

The Virtues



Path to the Good Life

The Pastor's Class Cary Presbyterian 2022

This is a main resource



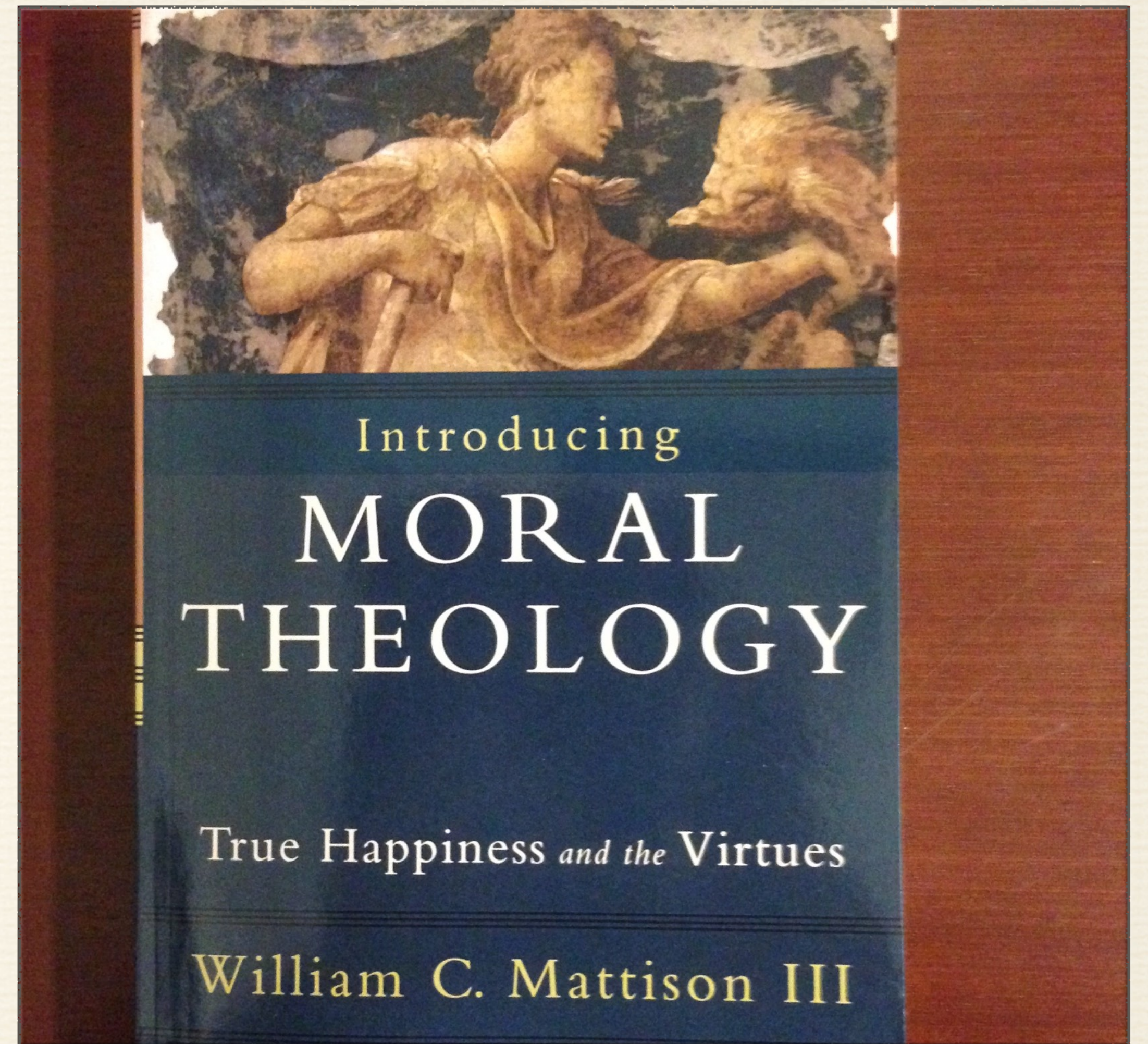
Also

After Virtue by Alasdair MacIntyre

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

The “Discourses” of Epictetus

The “Meditations” of Marcus Aurelius



The course

Sunday 9:15 - 10:15 AM

- † Virtues & Moral Theology - An Introduction
- † *The Cardinal Virtues*: Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude
- † *The Theological Virtues*: Faith, Hope, Love
- † Virtues & Vices

Virtues & Moral Theology -
An Introduction

“We are restless, longing to be satisfied, to have our desires fulfilled and to be content in perfect happiness”

St. Augustine — Confessions 1.1, trans. Maria Boulding, OSB.

“People long to be happy”

Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-II 1, English Dominican Translation.

*“I came that they may have life, and have
it abundantly.”*

John 10:10

*“I have said these things to you so that my
joy may be in you, and that your joy may
be complete.”*

John 15:11

Two Fundamental Assumptions

- ❖ 1) That each of us is living our lives *in the pursuit of happiness* — or to say it a little differently — we all are pursuing what we perceive to be the “good life.”
- ❖ 2) I will argue (following the teaching of western moral philosophy and theology) that the path to the “good life” and to true happiness is the path of the Virtues. *A virtuous life is a good and happy life.*

Terminology

Moral / Morality — I'll be using this in two ways: Descriptive & Normative
Descriptive simply means - *everyone* has *some* set of rules by which they live life.
In this sense *everyone* is “moral.” The characters in *The Godfather*,
or *The Sopranos* are “moral” in this descriptive sense - even though their
behavior is appalling to the rest of us.

Normative is how we normally think of the word “moral.” That is, there
are norms of behavior that many hold in common which govern what
behaviors and attitudes we think are helpful.

Terminology

Virtue — derives from the Latin word for “excellent.” The virtues are the “excellent” things. They are the path to a well-lived life.

Cardinal — as in “the Cardinal Virtues” derived from the word “hinge.” The good life hinges upon the pursuit of these four virtues.

How would *we* define “the good life?”

- ❖ Satisfying work?
- ❖ Home & Family?
- ❖ Wealthy & Prosperity?
- ❖ Safety and Security?

Why do I live the way I do?

- ❖ To meet family or societal expectations?
- ❖ Out of fear of the consequences if I fail to meet the norms of morality?
- ❖ Out of a sense that I am in pursuit of something which requires discipline to achieve it?

Why be good?

- ❖ Plato's Republic a discussion with Glaucon about why people should be good citizens/people.
- ❖ Glaucon says that the best way to be happy is to have everything you desire. Happiness would be the capacity to have whatever one wanted and to do whatever one wanted to do.
- ❖ The *Ring of Gyges*
- ❖ In this, morality in the normative sense is a necessary “second best.”

Why be good?

- ❖ Plato replies to Glaucon that the virtuous life *is* the “happy life.”
- ❖ The choice to be moral is *not* against the pursuit of what is best, it is, in fact, the path to achieve what is best.

Two Orientations to the Moral Life

- ❖ **A Morality of Obligation.** Imposed upon us out of the necessity of keeping civil order. We act morally for fear of the consequences if we do not (either by civil authorities or by the disdain of our peers).
- ❖ **A Morality of Happiness.** We choose to act in moral ways driven by an internal commitment to pursue the good life and with the conviction that the moral (or virtuous) life is the path that leads to the happiness we desire.
- ❖ *Both* of these orientations toward the moral life are found within the church. Indeed, they are usually *both* found *in each of us, individually*.

Why bother thinking about this?

“The unexamined life is a life not worth living.”

