

GOD'S PLAN FOR SERVICE

PROGRAM #205 B VIRTUE AND TOLERATION

This week let's talk about virtues (our principles) and their relationship to toleration. Helen Keller is quoted as saying that "toleration . . . is the greatest gift of the mind; it requires the same effort of the brain that it takes to balance oneself on a bicycle." The weakness of that statement without qualifiers is that it was toleration that brought Adolf Hitler to power in Germany in 1933. Once Hitler was in power he sought more power, first in Germany, and then in the surrounding countries and eventually power over the world. Hitler was himself very intolerant of others not like himself and promoted intolerance with the German people building upon years of prejudice that existed, not only of Jews, but also of any other people not like himself. Germany expressed intolerance for much of humanity.

Toleration is a virtue only when it allows others to be themselves and thus reach their positive potential within the laws of God and man. The Allied Forces (1939-45) fought the intolerance of Germany. Tolerance is not a virtue when it fosters intolerance. Tolerance in its extreme case allows others to do anything they want to do, whenever they want to do it and by whatever means. The English word for this is chaos. Jesus was tolerant of a wide range of people but he was intolerant of the Pharisees because they were in violation of the Bible.

So what must go with tolerance to make it a virtue? He who stands for nothing stands, in effect, for anything desired by others. We cannot be tolerant when we see another person breaking the law. We cannot let a murderer go free because we need to be tolerant of his or her desire to kill someone. So, first of all, we must recognize that toleration must have its limits. Toleration, like freedom, is not an absolute. Freedom and toleration have limits when exercised to limit the freedom of others.

But where do the limits come from? What one person holds as a virtue, such as Hitler's belief that he represented the superior race, ceases to be a virtue when it begins to infringe on the virtues and rights of others. The right to life is a virtue most of us recognize. We must stop the murderer even though we are being intolerant of the would-be murderer's values and desires. The Bible is our best guide to virtue or qualities acceptable to God.

We hear the virtues recorded in the Bible advocated by people we admire and trust. Each of us must discover the virtues, our principles, by which we will live. One of these virtues should be toleration of diversity in society by which we benefit from others being different from us as long as they in turn respect our right to our virtues. Toleration of diversity as a virtue encourages us to be tolerant, even encourage, different viewpoints and perspectives which can contribute toward making this a better world. However, this toleration must not extend beyond what we have been taught in the Bible as the appropriate virtues or principles by which God commands us to live. By knowing our virtues, we learn when to be tolerant of others and when we must resist the intolerant actions of others.

Study questions are available for this program. You can obtain them by writing to info@godsplanforservice.org or calling 615.268.7223. May God continue to bless you.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR PROGRAM #205 B VIRTUE AND TOLERATION

These study questions are intended for use with God's Plan for Service, Program #205 B. The primary purpose of the study questions is to help the listener/reader to more fully grasp the significance and implications of the topic. Recipients have the option of sending your responses to God's Plan for Service for comment by Dr. Oosting (by email to info@godsplanforservice.org or mail to GPS, 1226 Knox Valley Drive, Brentwood, TN 37027.

1. Think about what virtues you hold dear. What are the principles by which you guide your behavior every day?
2. Is one of those virtues toleration for others to have a right to express their opinion even when it differs from yours?
3. Where is it appropriate for you to be tolerant and when should you be intolerant (when it violates your virtues)?

6-10-14/BTW/KWO

WAKM recorded 6-13-14/For broadcast the week of July 28-August 1, 2014

#205 VIRTUE AND TOLERATION

#205 A Prepared for use in 2018 but it somehow was changed to a .dic version which I could not use. As a result, much of A was put into a B version which was used.

#205 B Revised 6-21-18/BTW/KWO

WAKM recorded 6-22-18/For broadcasts the week of July 9-13, 2018