

## The Call to Virtue

**Intro:** For our study let's turn tonight to Luke 12 where Jesus instructed his disciples on one of the important principles of discipleship.

There is one theme that binds these verses together—it is the concept of moral courage or virtue or dealing with the problem of fear.

### A warning against hypocrisy (v. 1)

*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. The bread of the NT era was “sourdough”, a piece of the leavened dough is added to a new batch and dough and is made to rise by it. The “leaven” calls attention to the subtle corrupting influence of something. The word hypocrisy means “acting” or being pretentious.*

*Why are people hypocritical? The answer primarily is because they lack virtue or moral courage. Or to put it another way, they are afraid of what others may say or do to them.*

*Consequently, Jesus not only warns about what fear causes, he seeks to give us incentives to be bold, unashamed and courageous in our spiritual lives.*

### Incentives to virtue

*Pretense or hypocrisy can't be hidden (v. 2-3)*

The point Jesus makes is a practical and important one. Whatever we are is ultimately made manifest to others. To be pretentious is only to postpone the inevitable.

When Jesus indicates that all things will come out into the open, he may be referring to this life; but if not, certainly it will be true at the judgment. 1 Cor. 4:5

It makes more sense to simply be sincere and transparent from the beginning.

*God punishments are more fearful than anything man can do to us! (v. 4-5)*

Man can destroy our body; but cannot touch our souls.

God can destroy soul and body in hell.

*God is aware of the circumstances of His people! (v. 6-7)*

One of the things that will make us bold and courageous is to remember that God knows about our lives and cares about what happens to us. Sparrow would often be sold in the market for a few cents (assarion, 1/16 of a denarius) to provide a small amount of meat to flavor a pastry dish. Yet, even these God knows.

The hairs of your head are numbered. God knows everything about us!

To know that God is aware is also to know that God will help His people against their enemies.

*Jesus will treat us in the judgment just as we have treated Him!*

Imagine that you are before the Lord in judgment and the Lord says, “I don't know who this disciple is. In fact, I am ashamed of him

because he was ashamed of me. He was afraid to stand up for what was right and allowed my truth to suffer because of it.” Awesome thought!

Jesus says, “if you confess me, I will confess you”. The word means to “acknowledge” with the force of approval.

If you deny me, I will deny you!

Here Jesus gives a warning that he gave in other contexts where enemies of truth charged that Jesus performed his miracles by the power of Satan. It was their way of discrediting Jesus and the manifest miracles he performed. Possibly others in the audience were afraid to express disagreement with the Pharisees view and gave their own words of consent. Consequently, Jesus warns in v. 10.

*Jesus promises God’s help in time of opposition, v. 11-12*

What a comfort this must have been to the disciples. They were forewarned that fearful times were ahead; but they were also assured that the Holy Spirit would help them meet those times.

I believe that the promise of the Holy Spirit’s guidance refers primarily to the inspired guidance the disciples would receive miraculously from the Holy Spirit to defend their faith.

Yet, from it we may derive a principle that God will help us also as we seek to stand up for him. Perhaps one aspect of the nature of the “living” word is its ability to be retrieved from the conscience in time of need. Have you ever been in a situation and at that very moment the truth of God came back to you?

**Conclusion:** Every day we are confronted with situations that call for boldness. Perhaps we are feeling the pressure to agree with those about us who advocate error. Perhaps we may be hesitant to speak out in a Biblical issue. Perhaps we are tentative about acknowledging our faith before a neighbor or unbeliever through discussion of the Bible with them.

In all these ways, we need to remember the words of Jesus about discipleship so we can demonstrate the moral courage we need to have.