

Patience is a Virtue

The saying “Patience is a Virtue” is a statement sometimes rolled out when a person is being impatient. Apart from that use I don’t remember virtues ever being a topic of discussion in my lifetime.

It struck me quite profoundly recently that this has not always been the case in society. On reading Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography, he outlines the driving forces in life and his daily habits in a very clear way. Franklin had in fact undertaken a study on virtues and summarized his most important thirteen. These were: temperance, silence, frugality, order, resolution, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquillity, chastity and humility. He would check himself on a daily basis by these standards and have a strict routine of productivity and all I can say is it is no wonder he achieved so much good with his time. He also met with a group of men for most of his life on a weekly basis called The Junta. These chosen men were eligible for entrance into the Junta after undertaking the same course in virtues over a 13 week period. This was most definitely a group of movers and shakers. They met all their lives challenging one another to establish and further good works.

For those unacquainted with Benjamin Franklin’s life, his many achievements include the first library in the United States, the first Fire Department, establisher of a University as well as ground-breaking inventions and scientific experiments on electricity. He developed the US postal service, established printing companies and successful partnerships in various parts of the US, was involved in government and he even made a glass harmonica. And yet in his every day’s routine he rested between 12 and 2 and knocked off work at 5pm for a time of personal study and repast.

Talk about good time management!

After spending some time thinking about Franklin’s top 13 virtues I then realized there were a lot of other virtues worth thinking about: Love, kindness, self respect, a fun loving nature, forgiveness, competence, discretion, enthusiasm, precision. The list goes on...

Below is Franklin’s list of virtues expanded upon using his definitions.

They are challenging and I encourage you to take the ‘Franklin test’ and check yourself as to what has become woven into your character.

Benjamin Franklin would lay particular emphasis on one virtue per week until a habit was established.

I have kept the old English style of expression as written by Franklin as it is curious and interesting.

1. TEMPERANCE

EAT NOT TO DULLNESS, DRINK NOT TO ELEVATION

2. SILENCE

SPEAK NOT BUT WHAT MAY BENEFIT OTHERS OR YOURSELF, AVOID TRIFLING CONVERSATIONS

3. ORDER

LET ALL YOUR THINGS HAVE THEIR PLACES, LET EACH PART OF YOUR BUSINESS HAVE ITS TIME

4. RESOLUTION

RESOLVE TO PERFORM WHAT YOU OUGHT, PERFORM WITHOUT FAIL WHAT YOU RESOLVE

5. FRUGALITY

MAKE NO EXPENSE BUT TO DO GOOD TO OTHERS AND YOURSELF IE WASTE NOTHING

6. INDUSTRY

LOSE NO TIME, BE ALWAYS EMPLOYED IN SOMETHING USEFUL CUT OFF ALL UNNECESSARY ACTIONS

7. SINCERITY

USE NO HURTFUL DECEIT, THINK INNOCENTLY AND JUSTLY, AND IF YOU SPEAK, SPEAK ACCORDINGLY

9. MODERATION

AVOID EXTREMES, FORBEAR RESENTING INJURINES SO MUCH AS YOU THINK THEY DESERVE

10. CLEANLINESS

TOLERATE NO UNCLEANNESS IN BODY, CLOTHES OR HABITATION

11. TRANQUILITY

BE NOT DISTURBED BY TRIFLES OR ACCIDENTS COMMON OR UNAVOIDABLE

12. CHASTITY

NEVER BE DULL OR WEAK INJURING YOUR OWN OR ANOTHER PERSONS PEACE OR REPUTATION

13. HUMILITY – MAINTAIN A MODERATE SENSE OF ONE'S OWN IMPORTANCE (my definition)

Call me old fashioned but I stand by the value in considering the subject of virtues and doing a bit of self examination. Next thought provoker we will consider the Holy Spirit as it relates to virtues in Galatians 5:2. But for now below is an exhaustive list of virtues to ponder.

