacefulness, beneficence, forgiveness, purposefulness, good counsel, responsibility, respect, tolerance, trustworthiness, perseverance, good judgment, gratitude, and obedience.

Virtues for Contentedness

Optimism, high self-esteem, dispassion, freedom from results, selflessness, meditation, taking risks, introspection, contentment, compassion, honesty, and thinking of others.

Virtues for Success

Leadership, cheerfulness, moderation, self-discipline, loyalty, courtesy, friendliness, sincerity, and temperance.

Virtues for Moral Living

Integrity, adaptability, mindfulness, self-respect, cooperation, assertiveness, empathy, tact, commitment, excellence, authenticity, grace, and prudence.

Virtues for Fulfillment

Honor, meekness, joyfulness, patriotism, foresight, industriousness, docility, greatness, prayerfulness, ambition, and liberality.

Virtues for Self-improvement

Certitude, cleanliness, thankfulness, decisiveness, initiative, endurance, sacrifice, steadfastness, unity, wonder, and zeal.

Virtues – A Framework for Living

As a human being, you are prone to make mistakes, and it is not always easy to live by these moral codes. It is important to think that these virtues are a guide instead of strict rules. They are required, however, to give you a framework for living your life.

Everyone has a few virtues they can improve to become better people and lead a better life. Take time to understand the list of virtues to know which areas of your life can use more balance. You can write down actions you need to take to improve the different areas that need work and come up with a plan to implement these actions.

Examples of virtues in action

- Listening compassionately to a friend after they have had a difficult day.
- Writing a short story.

- Donating to different charities.
- Studying a period of history.
- Being present to appreciate nature and beauty
- Showing sensitivity to a delicate matter someone reveals to you.
- Showing up on time.
- Taking time every day to meditate.
- Following through on a difficult or boring project.
- Believing in yourself and your abilities.
- Listening patiently to an older person.
- Choosing to be happy and positive.

Applying Virtues

Some people consider virtues a Victorian concept, while others consider it a puritanical idea. The meaning of virtue varies from one person to the next. Philosophers from different cultures and ages took time to talk about cardinal virtues and their importance, including Greek philosophers, Plato, Buddha, and Yogis, who revealed the importance and significance of cultivating certain qualities or habits to better one's life.

Again, virtue is a trait or quality deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. It is any behavior that displays high moral standards by doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong (which is the opposite of vice).

When we live the virtues, the good values manifest automatically. We should not be teaching "values" for months or years at a time. We need to be teaching Christian virtues instead.

These virtues are listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7. But back up to verse 3...

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your **faith** supply **moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, **knowledge**, and in your knowledge, **self-control**, and in your self-control, **perseverance**, and in your perseverance, **godliness**, and in your godliness, **brotherly kindness**, and in your brotherly kindness, **love**.*

Jesus Defines the Words

Faith

Matthew 26:36-39

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Moral excellence

John 8:45-47

But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

Knowledge

Luke 2:40-47

The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

Temperance

John 2:14-15

And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

Patience

Matthew 26:65-68

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; what do you think?" They answered, "He deserves death!" Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, "Prophesy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

Godliness

Luke 6:12

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Brotherly Kindness

John 1:9-13

So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise.

Love

John 19:26-27

When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

Conclusion

Each virtue could have at least one lesson on it. Virtues used to be taught in public schools in addition being taught in the churches; these have been replaced with gender studies and sexuality in the schools and with values in the churches. This must be changed quickly if the Church is to survive in this country.

Surely there is something in this lesson you can apply to your life. Apply the virtue of honesty to yourself and see if it fits. If so, teach that to others. If it misfits, repent; change your life!