[Socrates in Plato's *Apology* 38.a]

“...you will know the truth, and the truth will
make you free.”

John 8:32

The Pursuit of the Good Life

“You are what you eat!”

Nutrition poster in my childhood cafeteria.

We tend to *become* what we *pursue*.

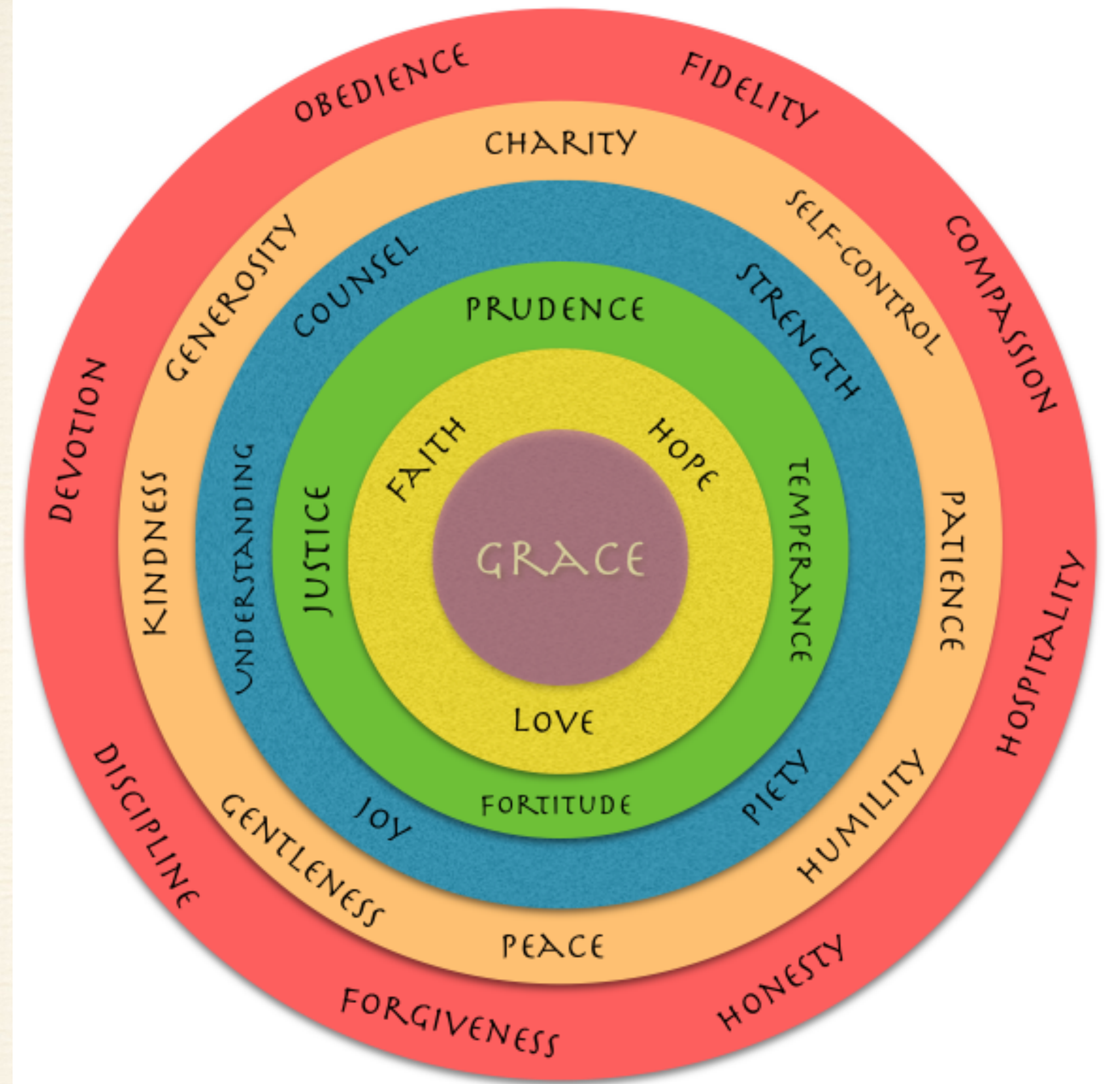
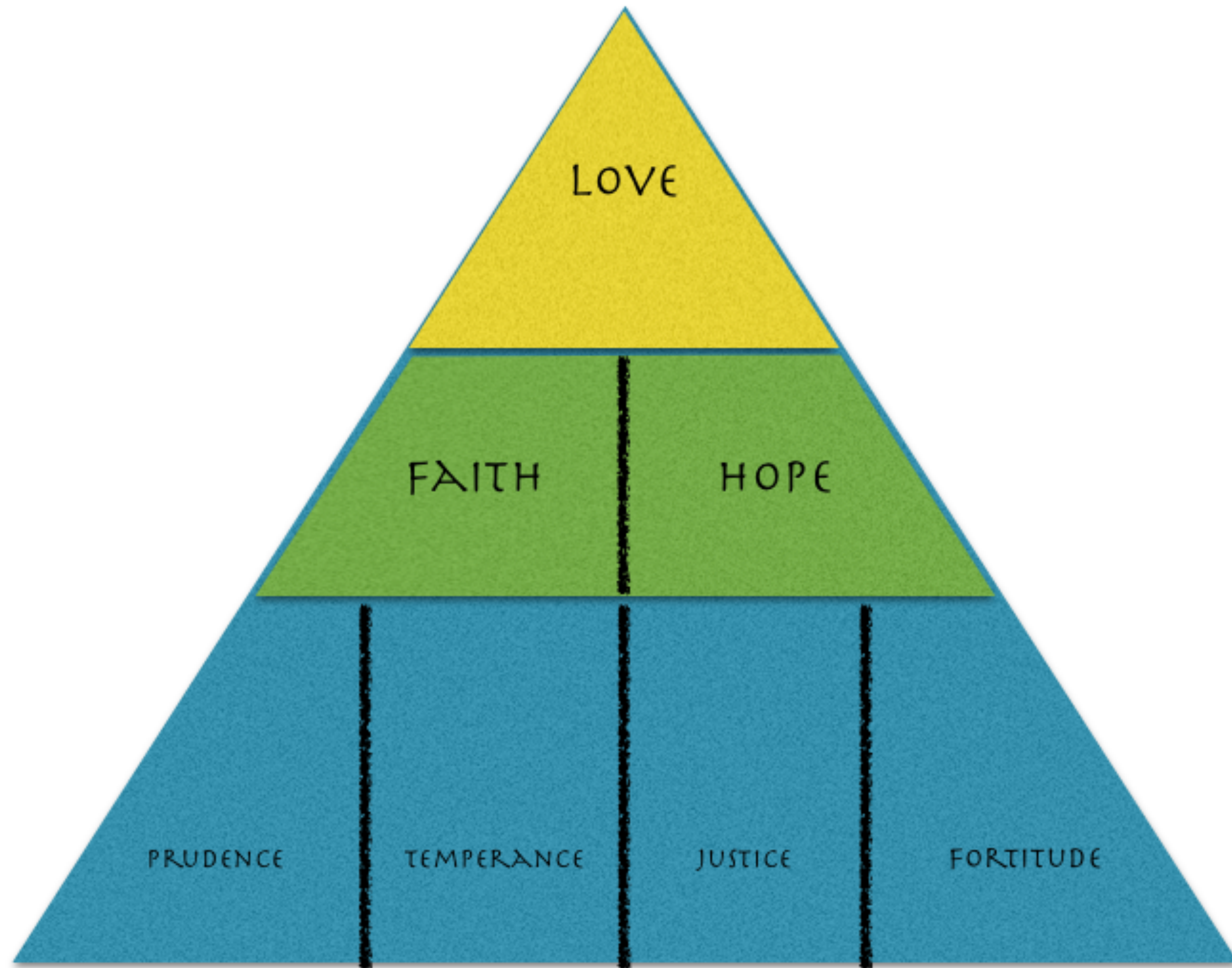
Actions - Intentions - and the virtuous life

There is a distinction between actions and intentions.

