

Virtue

Ponder: Are you a virtuoso?

Scripture: “Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue” (2 Pet. 1:5, ASV).

In 1993 William Bennett wrote “The Book of Virtues,” a collection of poems and stories emphasizing right and wrong. It sold over two million copies. Bennett said people over 60 told him how they enjoyed the stories, but people under 40 told him they had never read them before! Nowadays, our culture frowns on dealing with right and wrong. The only thing that’s wrong is to say someone’s beliefs or actions are wrong! But God still commends virtue.

Since Peter said that in our faith we are to supply virtue, let’s be certain we understand what virtue is. The New American Standard Bible accurately puts “moral excellence” in the place of virtue. God Himself possesses moral excellence and requires us, as His children, to demonstrate it as well. “. . . that ye may show forth the excellencies (virtue) of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

We would never say God is morally mediocre, nor should we be satisfied with our own moral mediocrity. It isn’t enough to say, “I’m not as bad as that guy over there!” The goal is moral excellence. God doesn’t say, “Worship Me because I’m not as bad as Baal and Molech.” He says, “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16). God didn’t call us to be a little less vile than the rest of the world; He called us out of darkness into His marvelous light!

The ancients also used “virtue” to refer to excellence of achievement in mastering a certain skill. Even today, we call an accomplished musician a “virtuoso.” Plumbers and electricians begin as apprentices, then advance to journeymen, and finally become masters of their trade. What about Christians? We start as babes in Christ, but we must grow and mature! That requires work and discipline, but our Lord deserves the best from us.

In your faith, supply moral excellence! Be a Christian virtuoso!

Song: “More Holiness Give Me”

Prayer: Glorious Father, we marvel at Your excellence! You are worthy of our praise and of our best efforts to be morally excellent. May we never be content to be mediocre. In Jesus’ name, Amen.