

# Virtue

vs. Weakness

**Virtue is the power of a life that is in harmony with the holy standards of God.**

## Definition

The Hebrew word for *virtuous* is *chayil*. It is translated only three times as *virtuous* and more than two hundred times as *man of valour, valiant, strength, power, might, strong, army, host, forces, riches, wealth, substance*, or other similar words.

Two Greek words are translated *virtue*: *dunamis* and *arete*. *Dunamis* is translated only three times as *virtue* but more than one hundred times as *power, might, miracle, strength, mighty, or mighty work*. Virtue is the Godly influence of a life that is in a right relationship with the Lord and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

## The Power of Virtue

Virtue is like static electricity that builds up in a person's body after walking on carpet in a dry atmosphere. If someone touches that person, there will be an electrical shock. In a similar manner, Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit and then led into the barren wilderness, where He was tested and tempted for forty days. He returned "in the power [*dunamis*] of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14), and He began to minister to the multitudes. The people soon realized that the power of God was in Him; therefore, "the whole multitude sought to touch him: for

there went virtue [*dunamis*] out of him, and healed them all" (Luke 6:19).

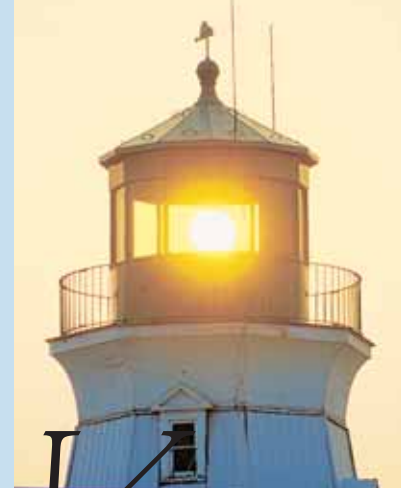
It is the will of God for every believer to experience this same power of virtue and use it to benefit others, who in turn will glorify God.

- "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power [*dunamis*]" (I Corinthians 4:20).
- "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power [*dunamis*] that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).
- "According as his divine power [*dunamis*] 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" (II Peter 1:3).

## How the Power of Virtue Is Lost

When virtue is defiled through lust and immorality, there is a loss of power. Thus, Scripture warns young men, "Give not thy strength [*chayil*] unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings" (Proverbs 31:3).

Solomon warned his son, "The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two edged sword. . . . Remove thy



Virtue is like a lighthouse. The greater the storms and the darker the night, the more its power and brightness are valued.

*"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."*

—Isaiah 60:1–2



The power of virtue is a great threat to Satan's kingdom. Therefore, he will unleash his most attractive temptations in an attempt to destroy it.



**T**he wisest man who ever lived praised virtue, though he himself lost his virtue by associating with the kind of women he warned his sons to stay away from. (See I Kings 11:1–10.)

*“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. . . . Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.”—Proverbs 31:10, 30*



**V**irtue is the power of the Holy Spirit energizing the lives of those touched by it.

*“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”*

—Ephesians 3:16

way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed” (Proverbs 5:3–8).

## How the Power of Virtue Is Gained

When Peter wrote to all those who have “obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” he stated, “add to your faith virtue” (II Peter 1:1, 5).

Paul explains the process by which virtue is added to faith. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power [*dunamis*] may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you” (II Corinthians 4:6–12). The more Paul successfully responded to trials and tribulations, the more power he had to give the life of Christ to others.

In this same letter, Paul describes how he discovered the source of this power. “There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength [*dunamis*] is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power [*dunamis*] of Christ may rest upon me.

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:7–10).

This sequence of rejoicing in suffering in order to experience the power of virtue is repeated several times in Paul’s epistles. He said to the believers in Philippi, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10).

To the believers in Colosse he said, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:10–11).

