

# TRUEMANHOOD.COM

## TRUEMANHOOD'S GUIDE TO VIRTUE

*Note: This guide is compiled from various notes, resources and previously written articles and is not necessarily a unique project written by TrueManhood.com or any of its contributors. The information contained within is intended for the use of individuals attempting to live virtue.*

Virtue is the key component to manliness. The Latin word for virtue is *virtus*, meaning manliness. In order for a male to be a TrueMan, he must possess virtue. Because virtue cannot be partially possessed, all males must strive to obtain virtue. This guide should aid in understanding and should be a first-step. TrueManhood.com encourages all males to begin the journey toward virtue, with continued education and work! Strive for virtue.

**DEFINITION of VIRTUE:** a habitual and firm disposition to do the good, which allows a man not only to do good acts, but to give the best of himself.

Being virtuous means that you “should be able to do the good”:

- With ease
- Promptly
- Consistently
- With joy

There are two ways to grow in virtue: 1. Practice      2. Grace

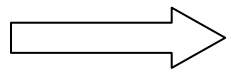
Virtues are like skills, acquired by education, that are then repeated. (Think of virtues like muscles, you must strengthen your spiritual muscles in order for them to perform for you.)

**VICE:** the opposite of virtue. In order to break a vice, practice the opposite virtue (more on opposite virtues below).

**GRACE** helps us to live the virtuous life, which is God's love in us. Grace allows us to live supernaturally, thus, we should ask God for grace. Grace also gives us hope.

### 4 CARDINAL VIRTUES:

- PRUDENCE
- JUSTICE
- FORTITUDE
- TEMPERANCE



The 4 cardinal virtues are the “hinges” on which our life turns.

**PRUDENCE:** wisdom for practical everyday life. Practical knowledge and right reason, therefore, applied to actions throughout our days.

- Knowing how to do the right thing, at the right time and in the right way.

We must begin with the end in mind. Think of a charioteer; he is the director of the horses, the chariot and the race. Not having the virtue of prudence is like the chariot not having a driver. \*\*\*\* Prudence directs ALL OTHER VIRTUES. \*\*\*\*

### 3 PARTS of PRUDENCE:

1. **COUNSEL:** Gathering information for making a good decision.
  - a. Opposing vice: **PRECIPITATION:** a defect in counsel. (Think of this as “falling down”)
  - b. 3 Causes of Precipitation:
    - i. Impulse/Quick Decision (Not thinking a decision out)
    - ii. Passion and Emotions
    - iii. Stubbornness
2. **JUDGEMENT:** weighing the information gathered during counsel like a judge would (this isn’t cut and dry, it is an art)
  - a. Opposing vice: **THOUGHTLESSNESS:** failure to judge rightly
  - b. 1 cause: Lust. St Thomas Aquinas (STA) said “lust clouds the mind”
  - c. Aristotle said “the angry man listens to reason, though not perfectly, but the lustful man does not listen to reason at all.”
3. **DECISIVENESS:** acting after COUNSEL and JUDGEMENT.
  - a. Counterfeit vice (appears to be decisiveness): **FALSE PRUDENCE**
  - b. Opposing vices: 1. Indecisiveness and 2. Inconstancy.
    - i. Indecisiveness: fear of committing (not making a decision) to an action.
      1. Causes: Fear of Commitment and Lack of Courage
    - ii. Inconstancy: saying one thing, doing another. A failure to carry it out.
    - iii. Indecisiveness and Inconstancy result, as STA said, from:
      1. Anxiety over worldly things
        - a. Sinful in 3 ways: 1. We treat this as the end itself. 2. When the worldly things become a distraction. 3. When we fear we lack the goods we need.
      2. Anxiety over the future

Anxiety = why we don’t act. STA said: we have (and should see) 3 motives for not being anxious:

1. Matthew 6, lack of trust in God
2. God wants to give us blessings.
3. Seek 1<sup>st</sup> the Kingdom of God. → Seek Christ first!

