

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations.

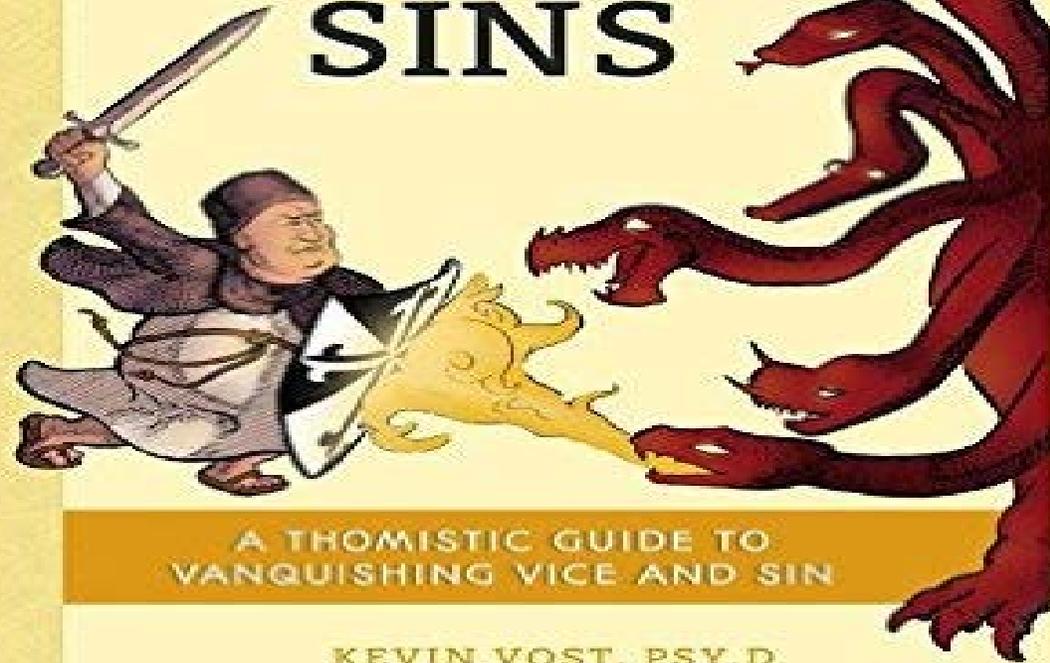
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



A THOMISTIC GUIDE TO
VANQUISHING VICE AND SIN

KEVIN VOST, PSY.D.

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1. SLOTH

2. ENVY

3. AVARICE

4. VAINGLORY

5. GLUTTONY

6. LUST

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SLOTH

Sloth is spiritual apathy, a sadness or boredom about the divine good of God (Laziness regarding spiritual things).

Proverbs 19:15

Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,
and an idle person will suffer hunger.

Proverbs 13:4

The soul of the sluggard craves, and gets nothing,
while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

- “Aren’t many of us living lives with no time or room for idleness, packed with so much work and so many extracurricular hobbies, commitments, and various activities that we don’t have time to think (let alone pray)?
- Sloth is not merely the sin slouching next to the couch potato gazing at the giant flat screen TV, munching chips.
- True spiritual sloth is just as happy to work up a sweat, spurring on the workaholic to work his fingers to the bone seven days a week, helping the boisterously enthusiastic sports fan become ever more “fan-atic”, leaving other concerns in the lurch, encouraging the fitness buff to devote ever more time to become more buff and more sleek, leaving it to less dynamic souls to sit there in some church.” (pg. 88)

The Daughters of Sloth

- Are there ways that I become *sluggish regarding the Commandments*? Do I keep holy the Lord's Day, go to Mass, and happily rest in God?
- Does my mind *wander after unlawful things*? Am I so apathetic about things of God that I am easily enticed away from devotional practices and Christian virtue by petty or sinful diversions? As Aristotle stated, "Those who find no joy in spiritual pleasures have recourse to pleasures of the body." Am I one of those? Do I see this in the members of my family? Have I given them an example of one who takes joy in spiritual pleasures?

- Am I ***fainthearted*** regarding my spiritual obligations? Have I asked God for the courage and fortitude to do difficult things?
- Do I succumb at times to the spirit of ***despair***? Do I lose hope in the joy that God has in store for me and my loved ones? Do I doubt His power and mercy?
- Have I felt or evidenced ***spite*** toward those who lead others to spiritual goods? Have I been angered at Church leaders who dare to speak out against emerging cultural trends that distort and devalue the dignity of human life or the sanctity of marriage? To what extent have I submitted to Caesar the things that are truly God's, aiding and abetting God's enemies, in spreading spiritual sloth throughout our land?