The virtuous life is not *just* good actions.

It is good actions which grow from good intentions.

For the Visual Learners



- The Heart of Everything Worth Having
- Theological Virtues
- Cardinal Virtues
- "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit
- Fruits of the Holy Spirit *a la* Galatians 5:22
- More & More Expressions of the "Good Life"

The Virtues



Path to the Good Life

Part II - The Cardinal Virtues

Pastor's Class — Cary Presbyterian Church

The course

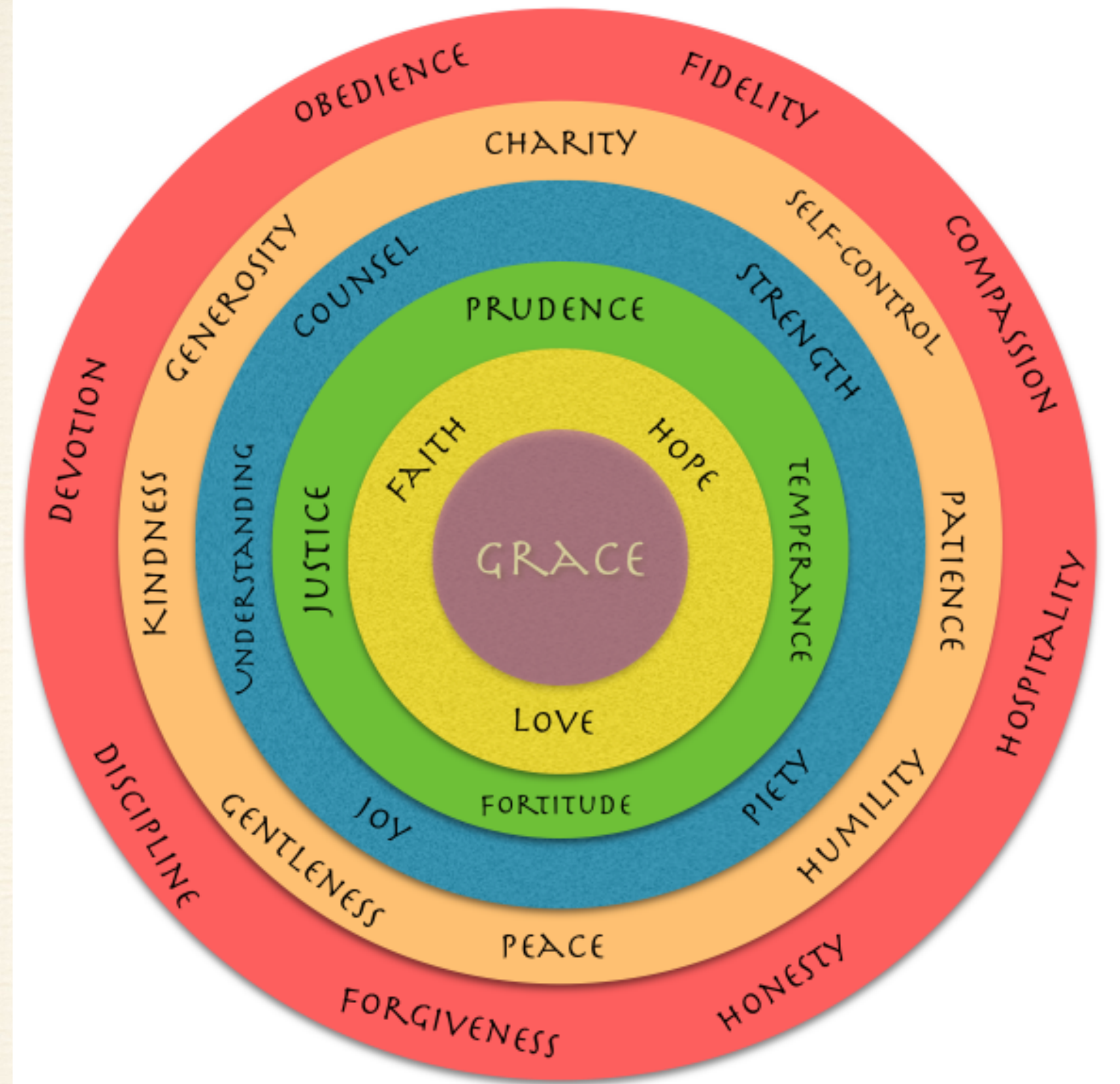
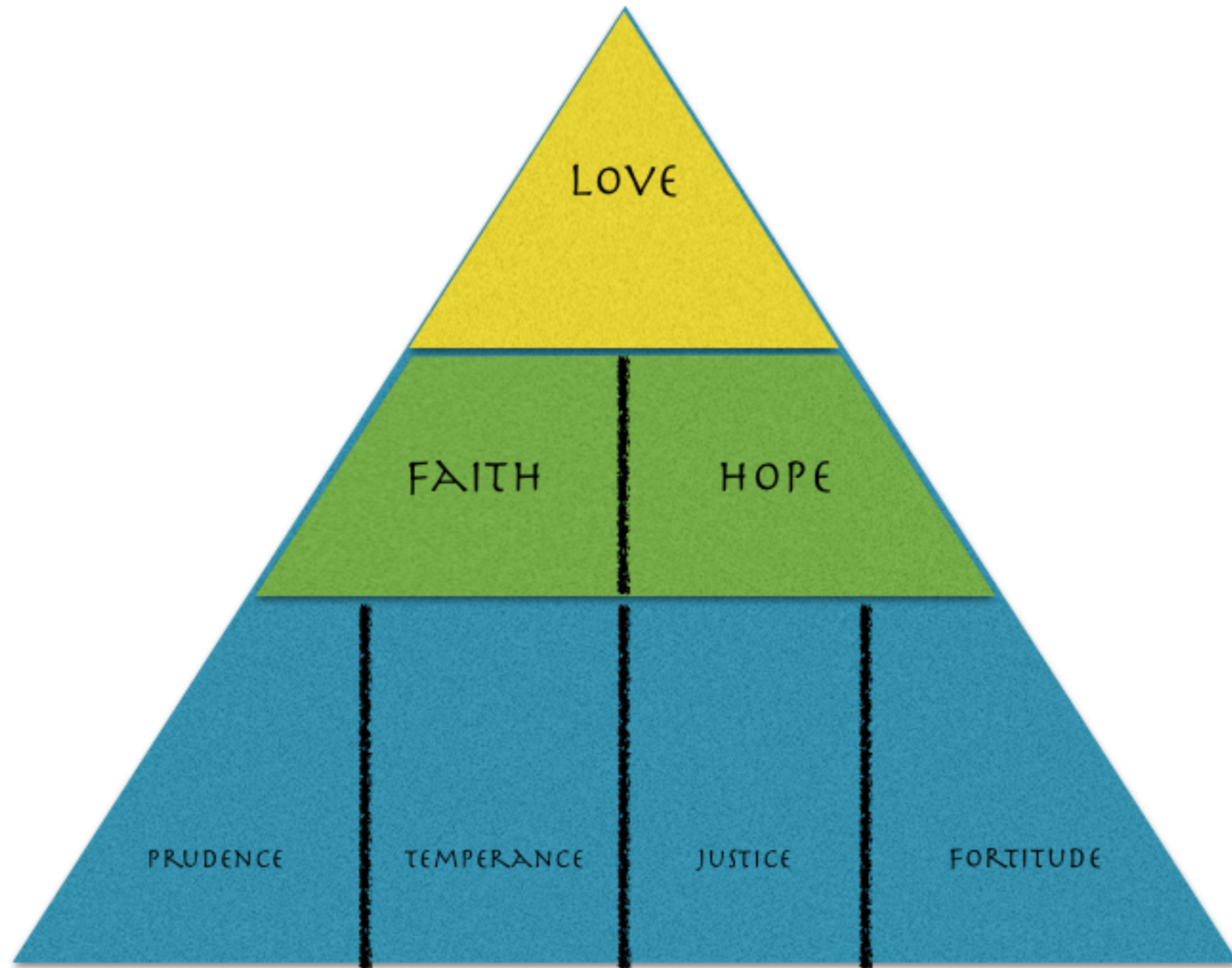
Sunday 9:15 - 10:15 AM