### → PRUDENCE orders our REASON, PASSIONS and ACTIONS

- When prudence orders our passions (the things that entice us to act contrary to right reason.) This is called **TEMPERANCE** (Temperance helps us deal these our passions).
- When prudence orders our passions (the things that draw us away from acting according to right reason). This is called **FORTITUDE** (Fortitude helps us deal w/ these passions).
- When prudence orders our actions, it is called **JUSTICE**.

**JUSTICE:** the good due to others. (Not emphasizing the self) Over emphasis on rights misses the concept of justice.  
Sub Virtues of JUSTICE:

1. **HONOR:** recognizing the worth of something. When someone/thing is honored, it is valued. In Biblical times, if something was weighty, it was of value (ie: gold). In ancient Greece, dishonor was symbolized by mist or steam (weightlessness, therefore, not valuable).
2. **RELIGION:** Head Virtue. Habitually honoring and praising God in all we do.
  - a. Devotion: willing to give your self in service to God (habitually). You seek God’s will for your life.
  - b. Prayer: your prayer is habitual and constant
  - c. Tithe: means 10%. (Not just in money; time/treasure/talent). Stewardship. We are all called to this. It challenges us to:
    - i. Grow in generosity (giving not from leftovers)
    - ii. Grow in our trust of God
      1. Malachi 3:10 (context: the Jews weren’t tithing): “Bring the full tithes. Test me on this! If I will not pour down an overabundance of blessings.” Only time in sacred scripture that God allows His people to test him.
3. **PIETY:** Honoring Parents:

- a. 1. Honor and 2. Service
  - i. Honor through obedience
  - ii. Honor through respect
    1. Commandments 1, 2 and 3 → God
    2. Commandments 4-10 → human relationships
4. **OBSERVANCE**: Honoring Leaders: we need a culture that respects (father-like) leaders. In 1 Samuel 24: David could have killed King Saul, but bows down to pay him homage. David observes the office of the king. We need a sense of piety for our religious, priests, bishops and Pope.
5. **GRATITUDE**: Honoring benefactors. We are more likely to complain about what we don't have compared to the amount of times we give thanks.
  - a. 3 ways to show gratitude (STA):
    - i. Recognize the favor; when someone does something for you.
    - ii. Express thanks (written or verbal)
    - iii. Repay the favor:
      1. According to your means
      2. More generously, if possible
6. **KINDNESS**: intending comfort/pleasure for those around you. Anticipating other's needs, habitually. (Examples: Not "cliquish". Not rude in conversations.)
7. **TRUTH**: Our words and deeds correspond to reality. We owe each other reality.
  - a. Opposing vice: Lying:
    - i. Making false statements
    - ii. Boasting – exaggerating the truth
    - iii. Hypocrisy
  - b. Opposing vice: Rash judgment: Doubt of another's goodness based on slight indications.
  - c. St. Catherine of Sienna said "Compassion vs. Judgment: Compassion holds the whole truth about: 1. Our neighbor 2. Ourselves 3. God's Mercy while Judgment holds only the facts.
    - i. Conversation: used to build up or tear down. We should speak honorably of each other. Are we careful to do this? Do we treat others like we would a delicate, expensive rookie baseball card?
      1. James 3:5-6 "... the tongue is a fire..." Used for blessing AND cursing
    - ii. Gossip: a dangerous sin. You can never retrieve your words.
    - iii. Negative humor: sarcasm and/or tearing down
  - d. STA:
    - i. Reviling: directly attacking one's honor. Verbal abuse, publicly. This leads to:
    - ii. Back-biting: secretly attacking one's honor. This leads to:
    - iii. Tale-bearing: back-biting w/ the purpose of dividing friendships. This leads to:
    - iv. Derision: Publicly, not directly, attacking one's honor. Ridicule, laughing at another person, mocking another person. Derision doesn't take another person seriously.

**FORTITUDE**: ensures firmness in difficulty. Constancy in the pursuit of good. Resolve to resist temptations.

- Opposing vice: Timidity (Cowardly) not acting according to reason (/fear)
  - Fear is based on some kind of love.
- Counterfeit vices: Fearlessness and Rash Boldness
  - Fearlessness does not fear death or evil as much as it should
  - Rash Boldness: the taking on of an obstacle that one shouldn't.