- Am I ever tempted toward *malice* (the intention to do evil), to detest the spiritual goods of God? We can see explicit malice at work in our time in the writings of the “new atheists,” who have moved beyond disagreement with those who hold to the reality of God’s existence to an active and vitriolic hatred of religion and things of God. We may love God dearly in our hearts, but do we take any action to counter such malice, by speaking out for God’s truth and evidencing God’s love even to those who persecute us – and Him? (pg. 91-92)

Virtues Necessary to Combat Sloth

- **Diligence** is a virtue directly opposed to the physical manifestations of sloth such as idleness and laziness, since it basically means the habit of doing hard work. Habits are built by practice, so the physically slothful need to cultivate the virtue of diligence in repeated bouts of meaningful effort, however small they may need to be at first.
- **Gratitude** is a good one for starters; we should avoid taking for granted the good gifts from God, by practicing prayers of thanksgiving and expressing our gratitude to those who do good deeds or take care of us.

- **Piety** is another way to develop diligence, as one of the "gifts of the Holy Spirit," it is a special quality of faithfulness in a person's relationship with God that is bestowed by the Spirit. It gives God special reverence, not only as the Creator, or even the Sustainer of our existence, but as our *Father*.
- **Religion** is a virtue that St. Thomas treats under the cardinal virtue of justice. Justice involves giving another his rightful due. God has given us so much that we can never give him back his rightful due in equal measure, but we can return to him what is within our power by practicing the virtue of religion through the various internal acts of contemplation and mental prayers, as well as in external acts of worship, almsgiving, and more. (pg. 99-100)



ENVY

What is the Difference Between Envy and Jealousy?

Envy regards our sadness in reaction to when we lack a desired attribute enjoyed by another.

Jealousy occurs when something we already possess (usually a special relationship) is threatened by a third person.

And so envy is a two-person situation whereas jealousy is a three-person situation. Envy is a reaction to lacking something. Jealousy is a reaction to the threat of losing something (usually *someone*).

“Envy is born of pride, and we may be too proud to admit that this petty, mean-spirited vice is lurking about within us. Yet we won’t be able to fool ourselves for long, because of the discomfort that envy brings to the forefront of our awareness.

Let’s think about it. When we’ve heard of someone else’s good fortune or positive achievement, be it something simple and material such as getting a raise at the office, or acquiring a new house or car, or being honored for something noble and spiritual such as a good work performed for one’s community, has our reaction been to rejoice with that person or to be made uncomfortable – to feel somehow that his success implies some kind of deficiency in us?

We would do well to train ourselves to catch these feelings of sadness about another person’s good as soon as they cross our minds and sadden our countenances.”
(pg.110)

Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Envy and the Ego

- Ego – the Latin for “I”.
- A vast majority of our contemporary culture (70%) has an Ego Comparative Worldview. This worldview anoints the “I” or “myself” as King of the universe and seeks to establish a comparative advantage over everyone else.

I look better than you.

I’m physically stronger or more fit than you.

I have more money than you.

I’m more intelligent than you.

I have more status than you.

I have more friends than you.

I have more respect and esteem than you.

I have more power and control than you.

- The Ego Comparative Worldview establishes your value as a person based upon how you compare with others. It also allows the thoughts, words and feelings of others to influence and determine your sense of self.
- In the case where others possess gifts and attributes greater than what you possess, a sense of sadness appears (Envy).
- The Ego Comparative Worldview is a default worldview that we all are subject to due to the “effects of original sin”.
- We need to make a conscious decision to enter the “spiritual world” revealed to us by God and His grace, in order to exit the Ego Comparative Worldview.

The Daughters of Envy

- When I have heard of someone's success, have I set envy into action through ***tale-bearing***? Have I gossiped to others, trying to highlight that person's faults, showing others that he is not really "all that"? Do I really believe that this somehow makes me a more valuable person?
- Regarding ***detraction***, in the same situation, have I been so brazen as to diminish that person's accomplishments to his face? Have I teased or joked about him in his presence or in the presence of others with a malicious intent? Have I underhandedly slighted a peer's accomplishments by damning it with faint praise – by speaking positively about it but in a way that diminishes its true importance? Will his sadness serve to make me happy.?

Proverbs 11:13 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,
but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing hidden.

Test your integrity or faithfulness. Can you keep a secret? Will you hide it from those not needing to know? Tattlers or gossips have no integrity – they do not have a faithful spirit. If they know damaging information about another, they must tell it, quickly and widely.