- † Virtues & Moral Theology - An Introduction
- † ***The Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude***
- † *The Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, Love*
- † Virtues & Vices

A Quick Recapitulation of Last Week

- † People are all seeking what they perceive to be the “good life.”
 - * Glaucon and the *Ring of Gyges* story —
morality of obligation vs. morality of happiness
- † The discipline of making certain actions and intuitions *habitual*,
so that we slowly reshape ourselves by becoming what we pursue.
- † The distinctions within any given action which derive from
the *intention* behind the action and which make it either more or less virtuous.

For the Visual Learners



The Heart of Everything Worth Having

Theological Virtues

Cardinal Virtues

"Gifts" of the Holy Spirit

Fruits of the Holy Spirit
a la Galatians 5:22

More & More Expressions of the "Good Life"

The Apostle Paul's Confession

Roman's 7:15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Rom. 7:21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The Irony of Exodus

The Moses delivers the good news that we do not have to remain enslaved to “half-lives” but are offered an alternative . . . BUT . . . to receive the gifts of the Promised Land *requires* a departure from Egypt with all its enticements.

Many of us struggle with being double-minded

(as did the Isrealites departing Egypt):

† We yearn with our whole being for something new and more life-giving.

† We remember the flesh-pots of Egypt and long to return.

The Cardinal Virtues

- ❖ **Prudence** — wisdom. (icons = book or scroll)
- ❖ **Temperance** — moderation. (icons = wheel, bridle & reins, vegetables and fish, cup)
- ❖ **Justice** — right human relationships. (icons = sword, balance and scales)
- ❖ **Fortitude** — patience, perseverance. (icons = armor, club, a lion, palm, tower, yoke, broken column)

Prudence



Prudence

- ❖ **Prudence** — In modern usage, we think of “prudence” as being “cautious,” and perhaps wisdom is sometimes cautious, but in the ancient context in which the virtue was named, “prudence” meant something like: *rightly knowing one’s place in the world, and developing the capacity to know/perceive things as they really are so that we act rightly.*
- ❖ Both *knowing* & *living* the truth.
- ❖ The truth will set us free. Living in falsehood ultimately imprisons us.
- ❖ “The Woman in the Mirror,” my therapist, corrective lenses.

Prudence

- ❖ **Prudence** — Is gained by living and experiencing *and reflecting on the experiences*. This is *both* formal learning *and* simply paying attention to life.
- ❖ “*The unexamined life is a life not worth living.*” - Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*
- ❖ You don’t become wise simply by surviving to old-age. You have to reflect on the experiences of your life in order for them to yield their wisdom to you.
- ❖ David Steindle-Rast — we can attend to the “meaning of the moment.”

Prudence

❖ **Education and Common Sense**

- ❖ On the one hand prudence is not reserved for the smart and well-educated. Clearly we all know of highly educated people who lack *wisdom*.
- ❖ On the other hand because prudence is about seeing correctly the truth of things - those who have a good education *do* have leg up on those who remain pig-headed & bigoted. These are derived from fundamentally false perceptions of reality.
 - ❖ You are *not* always right (pig-headedness), people of other races/classes are *not* inferior to you (bigoted). To the degree that an education teaches you not to be pig-headed and bigoted, you are more likely to be prudent if you are well-educated.

Prudence's sub virtues

- ❖ ***memoria*** (memory) — maintaining a clear-eyed and faithful memory of what has happened. A memory devoid of self-serving tweaks. Remembering correctly what really transpired. Those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it.
- ❖ ***docilitas*** (docility) — open-minded ability to accept guidance from others. It is to have the “beginner’s mind.” This includes the capacity to determine who might helpfully inform us.
- ❖ ***solertia*** (nimble decisiveness) — the ability to quickly size-up an unexpected situation and act well.

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- † Virtues & Vices

Quick Recap of Prudence

Prov. 1:2 For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight,

3 for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity;

4 to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young— 5 Let the wise also hear and gain in learning,

and the discerning acquire skill,

6 to understand a proverb and a figure,

the words of the wise and their riddles.

Prov. 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;

fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Quick Recap of Prudence

Wisdom 8:7 And if anyone loves righteousness,
her labors are virtues;
for she teaches self-control and prudence,
justice and courage;
nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these.

Temperance



Temperance

- ❖ **Temperance** — Temperance is the virtue which inclines us to desire and enjoy pleasures well. Temperance is the virtue of “moderation.” It is the virtue which urges upon us the value of finding the middle way.
 - ❖ This is about **helping us to prioritize our enjoyment**. We are immoderately engaged in a pleasure when we pursue it in a way that displaces higher purposes and goals.
 - ❖ Drinking Scotch, playing games, eating.
 - ❖ This is **not just about engaging in these things**, but also, about our *desire* for these things.
 - ❖ Accountability Questions with Clay.
 - ❖ Matt. 18:9 “And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.”

Temperance

❖ **The Question of Feelings & Actions**

- ❖ Matt. 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire.

Temperance

- ❖ **Four steps toward a virtuous desire of good things.**
- ❖ Intemperance — we are constantly inclined to anger toward a spouse or sibling.
- ❖ Incontinence — similar to intemperance in that you still are engaged in unhelpful desires, emotions, and actions. The distinction is that with incontinence you are aware that your emotions and actions are disordered so you vow not to act that way again and are disappointed when you succumb to them.

Temperance

- ❖ **Four steps toward a virtuous desire of good things.**
- ❖ Continence — you still have disordered desires but you are able to contain (hence continence) them. You perform good acts with good intentions even though bad desires are present.
- ❖ Temperance — you not only perform good acts for the right reasons but you also desire to do them.

Justice



Justice

- ❖ **Justice** — Justice is the virtue which aids us in maintaining workable human relationships - and in a larger sense, a workable human community. Justice allows us to give each and every person what they are due - or what they deserve, and by doing so preserves peace and harmony between people.
- ❖ Aquinas *suum cuique* - “to each his due.”
- ❖ Matt. 7:12 “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.
- ❖ Luke 10:27 He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

Justice

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- ❖ Because we are “social animals” (Aristotle’s famous claim)— we derive an important part of our identity and our meaning in this life *in relationship to the others we encounter*.
- ❖ Therefore to pursue the truly good life — to live into the fullest expression of who we are and what we want — *requires* that we attend to the “others” around us and justly give them their due.

