

Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Cardinal Virtues

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COURAGE

The Cardinal Virtues

- Classical virtues: wisdom (prudence), courage, temperance, justice
- Christian virtues: faith, hope, and love (charity) – gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom and courage

- Wisdom: knowing the meaning of life, and how to pursue it
 - Shorter Catechism (1647), Q1: “What is the chief end of man?” *Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*
 - Attained by precept, practice, and imitation
- Courage: force that overcomes the obstacles impeding our pursuit of the chief end
 - A definition (Stalker): the power of going forward in spite of difficulties to reach a chosen and worthy object
 - Comparison to tenacity, single-mindedness, ferociousness (the Cowardly Lion?)

Everyday examples of courage

- Courage in battle
- Mundane examples

Biblical examples of courage

- Abraham, Noah, Joseph
- David vs. Goliath
- Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:1-2, 16-39)
- The martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 6:8 - 8:1)
- Paul (Acts 16:16-31, many others...)

The necessity of Christian courage

- The opposition of the world (John 15:18-21)
- Our duty to witness (“Every Christian is a possible martyr”)
- Our hope and model: the courage of Christ himself!

Coleridge tells a striking story of a young officer who confided to him that in his first battle he was absolutely demoralized with fear, till his general, Sir Alexander Ball ... grasped his fingers and said, “I was just the same the first time I was in a battle,” when, at that touch and these words, his timidity vanished in a moment and never returned. (Stalker, pp. 105-06)

Hebrews 4:15-16: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Our weaponry: the full armor of Christ (Eph. 6:10-17)