LOVE – SHOWING AFFECTION AND WARM PERSONAL ATTACHMENT

KINDNESS – CORDIAL, BENEVOLENT, WELL MEANING, GOOD NATURED

FUN LOVING – JOKING, PLAYFULLNESS, PLEASURABLE, ENJOYABLE, NOT SERIOUS

GRACE – FAVOUR OR GOODWILL, MERCY, PARDON, COURTEOUS, POLITE

UNCOMPLAINING – EASY, SATISFIED, NOT FAULT FINDING, EXPRESSIONS OF HAPPINESS, HEALTH

PRIDE – TOO HIGH AN OPINION OF ONES OWN IMPORTANCE. A NOBLE SENSE OF WHAT IS DUE TO ONES POSITION OR CHARACTER, SELF RESPECT.

RESPECT/SELF RESPECT – A GOOD SOCIAL STANDING, HIGH REGARD, HAVING SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF MORAL BEHAVIOUR, TO SHOW CONSIDERATION AND REFRAIN FROM INTERFERRING

POSITIVE – SURE OPINION OR STATEMENT, ADMITTING OF NO QUESTION, SURE ON OPINION OR STATEMENT, PROCEEDING IN A DIRECTION ASSUMED OF THAT OF INCREASE OR PROGRESS OR ONWARD MOTION.

HAPPY – EXPRESSING PLEASURE, CONTENT, OR GLADNESS, DELIGHTED, DELIGHTED OVER A PARTICULAR THING ENJOYING, SHOWING, OR MARKED BY PLEASURE, SATISFACTION, OR JOY. BEING ESPECIALLY WELL-ADAPTED; FELICITOUS, CHEERFUL, WILLING, HAPPY TO HELP

PATIENT – QUIETLY PERSERVERING OR DILIGENT, LETTING THINGS HAPPEN TO ONE CALMLY AND WITHOUT COMPLAINING – WAITING WITH CALMNESS

SUCCESSFUL – TO HAVE THE DESIRED RESULT, TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT IS ATTEMPTED, TO COME AFTER AND TAKE THE PLACE. FAVOURED AND DESIRABLE END TO ATTEMPT OR ENDEVOURS, GAINING OF WEALTH OR POSITION.

GIVING – TO DELIVER FREELY AND TO HAND OVER

FORGIVING – TO GIVE FREE PARDON FOR AN OFFENCE OR DEBT. TO GIVE UP ALL CLAIMS TO. TO CEASE TO HAVE FEELINGS AGAINST.

HONORING – HIGH PUBLIC RESPECT, GOOD NAME OR REPUTATION FOR WORTHY OR PROPER BEHAVIOUR, SOURCE OF CREDIT OR PRIDE,

SPECIAL FAVOUR OR PRIVILEGE, TO SHOW RESPECT TO AND TO BE A CREDIT TO

QUICK – HAPPENING WITH RAPIDITY, PROMPT, IMMEDIATE, COMPLETED WITHIN A SHORT SPACE OR TIME, HASTY IMPATIENT, ACTING DOING UNDERSTANDING AT ONCE OR IMMEDIATELY.

BRIGHT – RADIATING, STRONG, CLEAR, VIVID, CLEVER AND WITTY, LIVELY, CHEERFUL, FAVOURABLE, HOPEFUL

WELL READ/INFORMED – GIVE KNOWLEDGE OF A FACT OR CIRCUMSTANCE, GIVE INFORMATION

ABLE – HAVE ENOUGH SKILL, POWER KNOWLEDGE AND OPPORTUNITY

DETERMINED – ACT OF DECIDING FIXING OR SETTLING OF PURPOSE, RESULT BOUGHT ABOUT BY SOLUTION, OFFICIAL SETTLEMENT OF A PROBLEM, QUALITY OF BEING RESOLUTE, FIRMNESS OF PURPOSE, TO REACH A DECISION AFTER REASONING AND EXAMINING, UNFLINCHING AND FIRM

ENTHUSIASTIC – STRONG FEELING OF EAGER INTEREST

SOUND DECISIONS – HEALTHY ROBUST IN GOOD CONDITION, POSITION OR OPINION REACHED AFTER CONSIDERATION, ACT OF MAKING UP YOUR MIND

PROPER/APPROPRIATE –SUITABLE FOR A PARTICULAR PERSON PLACE OR CONDITION, SUITABLE, HARMONIOUS

AMBITIOUS – STRONG DESIRE FOR SUCCESS OR ACHIEVEMENTS, REQUIRING FULL USE OF YOUR ABILITIES AND RESOURCES, ASPIRATION

APPROVAL – LIKING SOMETHING

DETERMINED – DEVOTING FULL STRENGTH AND CONCENTRATED ATTENTION ON

DECISIVE – CHARACTERIZED BY FIRMNESS

ENDURANCE – LASTING QUALITY, TO BEAR WITHOUT RESISTANCE, PATIENTLY TOLERATE, CONTINUE TO EXIST.

