

TEMPERANCE

THE VIRTUE OF SELF CONTROL AND MODERATION

THE VIRTUES

4

“Temperance moderates the attraction of the pleasures of the senses and provides balance in the use of created goods.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1838



LEARNING MODERATION

By John Bosio

Once upon a time, a hungry fox, saw inside a tree-hollow the bread and the meat that a shepherd had stored there.

The fox entered the cavity and quickly ate all of the food. Then, with a full stomach, the fox tried to leave, but could not get through the opening, and started moaning and groaning.

(Aesop)

This story points to the consequences of self-indulgence.

“Even nectar is poison if taken to excess.” (Hindu Proverb)

We desire what is appealing to our senses. Desire is good, but needs to be guided. When we indulge our desires without limits we become stuck like the hungry fox. And what was good becomes a problem.

SELF-CONTROL

We practice temperance through self-control and moderation. The lack of self-discipline and moderation can lead us to develop habits that hurt the marriage relationship.

MODERATION

Moderation helps us live a balanced life. We need moderation when we eat or drink, when we use social media, when we spend money, when we play or watch sports, when we work, and in all aspects of our life. Without moderation we let our passions control our life and we are out of balance.

Either we govern our passions and find peace, or we let ourselves be dominated by them and become unhappy. (Catechism 2339)

One expression of the virtue of temperance is the practice of chastity.

CHASTITY

Christian spouses practice chastity when they submit their sexual desires to the rule of self-giving love. In other words, they treat each other with respect, as persons, and they put the needs of the spouse first, before the satisfaction of one's sexual desires. This requires self-control and a willingness to sacrifice.

The practice of marital chastity produces a love that is total, faithful, exclusive and open to life. (Love and Life #48)

“Do not let your passions be your guide but keep your desires in check.” (Sirach 18:30)

MODESTY

Modesty protects chastity. It guides our way of looking at others and how we behave toward them.

(Continued next page)

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. Which children's fables or stories teach about moderation and self-control? Can you name one?
2. Share with your spouse what the word "moderation" means to you.
3. In which of these areas of your life are you most successful being moderate?
 - Eating and drinking
 - Social media / digital devices / Internet
 - Watching TV
 - Hours spent working
 - Time spent with friends or hobbies
4. What person in your life has been a good example of self-control and moderation?
5. Chastity is one expression of the virtue of Temperance. How do you teach the virtue of Chastity to your children or grandchildren?
6. Do your children or grandchildren dress modestly? How do you teach them to act and dress modestly?
7. What do you do to protect your children or grandchildren from being exposed to pornography?
8. How is your faith helping you resist temptations and grow in moderation and self-control?



(Modesty – Continued)

Modesty is decency. It guides one's choice of clothing. It is discreet. We act modestly when we refuse to unveil what should remain hidden. Teaching modesty to children and adolescents means awakening in them respect for the human person. (CCC2425)

“Modesty protects the mystery of the person.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church #2522

PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is a serious threat to Chastity today. The United States Catholic Bishops recognizing the damage caused by pornography to today's families wrote a pastoral letter to guide us. The title is: **Create in Me a Clean Heart.**

<http://www.usccb.org/cleanheart>

Scientists are also finding that pornography is a danger to a person's sexual health and to the health of the marriage.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Temperance and self- mastery over one's desires is attained through the help of God's grace. At Baptism we received the gifts of Faith, Hope, and Love, and through these we enter a relationship with the Trinity, the source of all graces.

CONCLUSION

In this series of articles we reflected on the Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance. These are the virtues that form our character. They are the good qualities people will remember about us, and will miss on the day we die.

Teach your children the virtues - the good habits:

- of acting prudently,
- of honoring all their obligations and commitments,
- of being strong and persistent in pursuing what is good and right,
- and of enjoying all things with moderation and self-control.

When you do this, you leave behind a legacy you can be proud of because you have passed on to our next generation the keys to wisdom – the path to a successful life, as the Bible says:

“Moderation and prudence, righteousness and fortitude... nothing in life is more useful than these.” (Wisdom 8:7)

Need help? If you know someone who needs marriage or family counseling suggest they contact the local office of Catholic Social Services.

For help to overcome Pornography:
<http://www.usccb.org/cleanheart>
<http://www.covenanteyes.com>

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