

**Virtue: Direction & Misdirection; Worship & Morality, Confidence & Courage, & Personal & Unconditional Love; the Difference between Divine & Human Good****V. Virtue: Direction & Misdirection:**

1. The believer must direct his virtue toward proper objects. For example, for his worship to be virtuous it must be directed toward God and his morality must be directed toward mankind.
2. Worship includes Bible study, consistent observation of the Eucharist, prayer, singing, and giving – when each is done in the filling of the Spirit it is virtuous.
3. Morality consists of those basic standards that Scripture requires of the believer in his relationship to community – when done in the filling of the Spirit it is virtuous.
4. For the believer’s confidence to be virtuous it must be directed toward God and for his courage to be virtuous it must be directed toward mankind.
5. Confidence finds its source in the believer’s unquestioned conclusion that the teachings of the Bible are absolutes that can be trusted under all circumstances and conditions. The basic premises for such confidence are: (1) the Bible is the written revelation of God’s complete and coherent message to man, (2) in its original manuscripts it is inerrant and infallible, (3) the integrity of God insures its contents as absolute truth, and (4) God honors the believer’s reliance on Scripture for divine guidance.
6. The believer is empowered to be courageous toward man and circumstances because of his confidence in God. “If God is for us,” asks Paul, “who can be against us” (Romans 8:31b)? The virtue of courage is manifest by the disposition of no fear. Truth is the power behind the virtue of courage. Truth always defeats the lie and discerns the duplicitous machinations of mankind.
7. For the believer’s personal love to be virtuous it must be directed toward a perfect person, God being the only such personality. For the believer’s unconditional love to be virtuous it must be directed toward mankind.
8. Personal love places emphasis on the object and to be virtuous the object must be perfect. Unconditional love places emphasis on the subject and to be virtuous the subject must have integrity.
9. Each of these six categories can also have misdirection. For example, worship toward man is arrogant, humanistic, and idolatrous, while morality toward God is legalistic, ascetic, and pseudo spirituality.
10. An example of worshipping man is a recent selection discussed on the Oprah Winfrey Book Club where the latest screed by Eckhart Tolle is the current rage. *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose* (New York: Penguin, 2008) presents another twist on New Age theology which places man as the measure of all things rather than God. To develop his thesis, Tolle draws from Charles Darwin, René Descartes, Sigmund Freud, and Jean Paul Sartre to construct his best seller’s propaganda about discovering one’s inner self. In the process emotion rather than faith becomes the means of salvation.

11. This exchange between Winfrey and Tolle is instructive about Tolle's ideas about God:
- Winfrey: "God isn't something to believe, God is. And God is a felling experience, not a believing experience. If your religion is a believing experience—if God for you is still about a belief—then it's not truly God?"
- Tolle: "No."
- Winfrey: "That's what you're saying?"
- Tolle: "Yes."
12. It is arrogant to assert that belief in God is to be replaced by feelings related to human emotion. This leads to humanism and idolatry of self.
13. Morality directed toward God is the result of flawed theologies that assert that salvation is acquired by good works. For example, the central thesis of liberation theology teaches that when people unite in a collective effort to assist the downtrodden, then salvation is collectively earned.
14. Such efforts are gross legalism and those who engage in the effort are extreme ascetics who follow pseudo spirituality. They take a legitimate doctrine and contort it into an evil exercise.
15. Why evil? Because the only way the oppressed and the oppressors can possibly be lifted up is through faith alone in Christ alone. It is belief in the Person and work of Christ that lifts them up and sets them free, not an emotion-driven group effort to provide material goods and temporal provisions.
16. Yet collective salvation through good works is the lie that much of Christendom now believes. Heretical theology is excused if the church is involved in humanist efforts to assist the downtrodden.
17. The heresy and its evil imply that salvation is acquired by human effort and not by simple faith in Christ. The works done are quite often legitimate efforts from a biblical perspective, but the purpose assigned to them reveals underlying demon influence.
18. Human good is often helpful for its beneficiaries. Yet when this effort ignores the gospel, the help offered is not only temporary, its pseudo spirituality prevents both those who assist and those assisted from coming to a saving knowledge Jesus Christ.
19. Effort to help others is always a good thing, but when legitimate acts are used to camouflage truth, then good is transformed into evil. Satanic duplicity involved in this is evident in that the world observes that good things are done but is left ignorant of the one true Helper for both time and eternity, Jesus Christ.
20. If God is left out of the equation except for obligatory comments about His love, then the grace of divine provision is withheld for all involved. When a person believes in Christ, the grace pipeline is opened for that person for time and eternity. Yet New Age gurus and peddlers of liberation theology trump God's grace with human good.

21. Another misdirection is to express courage toward God and confidence toward man. To express courage toward God is blasphemy and involves challenging the integrity of God. An example is the misuse of rebound, a subject addressed by:

**Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Christian Integrity*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2002), 129-30:**

When you exit the divine dynasphere and commit a sin, you must acknowledge that sin privately to God to be restored to fellowship. When you follow God's policy, you do so as a royal priest from your confidence in God's ability to forgive you. The more you understand about rebound, the greater is your confidence in God: You know with absolute certitude that at the cross He has already judged the sin in question. (p. 129)

The believer who abuses rebound, however, attempts to distort this simple grace procedure of the royal priest into a function of the ambassador. He faces his sinfulness with great courage, standing before God and promising to do better next time. He performs some overt penance for all to see; he makes a great show of his remorse so God will be convinced of his sincerity. But virtue that is misdirected ceases to be virtue. Bravery in making promises to God, which cannot be kept, boils down to sheer presumption and arrogance. God does not want our human good; He has already done all the work necessary to restore us to residence in the divine dynasphere. When substituted for the matchless work of Christ on the cross, misdirected courage becomes an insult to the character of God. (pp. 129-130)

22. Confidence toward man is an expression of either dependency or naïveté. The former inevitably results in disillusion and disenchantment while the latter in disappointment and frustration.
23. Confidence placed in a person is a form of idolatry. The person who is admired is completely ignorant that someone has put him on a pedestal and regards him as a hero.