ENDEAVOUR – TO MAKE AN EFFORT, STRIVE

DIGNIFIED – NOBLENESS OF MANNER OR STYLE, STATELINESS, SENSE OF SELF-IMPORTANCE OR SELF RESPECT

ABSORB – TO TAKE UP MENTALLY, TO BECOME ONE WITH, ASSIMILATE, ENGROSS

ACCEPTING – TO AGREE TO TAKE, TO ENDURE RESIGNEDLY AND PATIENTLY, TO CONSENT TO PAY, TO UNDERSTAND AS HAVING SPECIFIC MEANING, TO ACCEPT ONE’S FATE, TO RECEIVE SOMETHING OFFERED, TO RECEIVE WITH FAVOUR.

PRAYERFUL – INCLINED TO OR CHARACTERIZED BY PRAYER, DISPOSED TO PRAY

JOY – EMOTION OF GREAT PLEASURE ARISING FROM PRESENT OR EXPECTED GOOD
2/ SOURCE OR CAUSE OF GLADNESS AND DELIGHT
3/ OUTWARD DELIGHT

WILLING – DISPOSED, INCLINED, PREPARED, ACTING OR READY TO ACT, EAGERLY OR COMPLIANTLY, BORN VOLUNTARILY OR UNGRUDGINGLY

THOROUGH – PAINSTAKINGLY ACCURATE AND CAREFUL, EXHAUSTIVELY COMPLETE

PRECISE – DISTINGUISHED AND CORRECT IN SOUND OR MEANING, CLEARLY EXPRESSED AND DELINEATED

CAREFUL-PROTECTIVE, SOLICITOUS, ATTENTION TO POTENTIAL DANGER, ERROR, CAUTIOUS, FULL OF ANXIETIES

ENERGETIC – VIGOROUS, SHOWING POSSESSING OR EXERTING ENERGY

DEDICATED – WHOLLY COMMITTED TO A PARTICULAR COURSE OR ACTION, DEVOTED, DESIGNED FOR A PARTICULAR FUNCTION

INSIGHTFUL – THE ABILITY TO PERCEIVE CLEARLY OR DEEPLY, THE PENETRATING AND OFTEN SUDDEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AN EVENT OR ACTION

SUPPORTIVE – FURNISHING ASSISTANCE, DISPLAYING AFFIRMATION AND ACCEPTANCE

COMMUNICATIVE – INCLINED OR ABLE TO TALK READILY

STRONG – IN GOOD OR SOUND HEALTH, ROBUST, HAVING FORCE OF CHARACTER, CAPABLE OF THE EFFECTIVE EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY, CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING FORCE OR WEAR

HELPFUL – SERVING A USEFUL FUNCTION

PERCEPTIVE - HAVING THE ABILITY TO PERCEIVE; KEEN IN DISCERNMENT. MARKED BY DISCERNMENT AND UNDERSTANDING; SENSITIVE.

FORTHRIGHT – DIRECTLY AND FRANKLY

WARM – FRIENDLY AND RESPONSIVE, DISPLAYING AFFECTION, NOT COOL OR INDIFFERENT

FLEXIBLE - RESPONSIVE TO CHANGE; ADAPTABLE:

PERSUASIVE - INTENDED OR HAVING THE POWER TO INDUCE ACTION OR BELIEF; "PERSUASIVE ELOQUENCE"; "A MOST PERSUASIVE SPEAKER"; "A PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT"

OPTIMISTIC – DWELLING ON HOPEFUL ASPECTS AND FAVOURABLE OUTCOMES