

2 Pet 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; (KJV)

2 Pet 1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Growing in virtue

Virtue is one of those things that is sorely lacking in our society. We see greed, corruption and immorality on nearly every page of our newspaper, our news magazines and the nightly news on television.

Children in school cheat on nearly all of the exams or would if they had access to the test questions.

Major scandals occur due to cheating on college entrance exams, medical school admission tests and graduate school entrance exams.

Major league baseball, football, and basketball players cheat, shave points or gamble on their own games in violation of the rules.

The honor system at the service academies is a shambles and sex has become a major problem for our armed services and their officers.

We can easily see the lack of virtue is all of these examples around us.

How do we put virtue into our lives?

Virtue in the KJV is translated as moral
excellence in the NASV.

Thayer in his lexicon tells us that it is any
excellence of a person in body or mind. The idea is
one of moral vigor.

In Young's lexicon we read that it means force,
strength of mind or body.

Virtue is simply the determination to do what is
right.

Being a Christian is not something that is for the fainthearted. When the opportunity is given for us to go along with the crowd or to do wrong on our own, we must resist. Virtue is not something that comes easily but must be developed.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (2 Pet 1:3) (KJV)

An example of virtue is given in the movie “Chariots of Fire” which is the story of Eric Liddel, an Englishman who gave up a chance to win an Olympic gold medal because his race was to be run on Sunday. Liddel believed that it would be wrong to work on what he thought was the Sabbath, so he chose to follow his conviction and serve God as he saw it rather than win an Olympic gold medal.

This is one of the few movies made by a major theater group to present a story of moral excellence and to show religion in a favorable light.

A Biblical example of virtue is seen in the defense Stephen makes before the council in Acts 7.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. 10 And yet they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and dragged him away, and brought him before the Council¹³

And they put forward false witnesses who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place, and the Law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us." 15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

7:1 And the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

2 And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers!
The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham
when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in
Haran, ...

They listen to him as he speaks of the history of
the Jews and shows that all of this pointed to the
coming of Jesus. Stephen does not deny his Lord
when pressed. Rather he points out their error.

Stephen didn't take the easy way. He stood for Jesus.

When he did so, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. ... and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, ...

We see virtue on every hand as we read Hebrews
11.

The heroes of the Old Testament are said to be a
cloud of witnesses for standing in the face of
opposition.

Heb 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud
of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside
every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily
entangles us, and let us run with endurance the
race that is set before us,

By faith ... 19 times we are told of those who stood for God when the odds against them were overwhelming.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

In our own lives, we need to set an example to those around us and especially for our children.

1 Cor 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

We need good movies. We need examples in the Bible.

But there is no example like the one given by a godly mother, father, brother or sister

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence (virtue KJV) and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Worthy of praise is a key.

We must praise virtue (excellence) wherever we see it. We must hold up those who stand firm, those who excel as models for our children and ourselves. We must dwell on their behavior, their choices as well as our own, so that we may instill a love of virtue in ourselves and our children

We can choose to stand up for what is right and to speak out against what is wrong.

If we are unwilling to take a stand with Jesus we
must remember,

Matt 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me;
and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

Why won't you humble yourself before God
today?

Be washed in the blood of the Lamb – the perfect
sacrifice by God Himself.

Rom 6:3-4 Do you not know that all of us who
have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized
into his death? (4) We were buried therefore with
him by baptism into death, in order that, just as
Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the
Father, we too might walk in newness of life.