Fortitude



Fortitude

- ❖ **Fortitude** — This is the virtue that allows us to face difficulties well.
- ❖ Life is hard. It requires patience, and resilience, and perseverance.
- ❖ Fortitude is often thought of synonymously with “bravery” or “courage.” It is the capacity to endure hardships well and to risk much - persevering in the pursuit of what is right.
- ❖ The quintessential expression of this virtue has often been the “lay down one’s life.”
- ❖ John 15:11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

Fortitude

- ❖ **Fortitude** — This virtue is *not* about praising or glorifying *suffering*. Suffering is not good and must be avoided when possible.
- ❖ However, much suffering is unavoidable and the virtue is to embrace and endure that suffering with grace.
- ❖ To be in a meaningful and committed relationship with another *is* to place oneself squarely in the path of suffering.
 - ❖ A parent with a child. A child with a sick or aging parent.
- ❖ Prudence and Justice are *necessary* precursors for the practice of fortitude.

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Path to the Good Life
The Theological Virtues

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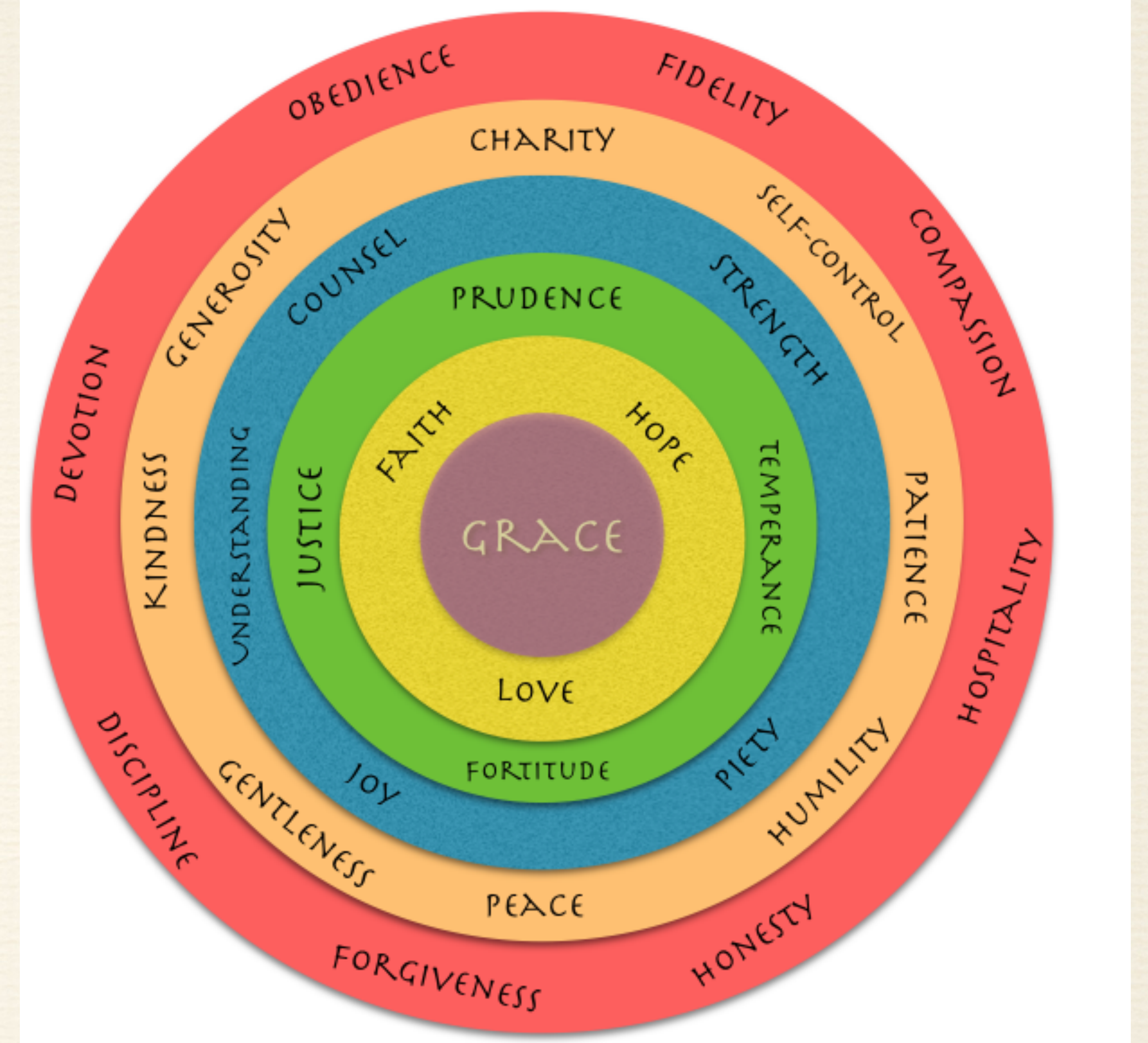
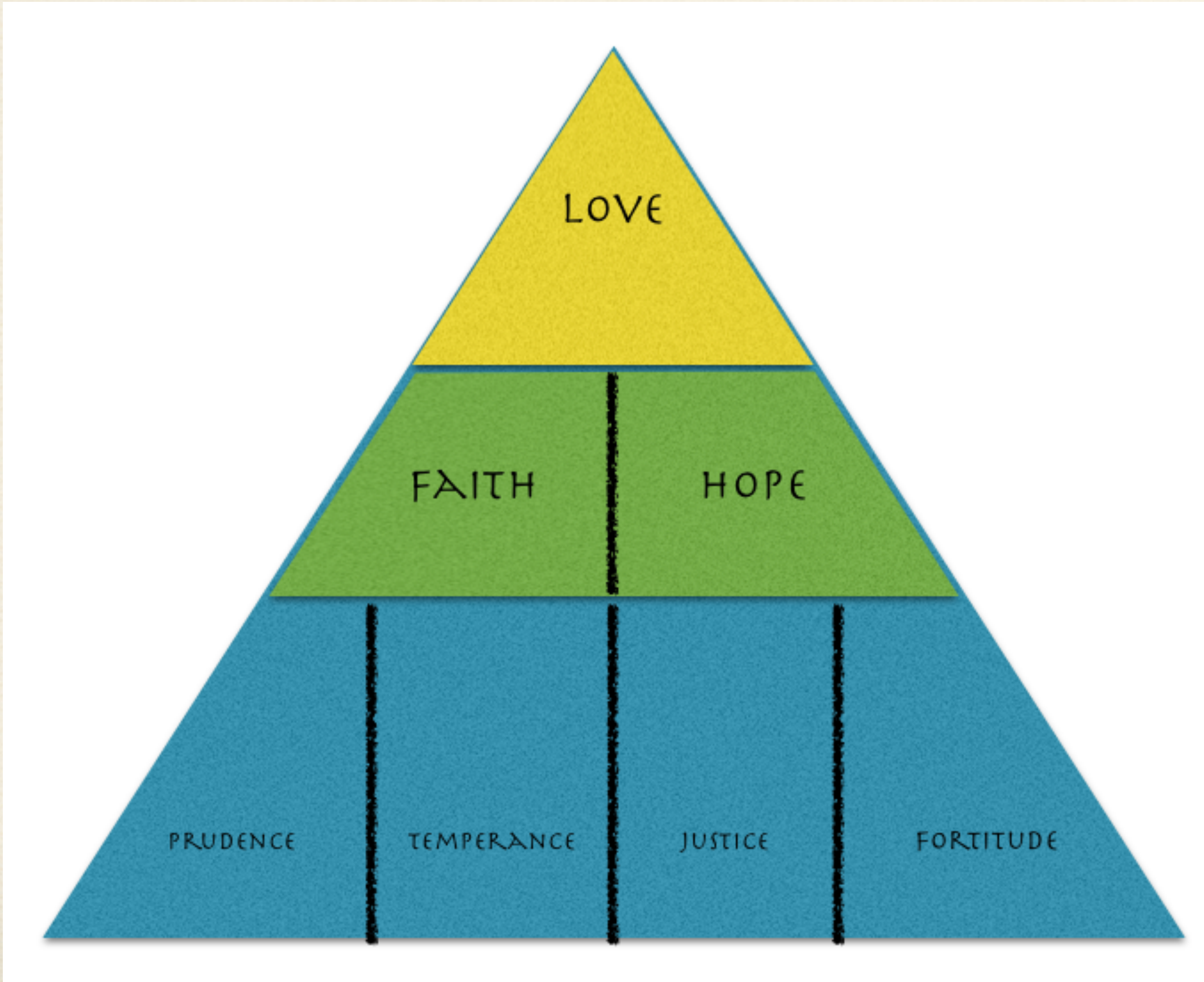
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- † ***The Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, Love***
- † Exploring the 7 Deadly Sins and Heavenly Virtues