**COURAGE**: helps us to persevere in practical everyday life. Courage moderates our fear; our fears of pain, failure, etc. It also helps us make the most of our lives. It enables us to stand up to something great in our life.

### 3 Practical sub virtues of FORTITUDE:

1. MAGNANIMITY: means “Greatness of Soul”. Striving for greatness.
  - a. Opposing vice: Pusillanimity: “Small spirit” (ie: *smallness of soul*) Makes a man shrink from greatness.
  - b. Causes of pusillanimity:
    - i. Fear of failure
    - ii. Sloth/Laziness
  - c. Counterfeit vice: Vanity: an inordinate desire for human praise. (Vanity is a capital vice, which gives birth to other vices.) Vanity leads to boasting, love of novelties and hypocrisy.
    - i. Hypocrisy: when we want the appearance of virtue, but don’t actually want the virtue.  
Translated from Greek = “acting”.
2. PATIENCE: Endurance of difficulties w/ Joy and Peace.
  - a. STA: “Patience allows us to not be controlled by sorrow. It keeps us from being discouraged.”
3. PERSEVERANCE: determination. Makes us persist firmly to carry through.

TEMPERANCE: from Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1809: “moderates our attraction to pleasure.”

- Opposing vice: Insensibility: rejects pleasure
- Counterfeit vice: Intemperance, or timidity.

### 3 Vices of Temperance:

- Gluttony: an inordinate consumption of food or drink.
  - How much is too much? (There are 8 pieces of pizza... leave the last 3 or 4, not just the last 2 pieces for others).
  - Gluttony comes in the following forms, as well: what kind of food/drink are you consuming? What is the cost? How did you go about eating it? Did you eat too quickly? Were you greedy with your consumption? When did you eat? Were you satisfying an immediate need for food?
  - Gluttony weakens our will.
  - The opposite of gluttony is FASTING: this is a sub-virtue (even done by pagans). This is in order to not be controlled by food/drink. Self-denial. It helps us to say no to little things (saying no to your appetite makes it easier to do other small virtuous deeds; giving up a seat, being attentive to others, etc. Fasting helps us make sacrifices.
- Drunkenness: hinders our mind (our reason). Drunkenness is a mortal sin because (STA:) man “willingly deprives himself the use of reason, whereby he performs virtuous deeds and avoids sin”.
  - The day after drunkenness: loneliness (inability to remember events from the prior day.)
  - Opposite of drunkenness is SOBRIETY: the moderate use of alcohol.
- Lust: sex, like fire, can be a good thing. Fire gives warmth, is used for cooking, etc. Fire taken out of context, however, can be very bad. It is destructive, can cause harm, etc. STA: “A man who gives into his lust has weaknesses. From this weakness means that he will give into his passions. He is not free to love.”
  - Opposite of lust is CHASTITY: sexual actions directed towards good, the way they were intended by God. (See Theology of the Body for more).

The virtue of MEEKNESS: moderates the passion of anger. (This is not weakness). Meekness calls on incredible strength. It keeps us from getting angry for the wrong things and from getting too angry about the right/good things.

- Opposing vice: Anger: a desire to punish. Punishment: 1. Remedial (to remedy) 2. Protect
  - We should become angry about wrong doings: abortion, homelessness, etc. It’s okay to be angry and in fact, many things should make us angry. We actually hurt others by not being angry about certain things. This is called RIGHTEOUS ANGER, it is a good thing. Meekness helps control righteous anger.
  - There is sinful anger: (sinful anger is a capital vice – gives birth to other vices)
    1. Wrath: angry too quickly, over little things, quick judgment
    2. Ill will: holding a grudge (hoping bad will happen to the person)
    3. Rancor: not setting aside anger until punishment takes place for the person the grudge is held against.
      - Rancor takes place in 3 areas:

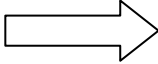
1. Thoughts: getting really angry over something small, or something you shouldn't be angry about. Angry over something that isn't bad. Plotting.
  2. Words: in harmful words.
  3. Actions: through actual things, harmful actions.
- Counterfeit vice: Unreasonable patience
  - Opposing vice: Pride: aiming to be higher than actual. Not accepting who we are right now. Inordinate desire for one's own glory. Leads to:
    - Boasting
    - The prideful man thinks he has a certain level of excellence within himself.
    - Pride desires to have a certain excellence more than others.
    - Tends to despise others. → Wants to be singular.
  - Pride should be HUMILITY: tempers the mind from deeming himself beyond what he really is. Standing on the truth. There is great freedom in being who we are. We can recognize our weaknesses and dependence on God and others.