What God called tale bearing here used to be called tattling or gossiping. Now it is called social media, investigative reporting, or entertainment. Newspapers, television, tabloids, and Internet sites feed on it. People read it with glee; they tingle with curiosity hearing it; they beg for more details, especially sexual ones; they cannot wait to repeat it to others.

Family members, neighbors, office workers, and even church members love to spread news of negative events in the lives of others. They say, “Did you know they are divorced? Have you heard the latest about him? Can you believe she did that?” And off go wicked lips and ears to discuss the private details of others that should be concealed.

This sin is an abomination to God, and He hates it. His holy nature knows that spreading damaging news about others is to rape their reputations. The Bible does not know the word gossip; it uses talebearer, tattlers, whisperer, and backbiter. Solomon taught here that good men with faithful spirits will not repeat private news they learn about others.

Tale bearing is telling private matters to gratify malice or idle curiosity. Tattling is tale bearing. Whispering is quiet or secret tale bearing. Backbiting includes tale bearing behind a person’s back. God condemns these sins (Lev 19:16; Rom 1:29-30; I Tim 5:13). Your character and wisdom are shown by how you handle negative news about others.

These four Bible terms all involve telling true facts about others that need not be told. That the information is true only means it is not slander, which is spreading lies about others. Talebearers will quickly justify themselves by saying they are only telling facts – but that is the very definition of tale bearing, tattling, whispering, and backbiting. Slander is two sins – lying and spreading the lie; tale bearing is one sin – spreading hurtful facts.

That the secrets are true does not mitigate the sin at all. The Lord knows there are only two reasons you are telling the secret – malicious hatred or idle curiosity. You damage another person's reputation when you do so, and there is no godly reason for you to do it. Only by reporting facts for authorities to fulfill their office can you justify telling secrets.

Physical rape is a horrible crime, and it should be punished severely. Tale bearing can be similarly harmful. Instead of violating a person's body and creating painful and fearful memories, it can leave permanent scars or questions on a person's reputation with others and the pain and trouble of defending ancient faults or sins by the person. Consider it.

Faithful men will hide private information they happen to learn. They will conceal such things; they will not repeat them to anyone. They will do all they can to protect the reputations of others, no matter what their personal feelings about the person might be. Such integrity and faithfulness makes a man great in the sight of God and men.

Guard your tongue, reader. Do not let it spread secrets that should be concealed. It does not matter at all whether the information is true or not. If the matter is not needed for the proper exercise of authority, then bury it. If the matter could hurt a person's reputation, then bury it. If the matter is not uplifting or commending or helpful, then bury it.

- If my efforts at tale-bearing or detraction have hit their mark, have I felt ***joy at the other's misfortune***? If so, is this a joy that a follower of Christ should relish?
- If my tale-bearing or detraction has been of no avail, has my failure to harm left me ***grieving at another's prosperity***? If so do I see how envy is a “just vice” with its own built in penalty?
- If this process has gone on in me, do I understand and admit that these thoughts, feelings, and attractions fuel a sinful ***hatred***? Do I recognize that hatred is opposed to the virtue of love of neighbor? Is this how Christ wants me to live? How then can I crush this hatred and grow in the love of charity? (pg. 110-111)

Virtues Necessary to Combat Envy

- **Kindness** is an affectionate warmth and considerateness that expresses care for the welfare of others. It does not feel sad when another achieves something good; rather it figures out how to help that person get it!
- Another virtue foundational to the defeat of envy is **humility**, the word itself deriving from humus for earth, which is low and literally on the ground. When we are humble, we recognize our place in the hierarchy of God's universe. We don't decide who receives which particular gifts, talents, skills, virtues, achievements, or successes. That's up to God's providence. The humble will thank God for whatever He has given us without selfishly begrudging it when it appears as if He has given greater gifts to others. (pg. 115-116)

Jesus and Envy

- Jesus Christ Himself was indeed the target of envy throughout His life, from the envy of Herod in His infancy to the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees in the days leading up to the His death. They felt that the spiritual good of Jesus diminished their own dignity and worth.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? Is not this the carpenter's son? Where then did this man get all this?" And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house." (Matthew 13:54-58)

- They did not experience joy in His goodness, in His fulfillment of the promises of Scripture, but rather they unleashed envy and all its daughters, even the last and most wicked one of *hatred* that sought out Christ's death. (pg. 120)



