

Virtues and Vice



- ❖ A virtue is a habit or an acquired human quality of character that allow one to achieve personal happiness. By definition, then, virtue is something good, an "excellence" of human character. There cannot be a bad virtue. Vice is the opposite—a habit that spoils one's chances of achieving personal happiness. By definition, vice is bad; there cannot be a good vice.
- ❖ Virtues are valuable to us because they are the requirements for living the good life. Doing something to undermine our virtues or our ability to practice virtues is a great harm to people.
- ❖ Virtues are not separate from happiness itself. They can be understood as the means to happiness, but since happiness is not a good over and above the other goods of life, acting virtuously and striving to be virtuous is identical to happiness. Therefore virtues are valuable as such, for themselves.
- ❖ Virtues can be either moral or intellectual—they make either our actions good or our thinking good.

| SEVEN DEADLY VICIES | VIRTUES |
|------------------------------|--|
| Pride | Humility |
| Greed, avarice, covetousness | Liberality, mercy |
| Lust | Chastity, continence |
| Anger | Patience, meekness |
| Gluttony | Temperance, abstinence, self-control |
| Envy | Love of God, love of neighbor, love of enemy |
| Sloth | Fortitude, courage |

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