

# PRUDENCE

THE HABIT OF MAKING WISE DECISIONS



## THE VIRTUES 1

*"Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good...and choose the right means to achieve it."*

Catechism of the Catholic Church:#1806

## THE VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE IN MARRIAGE

By John Bosio

In the sequel to the movie **The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel**, Madge (played by Celia Imrie) is in a taxi on her way to meet one of her two suitors, who happen to live close to each other, on opposite streets. The taxi driver asks Madge: "Should I turn right or left?" Madge hesitates for a few seconds while she is trying to make up her mind, then she asks the driver: **"When you are faced with a difficult decision, what do you do?"**

That is also the question I want to pose to you.

**What do you do, when you are faced with a difficult decision? What guides you in making your choices? Whose advice do you seek? Who are you listening to?**

These are questions we need to ask ourselves because each decision we make affects our life and our family.

Making wise decisions is a virtue. It is the virtue of **Prudence**.

**"Prudence is the knowledge of what to seek and what to avoid."** St. Augustine

Life is full of decisions, big and small. Each day we make many decisions out of habit. We decide what to eat, how we drive, when and how to use the Internet, what to buy, etc. Some of these habits lead us to good decisions; other habits may not serve us well.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that the prudent person discerns what is good, and chooses the right path to achieve it. (CCC1806)

We make prudent decisions when we follow three steps:

1. **We learn all the facts**, and we consider our options.



2. **We identify the option that is best for us.** This process requires us to discern good from bad, and right from wrong. Such discernment can be difficult. Here is where the gift of our faith and the wisdom of our Catholic Tradition can help us. Our faith allows us to turn to God in prayer asking for guidance. Another source of guidance may be listening to a friend whose judgment we trust.



3. **We decide and take action.** We move forward and pray for the strength to do God's will.



## THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

*"Moderation and prudence, justice and fortitude... nothing in life is more useful than these." Wisdom 8:7*

*Prudence – Justice – Courage – Temperance*

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

### For Couples

#### Directions

##### For a Fun Conversation

1. Read the article on this flyer.
2. Review the questions below and together choose three to talk about.
3. As you talk, be respectful of each other's thoughts and feelings.
4. Agree on a word or phrase that you will say when one of you is uncomfortable and wants to stop the conversation.
5. If later you want to review some skills for resolving conflicts, read the short article at:  
<http://www.happy-together.net/the-virtues-a-program-for-couples/skills/>

1. What are some of the fables or stories that you learned as a child? What was their message?
2. Can you name characters from books, TV shows, or movies that have made wise decisions?
3. If someone says to you that you need to be prudent, what are they telling you to do?
4. What are some of the **wise** decisions that you have made together?
5. What are some of the decisions your children or grandchildren are facing today? How can you guide them to make wise choices?
6. How do you help your children make wise choices when using electronic devices: smart phone, tablet, and computer?
7. What do we do when we are faced with a difficult decision?
8. Who do we seek advice from when we do not know what to do?
9. How does your faith help us make wise decisions?



Making prudent decisions helps us avoid costly mistakes and helps us make choices that benefit our spouse, our family and us.

#### **"The prudent man looks where he is going."**

Prov. 14:15

When we make prudent decisions repeatedly, they become habits through which we shape the way we run our life each day.

#### **For spouses, practicing the virtue of prudence is an act of love.**

#### **"No man is prudent who is ignorant of God."**

Saint Ambrose

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER**

Prayer and reflection are great tools to help us discern what is right and to make wise choices.

**Prayer** turns our mind toward God and helps us see our life from his perspective. In prayer we ask for God's guidance and strength to do his will.

**Reflection** is also very important in making a prudent decision.

When we do not know what to do, it is very helpful to stop, and pause to think about our best options. Making time for reflection is like pausing to look at our life as in a mirror.

The Renaissance painter, Rafael portrayed the Virtue of Prudence as a person looking in a mirror.



Raffaello Sanzio — Public Domain image from Wikimedia Commons.

**The purpose of this program is to strengthen your marriage.**

See directions for your conversation on the top left of this page.

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