Avarice

- **Avarice** (from Latin *avarus*, "greedy"; "to crave") is the inordinate love for riches. It makes the getting and keeping of money, possessions, and the like, a purpose in itself to live for.
- It is called a capital vice because it has as its object that for the gaining or holding of which many other sins are committed. It is more to be dreaded in that it often cloaks itself as a virtue, or insinuates itself under the pretext of making a decent provision for the future.
- **The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:15-21)** And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The Daughters of Avarice

- Have I employed *treachery (betrayal of trust; a deceptive action), fraud, falsehood, perjury, or violence* to obtain greater riches.
- Many of us harbor avarice in our hearts without such bold attacks on the virtue of justice by taking from others what is rightfully theirs. Our avarice more likely smacks of *illiberality*, of a stinginess in freely sharing what does not belong to us.

- Do I suffer *restlessness*? Not the kind of wandering of the mind that may come from the vice of sloth, in which I move from one thing to another because of a lack of spiritual joy, but the restlessness that comes from never being satisfied and always wanting to possess more, thinking of ways to get more and putting them into action? Am I a workaholic?
- Am I insensitive to mercy? Do I give freely, or am I what those in Aristotle's day might call a skinflint or tightfisted? Am I generous in giving to charities and to the Church? Do I need to unclench my grip or to "let the wallet breathe" in a way that might provide some fresh air to others in need? (pg. 126-127)

Virtues Necessary to Combat Avarice

- Our most direct counter to greed is to simply give it away. What we need to give away is that which avarice desires – immoderate possessions and riches. If we realize that we have been blessed with wealth and possessions far beyond what is needed to meet our actual needs, we will help quash avarice within our souls if we cultivate the virtue of generous giving, what St. Thomas calls *liberality*, freely giving, deriving from the Latin adjective liber for “free.”
- We must note as well that liberality does not imply recklessness in our giving. Liberality means not only giving away money, but always using reasonable means to earn money and save it, so that it can be employed when it is truly needed.

- The virtue of *magnificence* requires a willingness to suffer damage to one's pocketbook in order that great things can be made or accomplished. Think, for example, of the great cathedrals and basilicas throughout the ages, the multitude of Catholic abbeys, missions, schools, and hospitals that have uplifted, educated, and healed the world throughout the centuries, all funded by the magnificent liberality of countless donors.
- So how can we defeat avarice through the cultivation of liberality in our daily lives? St. Thomas reminds us that we must also employ the virtue of *prudence*, or practical wisdom, so that we give wisely. He notes that our money can be used in two main ways, either for our use or for the use of others. Therefore, to thwart the illiberality of avarice and to build the virtue of liberality, we will act prudently in both the ways that we spend money on ourselves and in the ways that we give to others. (pg. 128-130)



Vainglory

Edward P. Sri

From the Jan/Feb 2010 Issue of Lay Witness Magazine

- According to St. Thomas Aquinas, “glory” denotes someone’s excellence being known and approved by others. He explains that there is nothing wrong with others recognizing our good qualities and deeds. In fact, seeking to live in a way that inspires others to give glory to God and to pursue a more virtuous life is good.
- However, seeking or desiring glory for its own sake is a sin, vainglory. Such a person wants glory for himself more than he wants glory for God. He wants to receive the praise of men, which is a *vain* glory that is empty, fickle, and often off the mark.
- St. Thomas Aquinas explains that the glory we seek can be vain in one of three ways.

- **First**, it is vain to seek praise for something that is not truly praiseworthy (vain or petty). Seeking glory for the wrong things.
- Of course, this would include seeking praise for sinful acts. The college student, for example, who hopes to gain respect from his peers for his drunkenness, his sexual exploits, or his cheating on an exam is pursuing not true, but vain glory.
- Yet even devout Christians are susceptible to this vice when they plan their lives around the standards of happiness and success set up by the world.
- For example, a part of us might hope to gain respect from old friends and family members for having a successful career, wearing the latest fashions, having children succeed in school, living in a nice home, etc.
- These are not evil pursuits in themselves, but they can distract us from pursuing Christian ideals such as charity, generosity, simplicity, and humility. If these worldly pursuits hinder us from living a truly praiseworthy life—a life of virtue and holiness—then we may be seeking the vain glory of this world more than the glory of God.

