

Enrichment: Virtue

Cardinal Virtues: Temperance



TEMPERANCE

Temperance is the cardinal virtue that helps us control and direct our desires for created goods and pleasures according to God's plan.

All humans experience a variety of desires and feelings. Some desires are always good, such as the desire for God, and some are always bad, such as the desire to eat dirt. Many desires are good yet need to be properly ordered. For example, the desire to eat food is a good desire, but it can become disordered if we desire to eat too much or too little.

Those who are temperate not only control their desires so that they do not want something beyond a reasonable amount but also desire the right things, at the right time, and in the right way. Our reason must train our desires and feelings just as a rider trains a horse. The bridle and reins are like the virtue of temperance. The more temperate we are, the easier it is for our reason (the rider) to direct our desires (the horse) to what is good. Those who are truly temperate do not want to have something beyond a reasonable amount or to have something that is bad. They simply desire what is good and godly.

But being truly temperate and truly virtuous is hard. That's why the virtues are depicted as shields. We need to equip ourselves with these virtues through our cooperation with God's grace. These virtues strengthen us for spiritual battle and protect us against temptation and sin.



A temperate person fasts.



A temperate person joyfully serves others.



A temperate person controls his desires.



A temperate person dresses modestly.

Journal Reflection

What good desires do you need to develop to replace any disordered desires? Write your answer on the journal page. Journal pages are available on the parent and student portals.

Prayer to Grow in Virtue

God our Father, You know our human weakness and the temptations we face. Please protect us against sin and purify us so that we desire You and Your will alone. Amen.