A Quick Recapitulation of Last Week

- ❖ **Prudence** — wisdom. *Rightly knowing one's place in the world, and developing the capacity to know/perceive things as they really are so that we act rightly.*
- ❖ **Temperance** — moderation. Temperance is the virtue which inclines us to desire and enjoy pleasures well. Temperance is the virtue of “moderation.” It is the virtue which urges upon us the value of finding the middle way.
- ❖ **Justice** — right human relationships. Justice is the virtue which aids us in maintaining workable human relationships - and in a larger sense, a workable human community. Justice allows us to give each and every person what they are due - or what they deserve, and by doing so preserves peace and harmony between people.
- ❖ **Fortitude** — patience, perseverance. This is the virtue that allows us to face difficulties well.

For the Visual Learners



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The Theological Virtues

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Faith** — is the virtue that enables us to believe (trust) well in answering the “big questions” of life.
- ❖ **Hope** — is the virtue that enables us to cling to union with God as a final destiny even in the face of the sin which separates us from one another and from God.
- ❖ **Love** — is the virtue of living out our lives in self-giving charity.

The Theological Virtues

A Few Preliminary Remarks — Your World View Shapes Your Sense of Virtue

- ❖ **Virtues Require A Truthful Grasp of the Way Things Really Are** — This is one reason *Prudence* was so important. Obviously, people of any particular faith have their perception of “the way things really are” skewed by the claims of their faith tradition.
 - ❖ Something as simple as believing that “God *is* present and *does* matter.”
- ❖ **Lucretius & Epicureanism** — An Atomist/Materialist.
 - ❖ Banish Pain, Cease Worry, Seek Out Pleasures (not debauchery but tranquility).
 - ❖ The “greatest joy” is to look upon the misery of others from the lofty perch of knowing better. As an Atomist he sees no interdependent connections for happiness.
 - ❖ Fear of death is what drives irrational belief in metaphysical gods. But we should not fear death because it is merely the end of us - no life beyond to worry about.

The Theological Virtues

Epicurean thought as it instructs questions of human intimacy

- ❖ Arousal is not about a *relationship*. It is about a *body*.
- ❖ Therefore one should keep focussed on physical desire and avoid romantic desire because romance inevitably brings on storms of passion and leads to “waves of delusion and incertitude.”
- ❖ Unlike physical attraction which can be satiated, romantic love entangles you in a life-time of renegotiation with the other - which moves you away from tranquility and therefore to unhappiness.

The Theological Virtues

Christian thought as it instructs questions of human intimacy

- ❖ Self-giving, interpersonal communion is the point of life.
- ❖ A Communion of Love — *a relationship of self-giving love* is at the very heart of what we believe about God (Trinity).
- ❖ The greatest commandment is, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”
[Luke 10:27]
- ❖ Good human intimacy is intimacy which grows out of the desire to have and maintain *a relationship of mutual self-giving union*.

The Theological Virtues — Faith

Gal. 3:1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! ² The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? ⁴ Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. ⁵ Well then, does God^a supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

The Theological Virtues — Faith

Ephesians 2:4-10

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ^a—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The Theological Virtues — Faith

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Faith** — [Faith is] “. . . a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely-given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” — John Calvin
- ❖ Not a list of theological doctrines to which we must ascribe.
- ❖ *A relationship* of “trust” that God is lovingly disposed toward us. “Faith” is to trust that this is the *truth of our situation*.
- ❖ Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. . . . 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

The Theological Virtues — Faith

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Faith** — is to live in a certain kind of confidence even though there is much that remains clouded and unclear.
- ❖ 1Cor. 13:8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. 9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; 10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

The Virtues



Path to the Good Life

The Theological Virtues - Hope & Love

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Cary Presbyterian Church

The Theological Virtues — Faith

Fides Qua - Fides Quae

- ❖ *Fides Qua* (the “faith *by* which” we believe). *All* people of faith communities have faith in this sense. It is the impulse to believe. This is the faith of all who have an attraction to God.
- ❖ *Fides Quae* (the “faith which” provides) answers to specific theological questions. Throughout the history of Christian theology we have often restricted *Fides Quae* to priests and pastors and theologians.

The Theological Virtues — Hope

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Hope** — “Lord God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts remain restless until they find their rest in you.” [Augustine, *Confessions* I.1]
- ❖ Hope is the virtue of yearning for and trusting in our union with God. This virtue is made all the more essential in the face of human sin which threatens to undo us and which might lead us to despair of ever reaching the goal of union with God.
- ❖ This virtue knows that we are invited into union with God and it *also* knows that such union right now is far from complete.

The Theological Virtues — Hope

Status Viatoris

- ❖ **Hope** — is the virtue for those who are *status viatoris* or “on the way.”
- ❖ Two things follow:
 - ❖ We have the sense that we are going somewhere . . .
 - ❖ We know that we have not yet arrived.

The Theological Virtues — Hope

Status Viatoris

❖ Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Theological Virtues — Love

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Love** — as defined by God's love.
 - ❖ “God is love.” First John
- ❖ **Love** — as defined by God incarnate in Jesus.
 - ❖ See Philippians Chapter 2:1-ff the “Christ Hymn.”

The Christ Hymn

Phil. 2:1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Phil. 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Theological Virtues — Love

Friendship with God and with Others

- ❖ John 15:12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

The Theological Virtues — Love

Friendship As Aristotle gives us in Nicomachean Ethics

- 1) Utilitarian Friendships (business partners)
- 2) Friendships based on pleasure (fellow club-members)
- 3) Friendship based on the goodness or virtue of the other. You recognize and desire to contribute to the virtue(s) found within the other.

The Theological Virtues — Love

Friendship As Augustine describes in *The Confessions*

True friendship is based on 3 qualities:

† Seeking to do good (moral behavior)

† Trustworthiness

† Movement toward unity (working together for the common good)

The Theological Virtues — Love

Friendship As Saint Ambrose understand it.

“Because God is true, friends can be true...