- ***Second***, it is sinful to seek glory from people whose judgment is not sound. Seeking glory from the wrong people.
- Most of us desire the approval of our bosses, parents, spouses, or friends. And this is natural.
- If, however, these people do not truly understand what a good, virtuous life is, we likely will be disappointed, frustrated, or misled. To seek their recognition would be pursuing vainglory, for they are not able to judge what is truly praiseworthy.
- They sometimes will praise the wrong things, and they will fail to recognize what is most noble in life. They might even look down upon aspects of our Christian life.
- Therefore, instead of seeking the approval of worldly men, we should seek the praise of Christ-and by extension, His faithful followers who judge by His standards, not the world's.

- **Third**, *seeking glory is sinful if in one's heart, one desires human praise more than God's praise. Seeking glory for the wrong reasons.*
- Do we do virtuous deeds out of love for God and neighbor? Or is there a part of us wanting to be noticed and esteemed by others?
- If we perform righteous deeds in order to receive human recognition, we spoil the gift we could have given to God. We might receive applause here on earth, but Jesus says we will not receive a reward in heaven.
- On the other hand, the soul that desires to keep his piety hidden is the one who draws down the praise of the angels and saints. The soul that prays, fasts, and makes charitable contributions out of pure love of God-without seeking human praise-is the one who will be rewarded by the heavenly Father.

The Daughters of Vainglory

- Have I been vainglorious through my words by ***boasting***? Do I really believe such self-aggrandizement raises me in the eyes of others? Do I admire most those who center all conversation on themselves or those who show genuine interest by asking about the affairs and deeds of others?
- Have I sought to show my intellectual excellence and superiority over others through ***obstinacy***? Through failing to yield to another a point that was well made but contrary to mine?

- Do I sow ***discord*** in conversations by being unwilling to concede to others in matters contrary to what I will, even if deep down, I know I have been wrong?
- Have I been ***contentious***, quarreling with others, unwilling to admit that I could be wrong or that my own will need not always prevail? Do I always have to have or do it my way?
- Have I been ***disobedient***? Have I disobeyed directives from my boss, office administrators, or perhaps disregarded traffic, tax, canon, or civil laws, because I believe I always know better? (pg. 139-140)



Gluttony

Gluttony is the first of the carnal sins (Gluttony, Lust, and Anger) for which we will prepare to do battle.

Gluttony is an inordinate, unreasonable desire for food and drink.

- Do I simply eat too much? Have I noticed my weight increasing, my belt feeling tighter? Am I experiencing stomachaches, or fitful sleep by eating too much before sleep? If so, can I shrink down these portions?
- Do I eat too greedily? Do I wolf down my food? If so, can I strive to slow myself down by setting my utensils down between bites, to have a sip of water, or to share a word with my family?

- Do I eat too hastily? Do I have a hard time waiting for the dinner bell? Am I able to keep the brief fasts between planned meals and planned snacks? If not, can I strive to do so, to wait a bit when hunger pangs appear, to do something else and hold off until the next meal? Can I consider offering up minor discomfort?
- Do I eat to sumptuously or daintily? Do I expect only fine foods at every meal, prepared to my particular liking? If so, can I come to appreciate and thank God for the vast array of simple, healthy, tasty foods He has provided?

Excessive desire for food takes our mind off higher things, excessive consumption makes us lethargic and bloated, rendering us less capable of charitable actions, and seeking excess comfort for our bellies makes us less apt to imitate Christ through suffering and sacrifice. (pg. 148-149)

The Daughters of Gluttony

- When overstuffed with food or intoxicated with too much drink have I let loose any of gluttony's daughters of ***unseemly joy, scurrility, uncleanness, loquaciousness, or dullness of mind as regarding understanding?***
- Have I felt ***unseemly joy (joy at inappropriate behavior)*** about such excess with little thought of the damage to my body or of the possible harm to others who depend on my being in good health or even those who may happen to share the same home?
- Has my overeating or drinking led me to ***loquaciousness (excessive talking or babbling)***, to hurtful words or poorly judged jests?

- Have I acted the fool in such states of excess, committing acts of buffoonery or ***scurrility (vulgar, coarse, and abusive)*** that might offend others and might seem foolish to me in a more sober state?
- Has my gluttony or drunkenness led to ***uncleanness*** in body or mind?
- Have I let food or drink cloud my ability to think clearly and reason, ***dulling my understanding*** through lethargy or intoxication? (pg. 150)

Temperance is the virtue that needs to be practiced to combat gluttony. It orders our consumption of food and drink so that moderation is the guiding principle, allowing us to avoid eating too much or too little, and indeed, to avoid even thinking too much or too little about the role of food in our daily lives. (pg. 155)



Lust

Lust – The vehement desire for inordinate pleasures of the flesh.

