

Chapter 3: The Life of Virtue

We can become virtuous by obeying God's laws.

Chapter Summary

Moral laws tell us what is right and wrong. Natural laws are those moral laws we can know through our own reason. The revealed law is the moral law that God revealed to us. The natural law leads us to earthly happiness, whereas the revealed law leads us to true happiness on earth and perfect happiness in Heaven. It was necessary for God to reveal laws to help us attain a complete and certain understanding of the natural law. Jesus, the Word of God, perfectly and fully reveals God's laws to us. God gives us the moral laws to form our consciences so we can live as people of virtuous character. Our character is the kind of person we are based on our choices. God infuses the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity in us so that we may believe, trust, and love Him. They are the foundation of all the moral virtues. The cardinal moral virtues of fortitude, temperance, justice, and prudence are the hinges to the virtuous life and to the rest of the moral virtues.

Forming Your Conscience

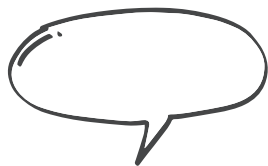
There are times in life when we *just know* whether a certain action is right or wrong. This can be attributed to the "inner voice" in us known as the conscience. It is a judgment of reason whereby we recognize something as good or bad to the best of our knowledge. It is crucial to form the conscience in accord with God's laws. With the help of the Holy Spirit, a well-formed conscience can truly discern what is good in order to live a holy and happy life.



First and foremost, the **Word of God**, spoken to us in Sacred Scripture, forms our consciences. The life of Christ in the Gospels provides *the* perfect example of the life of holiness we are called to as God's children. For example, you can use Christ's words "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13) to know the right action to take in relationships.



The teachings of **the Church**, instituted by Christ, also work to form our consciences. Such teachings like the requirement to attend Mass every Sunday should convict our consciences to choose the goodness of the Eucharist over the world's distractions on Sunday. (Purchase a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for reference.)



The **conscience** is further informed by the witness and advice of others. With that in mind, are you forming your child's conscience well through your witness? Is your conscience convicting you to establish deeper relationships with those in your parish so that you have faithful Catholic role models in your children's lives?

For more family faith formation resources, go to the parent portal.