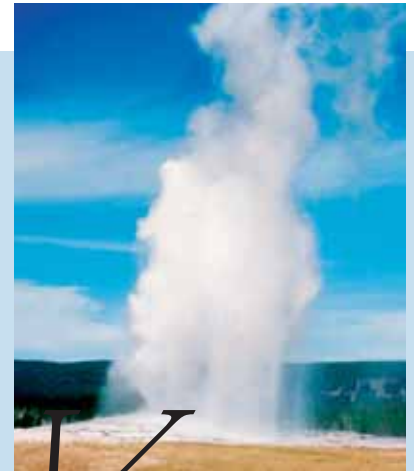
# The Power of Virtue Illustrated

Proverbs 31:10–31 gives a marvelous tribute to the virtuous woman. She is praised by her husband and her children and by all who read about her. The following verses describing her virtuous character are matched to the types of power that each quality brings about.

Descriptions of Virtue	Types of Power
“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.	The power of protection
“He shall have no need of spoil.	The power of provision
“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.	The power of endurance
“She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.	The power of diligent work
“She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar.	The power of creative procurement
“She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.	The power of fulfilling all responsibilities
“She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.	The power of making wise investments
“She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.	The power of good health and vigor
“She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.	The power of guarding valuable assets
“She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.	The power of skillful productivity
“She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.	The power of love and generosity
“She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.	The power of preparation
“She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.	The power of personal elegance
“Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.	The power of a good name
“She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.	The power of making wealth
“Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.	The power of contentment and true security
“She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.	The power of wise counsel
“She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.	The power of resourcefulness
“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.	The power of leadership
“Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.	The power of affirmation
“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.	The power of inner beauty
“Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”	The power of official honors



Many have wondered how the **great white egret** keeps its feathers so brilliantly white. The secret lies in its downy feathers that flake off to produce a continual supply of powdery dust. The dust adheres to dirt, oil, and other impurities. As the egret brushes the dust from its feathers, it brushes away the impurities as well.



Virtue is a birth-right of moral power. Those who despise it will lose it, as Esau did, and later seek it with tears.

“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”—Hebrews 12:17





**W**e are to add virtue to our faith, because faith is necessary to appropriate the virtue of Christ.

(See II Peter 1:5.)

*“Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.”* —Mark 5:34



**T**hose who lose their virtue will ridicule those who have it, because they feel ashamed in the presence of its power.

*“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.”* —I Peter 4:3-4

## The Requirement of Faith to Receive the Power of Virtue

“A certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment” (Mark 5:25-27).

Jesus immediately knew that the power of virtue had gone out of Him, so He turned around in the press of the throng and said, “Who touched my clothes?” (Mark 5:30). This question amazed the disciples, and they pointed out that the multitude thronged around Him and that many touched Him.

Yet one touched Him in faith, believing that she would receive the power of healing from that touch. “For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague” (Mark 5:28-29). It is, therefore, not enough just to touch Jesus; it is necessary to touch Him in faith. It is on this basis that Jesus often said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.”

## The Consequence of Losing Virtue

There is a power of life that is lost when virtue is surrendered. It is this power that the evil woman seeks to destroy in simple young men who surrender to her. Therefore Solomon warns, “For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread:

and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life” (Proverbs 6:26). “For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life” (Proverbs 2:18-19).

Such a loss should motivate us to repent and to cry out to God for His mercy and His grace.

### Personal Evaluation

#### How virtuous are you?

- Do you value the power of virtue, and do you have this power?
- Do people apologize for profanity or rudeness when you are around?
- Do others ask you for counsel for the problems they are facing in their lives?
- Do you help others conquer guilt, anger, fear, lust, and bitterness?
- Do others want to follow your example in living out the Christian life?
- Do you have the power to conquer the temptations Satan brings to you?
- Do you thank God for times of suffering and rejoice in them?
- Do you acknowledge your weaknesses to the Lord in order to experience His power?
- Do you demonstrate the qualities of a virtuous man or woman?
- Do others tell you how you have helped them in their walks with the Lord?