

GOSPEL PEARLS

Virtues overcoming vices

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Jesus said to his disciples: "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21: 34-36)

A faithful disciple of Jesus is always called to flee temptation. In particular, we must fight against the vices which destroy our freedom and joy of life: pride, avarice, lust, anger, rage, envy, sloth. To overcome our vices, we must practice the opposite virtues. For example, pride is overcome by humility (which moderates our desire for our own excellence). Avarice must be fought with temperance (which moderates our love for earthly goods and helps us to put our hearts in Heaven). In short, the struggle must be faced with courage which, as C.S. Lewis reminds us, "is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point."