- Do I thoughtlessly read modern books or watch modern movies that glamorize and glorify sinful sexual behaviors or listen to popular songs that promote illicit sexuality and besmirch the potential beauty and goodness of human sexuality?
- Even if I haven't committed fornication, adultery, or blatant sexual sins, have I done so in my heart? Have I dishonored my spouse by giving excessive attention to others of the opposite sex? Have I dishonored my single or religious state by similar thoughts, if not deeds? Have I normalized sexual sins, substituted my own judgement for God's? Have I thanked God for human sexuality, and shown gratitude and love for him by seeking to purify my thoughts? (pg. 162-163)

Temperance Tames Lust

- Temperance is the cardinal virtue that controls our desires for concupiscible pleasures, and chastity is its specific allied virtue that takes on the battles of lust.
- We are all called to the chastity consistent with our state in life, whether we are married or not, and by practicing chastity of the eyes, we can train ourselves not to seek out images that will entice us to lust.



Wrath

- **Wrath** is excessive anger. It is a failure of our reason to reign in our irascible appetite that seeks to fight back against things that thwart our desires.
- “Nature does nothing without a purpose,” per Aristotle. Our concupiscible, fleshly desires ensure the propagation of our species, and those irascible, fight or flight responses ensure our safety and survival.

- Have my thoughts been enkindled by wrath? Have I mentally belittled the object of my anger, denigrating his worth through **indignation**? Have I experienced **swelling of mind** as my calm and rational thoughts have been overwhelmed by growing thoughts of revenge?
- Have my words been wrathful? Has my anger led to the confused, thoughtless, or vulgar words that bespeak **clamor**? Have I purposely insulted and reviled someone with words that bespeak **contumely** (insulting language)? Have I been so carried away with rage that I have even cursed God Himself with words bespeaking **blasphemy**?
- Have my actions been wrathful? Have I engaged in **quarreling**, angrily provoking others and possibly leading to hurtful acts, even acts of violence? (pg. 173-176)

Using Reason to Reign in Wrath

- **Delay:** The first thing to do when some activating event has occurred and you realize you feel angry and desire to seek vengeance or punishment on someone is to delay taking action. This is embodied in the simple, homespun, but effective advice to count to ten when angry and to avoid taking action until you've calmed down.
- **Dispute:** Delaying provides us the time to let our cool, rational mind take over from our boiling heart so that we may dispute those anger-producing beliefs, those things we tell ourselves that fuel our anger and desire for revenge. We might try to see the issue through our offender's eyes and give him the benefit of the doubt regarding his motives for whatever action we have perceived as an insult. This may help produce a new, more rational belief and calmer emotional reaction.

- **Inoculate** yourself against further bouts of anger by preparing for them and forgiving your transgressors in advance.
- The Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius advised that every morning on arising, we should remind ourselves that we are going to encounter “the busybody, the thankless, the overbearing, the treacherous, the envious, the unneighborly,” and this rings as true in our day as it did in the second century.
- Aurelius elaborated that some people act this way because they do not truly understand good and evil, and that our souls can not be debased by their actions. Further, if we do understand the good, we will understand that they share with us the same humanity and reason and that we cannot hate them, but must value them as kinsmen, placed in the world for cooperation, and not for resentment and aversion. These are good Stoic suggestions that good Christians should endorse and practice daily! (pg. 180-181)

Virtues Necessary to Combat Wrath

- As powerful and unruly as the vice of wrath can be, we should be sure to arm ourselves with three calm, but powerful virtues that can put wrath in its place. ***Patience*** is a virtue related to fortitude that St. Thomas tells us enables us to endure hardships and suffering without becoming sorrowful or defeated, especially when these hardships have been produced by the actions of others.
- Sometimes justice might call for some kind of punishment of a transgressor, and here we may call forth the virtue of ***clemency***. Clemency is related to the cardinal virtue of temperance, and it tempers our desire for revenge.

- A third great virtue that works with patience and clemency in conquering wrath is the often misunderstood, most manly virtue of *meekness*. St. Thomas says, that clemency and meekness may work together as they constrain the onslaught of anger, but they differ from each other inasmuch as clemency moderates external punishment, while meekness properly mitigates the passion of anger. (pg. 181-183)



Seven Steps toward Conquering the Seven Deadly Sins

1. Examination of conscience
2. Embracing the Sacraments
3. Watching the steps of our movement toward sin.
4. Practicing prayer
5. Cultivating virtue
6. Immersion in the world of the Spirit
7. Imitation of Christ