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The Virtues: Seven Habits of Champions

by

by [Marcellino D'Ambrosio, Ph.D.](http://www.marcellino.com)

www.crossroadsinitiative.com

SHOW #6: FAITH (THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE)

I. Intro

- A. Cardinal virtues: anybody can recognize that they are needed to fulfill human potential. They are Natural—simply in accord with human nature.
- B. You need all 4 together to make a solid human being, a leader.

II. Theological Virtues

- A. Supernatural. Wouldn't know they were necessary, helpful, could not work them up without revelation & grace.
- B. Reason: can discover that God exists. Rewards & punishments. Common sense.
- C. Reason could never know on its own that God would love us so much, he would reveal himself to us as he really is through words, deeds, symbols, a person.
- D. Only by means of Revelation could we know that he calls us to intimate personal relationship with him, share in his inner life
- E. Can only accept this revelation is through the 1st of the theological virtues
- F. Like with the cardinal virtues, you can't have theological virtue without the others. Can't have saving faith without hope and love.

III. How do we begin to understand the Theological virtue of faith

- A. What it is not
 - a. It is not just Belief that God exists—this is natural, not necessarily supernatural
 - b. It is not even belief that God is one in Three (Trinity) or other revealed tenets of our faith
 - c. Not just acceptance of information, but a response of our whole person, whole self to God, triune God. A personal thing. Vat II

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wanted to make this clear in Dei Verbum, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation

- B. Used in New Testament over 200x. Faith is “The” distinctively Christian word.
- C. Nicene Creed – Profession of faith
 - a. Where does it come from?
 - b. Jesus command to baptize in the name of the 3 divine persons (Mat 28)
 - c. Easter Vigil: baptistry. Face West, then East. “I do.” Accepting a new lover. Wedding symbolism.
 - d. Faith: a commitment of your whole self to one you love.
 - e. Credere: cor & dare (to give one’s heart). Be-lieve comes from the Anglo-Saxon root of “love”
- D. Creator of Heaven & Earth added in there? Born? Died?
 - a. Make sure you know who you are committing yourself to?
 - b. Doctrine important because we must know who we are committing ourselves to

IV. The Three C’s: True

- A. Conviction
 - a. Heb 11. Conviction of things Unseen.
 - b. Convictions important
- B. Confidence
 - a. Entrust ourselves to him
 - b. Story of tightrope. Stunts.
- C. Commitment
 - a. To do what God says I should do.
 - b. If I really believe that He’s God, I’d obey
 - c. Obedience. Ro 7. Human weakness. The intention.
 - d. Ro 16 “The obedience of Faith
 - e. 1 Jn. The people who really believe, love. If they don’t love, they don’t believe.
 - f. James says the same thing: Faith without works is dead

V. Models of Faith in The Bible

- A. Abraham, in the OT (Gen 12, 22)
 - a. God reveals just a little bit.
 - b. Abe moves, acts, complies. Doesn’t even know the name of this God.

- B. NT:
 - a. Jesus can't be model of faith. No darkness
 - b. Beatific vision from the moment of his conception
 - c. Mary. Lk 1 Annunciation. Had a question. Questions OK.
 - d. "Let it be done unto me according to your word." "I surrender." Let God's will be done in me.
 - e. Faith--Faithful, loyal, committed.

VI. Faith is a Gift to be developed

- A. Can't make it happen. A gift. You can block it.
- B. Gotta be exercised. If you don't exercise it, it atrophies.
- C. Given as seeds: need to be watered & nourished
- D. Faith can be thrown away. This is a difference between us and some Protestant groups. "Once saved, always saved"
- E. Make Acts of Faith: creed, sign of cross. Devotional prayers.
- F. My favorite act of Faith. Charles De Foucauld's Prayer of Abandonment. Martyr.
- G. Scripture, sacraments, prayer ways to build faith

VII. Discussion Questions

- A. Discuss why belief in God is not enough to be saving Christian Faith.
- B. Discuss the relationship between faith and love.
- C. What is the "Isaac" that you have to be ready to surrender to God?
- D. What ways to you plan to exercise and build faith?

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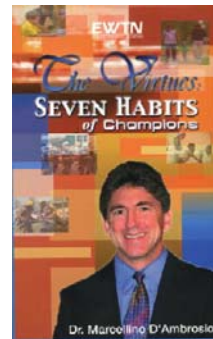
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