



Christian Virtues for Act Analysis

The Christian is called to a life of discipleship, that is, following Jesus Christ. This is not meant to be a life free of pain/suffering, but instead, a life in which is made possible the addition of a deeper level of fulfillment, joy and peace *despite* worldly suffering and affliction. This deeper peace, frequently termed serenity, can only be known through Jesus Christ. What guides us along in our way in following Jesus involve virtues, gifts and fruits.

I. Theological Virtues: Christians, enjoy the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As part of this indwelling the Christian enjoys certain new abilities, which are called virtues. The three Theological Virtues; faith, hope and charity, are so termed because God is their object. They provide our intellect a new power of taking hold of truth-- by faith, and our will new powers of reaching out toward goodness—by hope and by charity (love).

Faith allows our intellect a new means of taking hold of truth. Not simply by evidence, but by a type of ‘knowing’ which is supernatural, and God-given. This new power, or way of knowing God as the source of truth, is called faith.

Hope allows our will a new means of reaching out towards goodness. We already know, by faith, that God is true goodness. Hope allows us to desire final union with God, to know that this union is possible, and to be aware that it is difficult. Despair is a sin against hope in that it does not believe that salvation is possible. Presumption is a sin against hope in that it holds that union with God as easy. (we cannot simply accept our salvation and keep on sinning).

Charity allows our will a new power of loving God. As follows, charity is also a love of all that God loves: of humans made in His image and of creation (earth).

Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues, are not just feelings but realities. They are like habits or new abilities which dwell in our soul, and allow us to believe in God, to desire union with God, and to love God. The soul is literally alive with them.

“Unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God” Jn 3:3

II. Moral Virtues: The Moral virtues are so named because God is their end, however their object, or subject upon which they act, is not God. All Christians have God as their end. We go to work, play music, and bake cakes for the Glory of God. However, the object upon which we act are: our clients, a piano, and batter in the preceding sentence. There are four moral virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. These are also referred to as the Cardinal Virtues.

Prudence: Disposes us to practical reasoning to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it.

Justice: Consists in the constant and firm will to give our due to God and neighbor.

Fortitude: Ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good.

Temperance: Moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods.

III. There are seven **GIFTS of the Holy Spirit:** Coming from the Book of Isaiah 11:2 they are Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Good Counsel, Piety, Fortitude and Fear of the Lord.

The gifts of understanding, wisdom and knowledge allow a deeper grasp of the truths accepted by virtue of *Faith*.

Counsel helps us to be aware of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in relation to what we must do and what we must avoid for our souls eternal good here and now, and so is related to the virtue of *Prudence*.

Piety is related to the virtue of *Justice* in that, as justice guides us to give what is right to others, piety guides us to give our love to God, simply because He is lovable and it is right, or just, to do so.

Fortitude is naturally related to the virtue of *Fortitude*.

Fear of the Lord enjoys a special relationship with the virtue of *Temperance* in that it instills in our heart a greater desire to love God. We turn away from forbidden delights not just because of God's Law, but because our love for God draws us towards Him.

Source: Theology for Beginners. Sheed, Frank. 1981.

IV. The FRUIT of the Holy Spirit is taken from Galatians 5:22 from where we get the following list of 9.

These are: Love, joy, peace, patience (also referred to as longsuffering or forbearance), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

V. Discussion: Many of the above Fruits, Gifts and Virtues support or replicate the ACT processes. For instance...

1. Cognitive Defusion or Watchfulness aligns with the fruits of peace and patience.
2. Acceptance or hupomone: patient endurance aligns with the virtue and gift of fortitude.

3. Present - moment awareness or silence/stillness also aligns with peace, and perhaps also with gentleness and joy.
4. The observing self or the “eye of the soul” aligns with the virtues of faith, hope and the gift of knowledge.
5. Values are essentially the pursuit of or identification of goodness. As so, they are encapsulated by all 7 virtues. The theological which are spiritual gifts, and the moral/cardinal which we must work to obtain.
6. Committed action or endurance despite suffering relates to the majority of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, especially perseverance, fortitude, piety, counsel and self-control.