Because God offers friendship, we can be each other's friends.”

The Virtues



Path to the Good Life

Deadly Sins and Heavenly Virtues

The Pastor's Class
Cary Presbyterian Church

The course

Lecture only: Sunday 9:15 - 10:15 AM

Lecture & discussion: Sunday 4:00 - 6:00 PM

1/12 Virtues & Moral Theology - An Introduction

1/19 *The Cardinal Virtues:* Prudence, Temperance, Justice, Fortitude

1/26 *The Theological Virtues:* Faith, Hope, Love

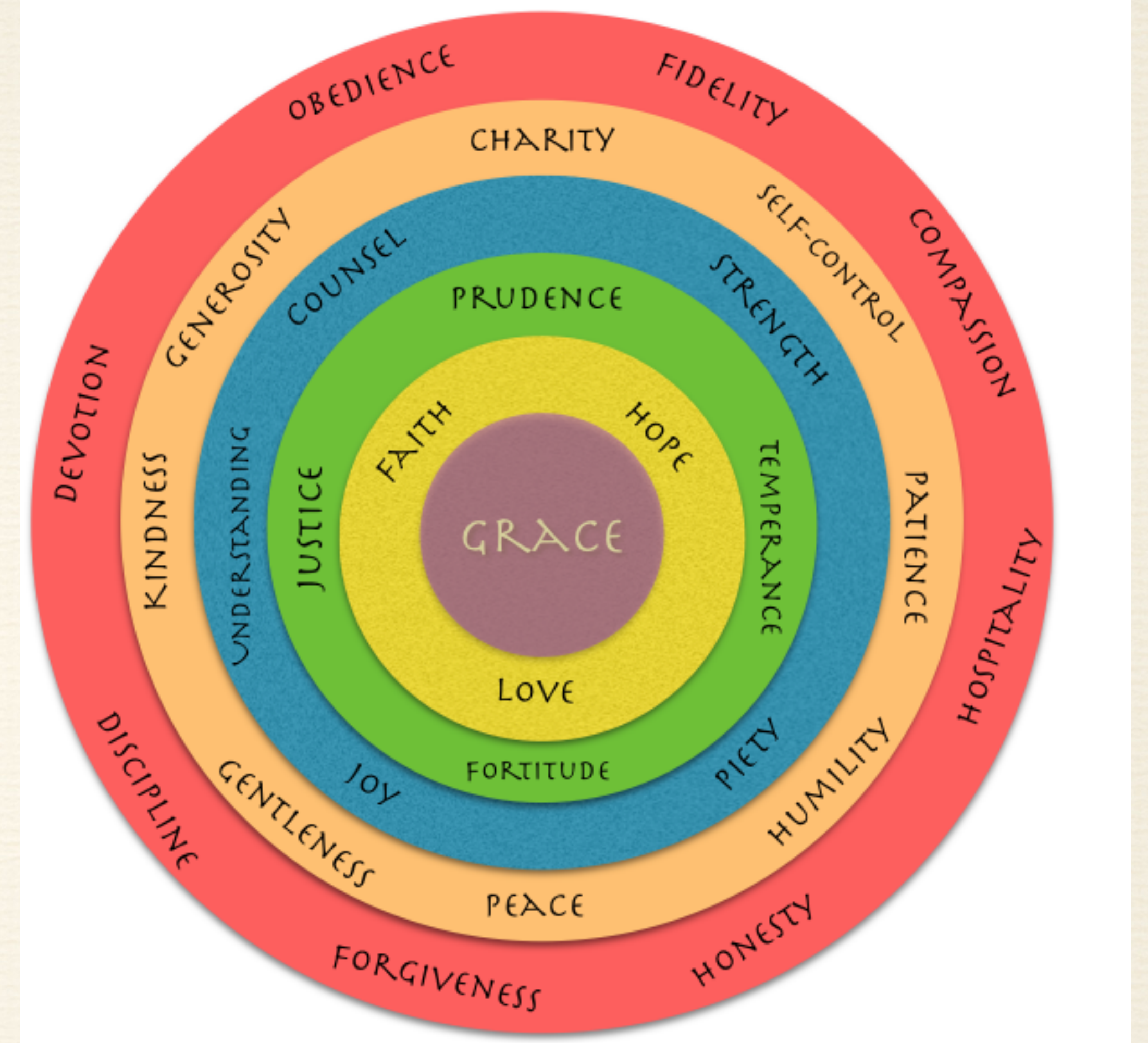
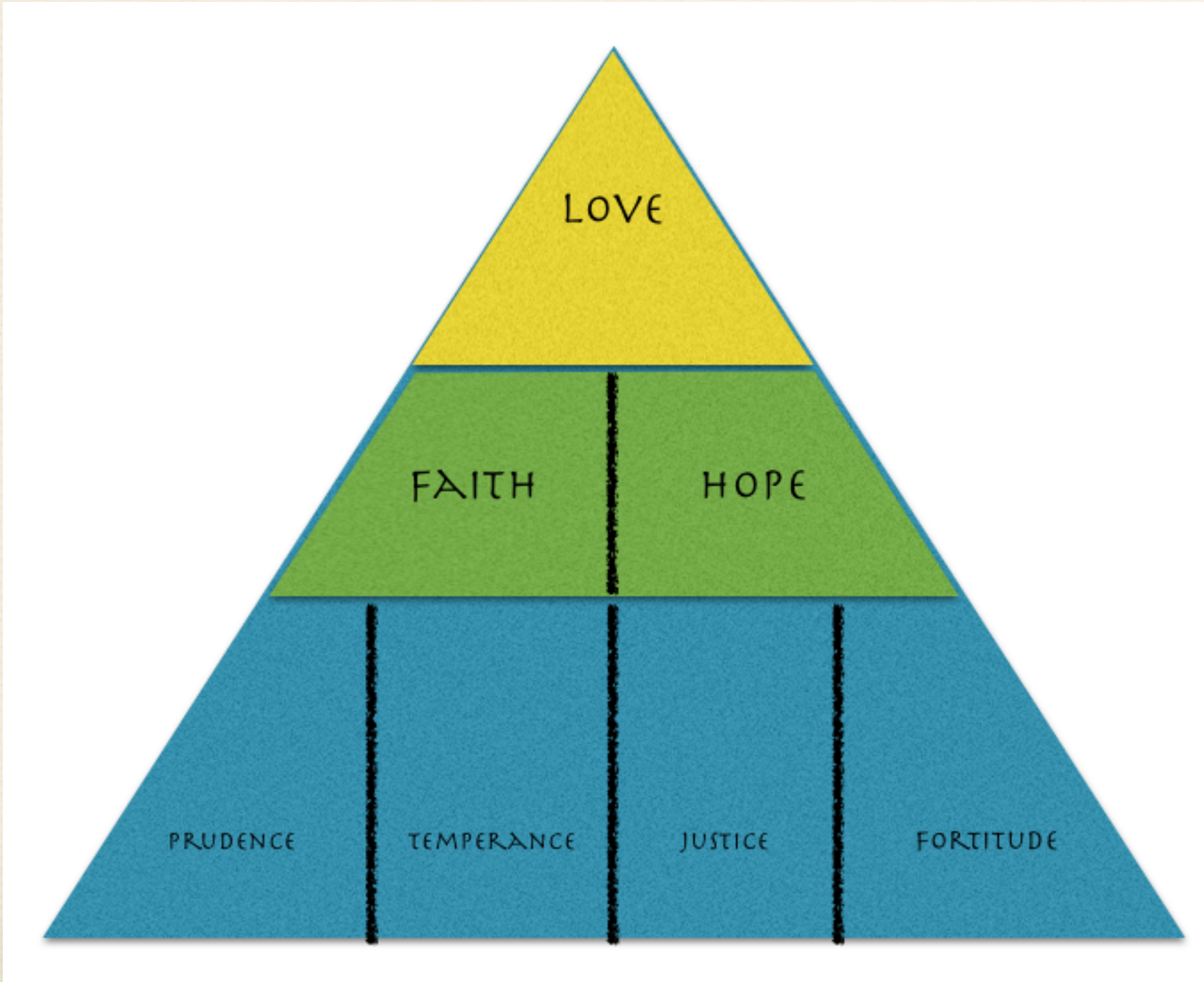
2/2 *Ordinary Virtues*

