

Lack of virtue in the world today has contributed to the high level of immorality and vices in our society. The big question that arises here is what is virtue? Virtue is the moral excellence and exhibition of good behavior by a person. Virtue is universal and highly recognized by all cultures and tradition of the world. However, irrespective of the recognition of virtue by all the cultures of the world, vices, immorality and indecency still exist in our society today.

In the present day modern society, virtues have slowly begun to lose their importance. The high level of indecency and immorality is indeed a major issue that needs to be addressed urgently. The question here is why is virtue important? Virtues are important because they are the basic qualities necessary for our well being and happiness. By recognizing the importance of virtues, in our lives, it will lead to better communication, understanding and acceptance between us and our fellow man.

Furthermore, the importance of virtue was further elaborated by Chinese philosopher Confucius through the formulation of the five constant virtues. One of the five constant virtues identified by Confucius is *Li* (prosperity, loyalty, filial piety, chastity, respect). *Li* is a form of virtue I have experienced and practiced while growing up in Nigeria. In Nigeria, virtues are one of the characteristics that earn a woman the respect she deserves.

In the Nigerian society, morality and good behavior is highly valued. Modesty, loyalty, faithfulness, respect and refraining from extra marital affairs are amongst the qualities a woman must possess for her to be accepted and recognized in the society. Family structure in Nigeria and many other Africa countries is very strong. In all parts of the country, the woman is considered as the great custodian and guardian of the family. The responsibility of women is enormous. They are responsible for instilling moral standards and values in their kids. Most

importantly, women carry the main responsibility of protecting her matrimonial home. This explains why every married woman must possess an exemplary form of virtue. As a young lady my mother would always take her time to educate us on the virtues needed to earn praise and respect us in the society. To her the virtue of a woman starts from her home. In our everyday activities, she ensured we were decent and modest in both our dressing and utterances.

This reminds me of an incident that occurred a while back. My friend came to visit us wearing a transparent dress that revealed her body and underwear. My mother on seeing my friend was displeased with her dressing. This form of dressing is regarded as indecent and immoral in the Yoruba community. My mum called us in and asked her a simple question, "Did your mother see you dressed like this before you left your house?" She replied "no".

She further asked why she was dressed like that. She said she thought dressing like that was the fashion in vogue at that time. At this point my mum sat us down and enlightened us on the responsibilities of a woman in the society. According to her, the body of a woman is sacred and must be protected always. In addition, the disadvantages of dressing indecently and immorally in the society pose more harm than good.

This could expose a lady to all forms of sexual harassment and most importantly, she could be a victim of rape. Indecent dressing encourages the sexual attention of men. My friend and I were so happy that we had a great mentor in my mum. I gave her one of my clothes to wear back home that day. This and many other discussions I had with my mother on a woman's virtue in the society formed the basis for my everyday activities.

I became a point of reference in my community and amongst my peers. I was known for my decency, modesty, holiness and faithfulness. As a result of this, I was made the treasurer of the

Muslim Student Society (MSS) in my high school. At the MSS, we gather together to enlighten ourselves in the ways of God, and remind ourselves of what is expected of us as a true believer. We organize several other programs within the community. Notable amongst our programs includes giving alms to the needy, providing shelter to the homeless and embarking on numerous visits to the hospital and orphanages.

As the treasurer of the MSS, I was entrusted with the associations funds. In this part I felt so honored and humored by the trust people had in me. This propelled me to discharge my duties diligently with great respect, devotion and loyalty. In discharging my duties, I felt fulfilled and satisfied. This would further remind me of an event that occurred at the time. The association president approached the MSS for financial assistance. He claimed his parents were having difficulties paying for his tuition. I alongside other executive members decided to come to his aid. Having fulfilled the entire requirement needed to receive the association's assistance, the association offered him the help he asked for.

However, when it was time for him to repay the debt, he defaulted. He persuaded me to collaborate with him to defraud the association. On hearing this, I felt so disappointed in him and reported him to the school authorities. When he was confronted by the authorities, he denied the allegation and my reputation was at stake. A committee was set up to investigate both our allegations. In the course of the investigation it was discovered that his parents were never in any form of financial difficulty. It was further revealed that he had previously collected his tuition bill twice from his parents. All these findings vindicated me and restored my dignity and respect. I was awarded the distinguished loyal and dedicated service award for my loyalty and respect.

Reflecting on my past experience and the numerous tasks I have faced in functioning well in the society as a virtuous lady. I ask myself this humble question, why did I choose to be virtuous? The answer to this question is simple. Ever since I was a kid, it has always been a part of me to exhibit great moral standard and good behavior. A decent and modest child promotes the good name and respect of the family. A modest woman must cover her body and conform to the prevailing standard of morality in the society. This would earn her respect in the society.

Good moral qualities dictate how much respect you earn in the society. This reminds me of an event that happened when I met my husband's parents for the first time. In our culture before any parent marries their kid to a family, they would love to know a little about the family's background. However, mine was not an exception either. I could remember the pleasure and relieve in my in-laws face when I mentioned my family's name and compound. They were so happy and welcomed me with open arms.

However, the fact that I possess some moral qualities does not mean that I did not have some bad moments. As a lady who has always preserved her body and beauty, every man was interested in me. While some were truly attracted to me, others just wanted me to satisfy their sexual urge. This reminds me of a nasty experience I had while I was in college. There was this professor who would always ask me to go to bed with me in exchange for grades. I felt insulted by him and turned him down. Most importantly, his request was immoral, indecent and against my virtues.

My refusal did not go well with him and in return he failed me in his class. I took the matter up against him and requested for my exam papers. My request was denied, because the professor was highly influential in the school. I felt unhappy and dejected, but I did not allow that to affect me. As a result of the virtues that I possessed, I was committed to doing the right thing, at any

personal cost. I found solace in my values and principles hence did not allow his urges or desires to distract me. At that moment I knew that everything in life comes with a price. I never felt distracted by him; I was calm and focused so that I could prepare myself for the task ahead. I had to retake the class with another professor and came out in flying colors.

In conclusion living a virtuous life has brought out the good in me. In it I have found happiness, fulfillment and satisfaction. It has made me strong and comforted me at times of depression and trying times. I do not give room for regrets and never lose all hopes. My virtue is all I have and cherished most.

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