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES: supernatural powers infused into the soul enabling the soul to participate in God's life. Faith, Hope and Love. Man's natural principles are not sufficient to help him fulfill what he's made for. We have infinite longings for God, but it is beyond our natural powers to know God. To be in full communion with God, He must give us all something to help guide our intellect and our will. (We always have free will to choose as we wish.) The theological virtues direct us to God. We cannot acquire them without God. We know them only through God's revelation to us.

FAITH: CCC 150: Intellectual assent to God's revelation (Intellect) and a personal adherence to God (entrusting one's self to God) (Will). Faith is a relational trust in God. Faith is the intellect + the will.

- Intellect: allows us to think about faith
  - Opposing vices:
    - Unbelief: either by ignorance (no knowledge) or by opposition (choice not to believe. Unbelief by opposition is a sin.
    - Heresy: a choice to disagree with what Christ taught. (This is prideful arrogance – acting as if we know better than Christ himself.)
    - Doubt: a lack of understanding (not a sin, until it leads to unbelief).
    - Blasphemy: making jokes about God (any of the three persons of the Holy Trinity), the Church, etc.
- Will: actions allowing us to believe

HOPE: the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven as our happiness. Because of hope, we trust in Christ's promises to help us.

- Hope is the bridge between faith and love.
    - Opposing vice: Despair:
      - Belief that God will not forgive me
      - Thinking that God can't really help me.
-  Giving up.
- Counterfeit vice: Presumption: the sin by which a man presumes he will get to his goal on his own. He doesn't depend on God and doesn't see the need to.

LOVE (also called CHARITY): the form of all virtue. Love = friendship with God. Love leads us to God. To perform acts of love, we must surpass our own abilities; we require supernatural grace. (Supernatural = super → beyond / natural → nature ... beyond nature.)

Love brings us (has the effect of):

- JOY: seeing love in others.
- PEACE: (shalom) – right relations, when we are united or have reconciliation
- MERCY: (misericordia) – the greatest virtue in relation to others. Compassionate heart for another's unhappiness.

- Opposing vices to love:
  - Hatred
  - Sloth: being lazy isn't loving to others or ourselves. Sloth takes the ability of being able to give of yourself to others.
  - Envy: not just jealousy, an actual tearing down of others. (Very selfish)
  - Discord: trying to break up relationships.
- Love also occurs as:
  - Passion: the desire for something. This happens to us as passive recipients.
  - Natural virtue: when you want what is best for someone else.
  - Theological virtue: The Holy Spirit dwelling in us. 1 John 4:8 "God is Love."

<b>FAITH</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Supernatural Prudence</b>
<b>HOPE</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Supernatural Courage &amp; Temperance</b>
<b>LOVE</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Supernatural Justice</b>

Below is a table displaying various virtues, their vice of deficiency and their vice of excess. The vice of deficiency occurs when an individual lacks the virtue and the vice of excess is when an individual acts in “overload” of the virtue, thus not possessing the virtue.

<u>VIRTUE</u>	<u>VICE OF DEFICIENCY</u>	<u>VICE OF EXCESS</u>
Bravery	Cowardice	Rashness
Temperance	Prudishness (insensible)	Intemperance
Generosity	Miserliness (ungenerosity)	Wastefulness
Magnificence	Stinginess	Ostentatiousness/vulgarity
Magnanimity	Pusillanimity	Vanity
Mildness	In-irascibility	Irascibility
Truthfulness	Self-deception	Boastfulness
Wit	Boorishness	Buffoonery
Friendship	Quarrelsomeness	Ingratiating
Shame	Disgraceless	Excessive Shame
Proper Indignation	Spitefulness	Envy