A Quick Recapitulation of Last Week

I Cor 13:13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

- ❖ **Faith** — is the virtue that enables us to believe (trust) well in answering the “big questions” of life.
- ❖ **Hope** — is the virtue that enables us to cling to union with God as a final destiny even in the face of the sin which separates us from one another and from God.
- ❖ **Love** — is the virtue of living out our lives in self-giving charity.

For the Visual Learners



- The Heart of Everything Worth Having
- Theological Virtues
- Cardinal Virtues
- "Gifts" of the Holy Spirit
- Fruits of the Holy Spirit *a la* Galatians 5:22
- More & More Expressions of the "Good Life"

Ordinary Virtues

There are *many* virtuous habits we can form which tend to follow in the wake of adopting a commitment to the first seven virtues. They are the *Ordinary Virtues*.

Ordinary virtues share much in common with the first seven. They are commitments to think and speak and behave in ways which:

- a) encourage individual moral excellence and
- b) the promotion of a workable human society and
- c) a fruitful creation.

A list of the Ordinary Virtues

(which is *necessarily* partial)

Compassion

- ❖ A volitional entering into the suffering of others. Choosing to participate in the suffering of neighbors and thereby the suffering of God. May God break our hearts with the things that break God's heart.
- ❖ “Compassion means justice. And compassion is just to the extent that it gives to each person what is his or hers. Compassion clothes the soul with the robe of God and divinely adorns it. And those who follow compassion find life for themselves, justice for their neighbor, and glory for God. You may call God love, you may call God goodness, but the best name for God is compassion.” —
Meister Eckhart

Courage

Fear no one but God. With God all things are possible.

Disturb Us, O Lord

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little, when we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wilder seas where storms will show Your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; and to push back the future in strength, courage, hope and love.

This we ask in the name of our Captain, Who is Jesus Christ.

Sir Francis Drake was a 16th century adventurer and, for much of his life, a “legal” pirate.

Devotion

Keeping God Ever Before Our Eyes.

“Today God still speaks to us as he used to speak to our ancestors at a time when there were neither spiritual directors nor any systems of spirituality. To be faithful to the designs of God then comprised the whole of one's spiritual life. Religious devotion had not become a science crammed with precepts and detailed instructions. Nowadays, no doubt, our special needs make this necessary, but in the old days people were less complex and more straightforward. Then they knew only that each moment brought a duty which must be faithfully fulfilled. Those spiritually inclined needed nothing more.” P. 22 *Abandonment to Divine Providence*,

Jean Pierre de Caussade

Discernment

Taking time to seek *God's will*. Nothing more. Nothing less. Nothing else.

"Cassian said that discernment is the eye and lamp of the body . . . The monk who discerns

- is kept from veering to the left in carelessness, sluggishness of spirit, and pretext of control;
- is kept from veering to the right in stupid presumption and excessive fervor beyond restraint.

Cassian also offered the image of the test applied by the money-changer who discerned true gold. We are to place thoughts on the scales of our heart and weigh them with exacting care.

1. Is it filled with what is good for all?
- 2) Is it heavy with the fear of God?
- 3) Is it genuine in the feelings which underlie it?
- 4) Is it lightweight because of human show or because of some thrust toward novelty?
- 5) Has the burden of vainglory lessened its merit or diminished its luster?'

For Cassian, humility was the path for the search. A monk was to disclose his thoughts to his spiritual guide. Self-disclosure and obedience, which produce humility, lead to discernment."

from Discerning God's Will Together by Morris and Olsen p.30.

Fidelity

Faithfulness to God, to spouse, to children, to colleagues at work and at church.
A self-sacrificial loyalty to them.

Discipline

No truly worthy goal can be attained by dreaming it only . . . discipline is how we place ourselves within the means of grace.

"Spiritual disciplines, both East and West, are based on the hypothesis that there is something that we can do to enter upon the journey to divine union once we have been touched by the realization that such a state exists."

from *Open Mind Open Heart*, pp. 34-25, Thomas Keating.

Forgiveness

Of self, of others, perhaps even of God?

"And now comes the third and greatest form of giving, at the end of the day — forgiving. Forgiving is over against taking offense. Of course . . . taking offense is the most stupid of all ‘takings,’ because we are taking something we don't even want. Forgiving is the greatest of all giving. It is so difficult for us, because it involves taking the blame. Not in a legalistic sense—‘I might have done it,’ . . . — but in the sense that when you really forgive, you forgive from your heart of hearts. And in that heart of hearts you are one with all, and also with whomever you have a grievance. There is no one to blame. You are taking away the blame by forgiving.”

The Music of Silence section on None, p.95 by David Steindle-Rast.

Generosity

How do we live so that everyone knows that everything we have belongs to God
and that we *so trust in God's capacity to provide* that we do not cling?

Lord God,

Provider of the things that are worth having,

We acknowledge the supposed greatness of what you offer
even as we pursue the things of this world.

You urge us to be rich in generosity and in compassion,
setting the oppressed free and providing for the marginalized.

We hear your calling and we will respond . . . but today . . .

Give us today to pursue our own security.

today and perhaps tomorrow.

We promise one day to be as generous with others as you have been with us.

One day when we have provided for ourselves and maybe for our children too.

It is a zero-sum world and someone has to be looking out for number one - else how will we get our share?

Lord, in your mercy, save us from the temptation to try to serve two masters at once.

create in us a confidence in your capacity to provide

win us to the vision of your ever-fruitful and rich creation

so that knowing the world is not zero-sum, but rather ever generative we might be fruitful and multiply the blessings in
the lives of the most at-risk.

Build for us and in us a bridge across the chasm of our economic segregation.

Humilty

Honest appraisal of one's gifts and proper estimation of their worth. Willingness to promote and celebrate the gifts of others.

From Abba Macarius (the Great) — "When Abba Macarius was returning from the marsh to his cell one day carrying some palm-leaves, he met the devil on the road with a scythe. The devil struck at him as much as he pleased, but in vain, and he said to him, 'What is your power, Marcarius, that makes me so powerless against you? All that you do, I do, too; you fast, and so do I; you keep vigil and I do not sleep at all; in one thing only do you beat me.' Abba Marcarius asked what it was. The devil said, 'Your humility. Because of that I can do nothing against you.'"

"It is almost impossible to overestimate the value of true humility and its power in the spiritual Life."

Thomas Merton — *New Seeds of Contemplation* p.181

Kindness

Kindness is better than being right.

“With Tranquil restoration--feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of Kindness and love.”

taken from the poem “Tintern Abbey” by William Wordsworth.

Learning

To love God with all our mind too. To be “teachable.”

Simplicity

“No thanks. I have enough.”