

## The Beatitudes as Leadership Virtues

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This conceptual article proposes that each of the seven beatitudes found in Matthew 5 is a virtue located between two vices as a mean, which aligns with Aristotle's definition of a virtue. The authors provide the anchors for what might become a semantic-differential scale for the seven beatitudes. Poor in spirit is placed between the vices of lowly and haughty; concern for others is placed between disregarding and controlling; controlled discipline is placed between Laissez-faire and overbearing; seeking what is right is placed between complacent and wayward; merciful is placed between lenient and ruthless; pure in heart is placed between ambiguous and unyielding; and peacemaker is placed between pacifist and warmonger.

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This article presents Winston's (2002) definitions of each of the seven beatitudes from Matthew 5 as a virtue. A virtue, as defined by Aristotle (Hardie, 1964) is a passion or action that lies at the mean between two vices—a balance between defect/neglect and excess. Hardie quoted Aristotle's description of a virtue, which helps depict what is meant as a "mean":

Both fear and confidence and appetite and hunger and anger and pity, and in general, pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, and the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best and this is characteristic of virtue. (p. 187)

With this definition of a virtue in mind, this present article presents each of the seven beatitudes as a mean between two vices. This document builds on the works of Winston (2003) and Kilroy (2008) and seeks to advance the state of the literature in understanding the beatitudes as virtues. Each statement of counsel in the beatitudes begins with the Greek word *makarios*, which translates into English as "blessed." *Makarios* is akin to the Hebrew word *shalom*. Augsburg (1982) offered an understanding of the relationship between *makarios* and *shalom* by describing the word *makarios* as "incorporating the meaning of wholeness, of joy, of well-being, of holistic

peace . . . of the condition of inner satisfaction expressed by Jesus in John 14:27, ‘My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth’ (KJV)” (p. 63). This implies that when a leader operates in the zone of intermediacy of the virtues, the result is wholeness, joy, well-being, and holistic peace.

Winston (2002) contended in his treatise on the beatitudes as a base for leadership behavior that the sum of the seven beatitudes lies in the concept of Agapao as a form of moral love: “doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason” (p. 5). This definition aligns with Aristotle’s definition of a virtue; thus we might say that Agapao is a collection of virtues. According to Winston, the beatitudes become a guide for what good leaders believe or should believe, which forms the base for behavior. Blanchard (2007) and Fry (2003) supported this notion, and each stated that leaders’ beliefs should flow from values that seek to do what is good and to drive out fear in the workplace. Kilroy (2008) expanded upon Winston’s work and crafted seven distinct scales to measure the seven beatitudes. While these scales help to understand more fully each of the beatitudes, they do not help to see each beatitude in the role as an intermediary between two vices—one of defect/neglect, and one of excess.

The sections that follow present each beatitude with the vices that the authors believe provide the anchors for what might become a semantic-differential scale for the seven beatitudes. Poor in spirit is placed between the vices of lowly and haughty; concern for others is placed between disregarding and controlling; controlled discipline is placed between pacifistic and overbearing; seeking what is right is placed between complacent and wayward; merciful is placed between lenient and ruthless; pure in heart is placed between ambiguous and unyielding; and peacemaker is placed between pacifist and warmonger.

### **Poor in Spirit as an Intermediate Between Lowly and Haughty**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). Poor in spirit, as defined by Winston (2002), connotes someone who knows that he is poor. Winston contended that being poor in spirit implies a sense of humility and teachableness that is similar to what Collins (2001) described as one of two notable passions/behaviors of great leaders. Collins commented that with personal humility comes a measure of self-doubt—not a debilitating doubt, but a questioning. This questioning may be part of what provides a ‘push’ away from each of the two vices: lowly and haughty.

Winston (2002) continued in his treatise on the beatitudes that being poor in spirit results in the leader being respectful of others. Perhaps this respect is an outcome of self-doubt, as Collins (2001) presented. Respecting others for who they are and what they can do may lead one to want to listen to what others have to say, thus contributing to the teachableness of the leader. Barton (n.d.) added this understanding: “Great men suffer hours of depression through introspection and self-doubt. That is why they are great. That is why you will find modesty and humility the characteristics of such men.”

According to Klenke (2005), being humble can be a source of strength demonstrating the leader’s ability to keep her/his accomplishments in perspective. Kilroy (2008) added that being teachable incorporates Senge’s (1990) concept of a lifetime learner. Humility should result in a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), leading one to know what he/she is capable of. This sense of capability should repel both conditions of being lowly and being haughty.

## Lowly

A lowly leader is one who is full of humility and inferiorities, one who is humble or seen as meek and weak with low self-esteem. The vice lowly leadership could cause problems with followers and the decision-making processes in organizations due to the weakness displayed by the leader. Firstly, poor in spirit is a virtue that is strength, not a weakness; thus, leaders should not feel inferior or lowly in their roles as leaders. In the words of Collins (1988), “the inferiority complex can lead to a lot of human misery and feelings of inadequacy, leaders must overcome inferiority by developing a positive and healthy self-esteem” (p. 313). The vice of lowliness must be governed with scripture to become plain as it relates to “poor in spirit”; in Proverbs 29:23 the author shares “A man’s pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor” (New International Version). Thus, clearly a lowly leader who has a vice characterized by inferiorities, low self-esteem, and is viewed by followers as full of meekness without a backbone has no place in leadership. However, those who have a lowly spirit (poor in spirit) will gain honor; thus, a leader who does not pride themselves as superior will earn honor from followers within any organization. A leader who carries the vice of lowliness should also consider the words of Carlson (1988): self-love is accepting myself as a child of God who is lovable, valuable, and capable—as I am made in God’s image. According to Paglis and Green (2002), leaders without strong self-confidence are less likely to make influence attempts, and any influence attempts made are less likely to be successful. Thus, a lowly leader’s poor self-image must become a virtue of poor in spirit with positive self-efficacy and self-confidence (Bass, 1990) to enhance the advancement of the organization.

## Haughty

A haughty leader is one who is arrogant and blatantly shows their disdainful pride toward others. Haughtiness in leadership positions is a pride before the fall circumstance. As the Bible shares in Proverbs 16:18–19, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.” Thus, haughtiness is a vice that is detrimental in leadership positions and is perceived as arrogance. According to Yukl (2006), an arrogant leader will have difficulty developing cooperative relationships with followers due to their pride and self-centered behavior. The excessively self-confident leader is usually overly optimistic and risky in ventures with rash decisions and will also show denial of evidence that a plan is flawed (Yukl). The vice haughtiness has no place in leadership positions—humility and acceptance of others is a virtue of the poor in spirit. In the words of Blanchard and Hodges (2005), “humility is realizing and emphasizing the importance of others, it is not putting yourself down; it is lifting others up” (p. 67). Also, according to Collins (1988), “in essence haughtiness is an attempt to claim for oneself the glory that rightly belongs to God” (p. 316). How awful that one would consider taking God’s honor and claiming it as their own! The Bible also states that the Lord will be exalted over the arrogant and proud: “The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day” (Isaiah 2:17). Therefore, leaders should seek the virtue poor in spirit by respecting others and gracefully depending on God to successfully lead them as they lead others with a spirit of love.

### **Concerned for Others as an Intermediate Between Disregarding and Controlling**

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). The Greek word that translates as “to mourn” in this beatitude is the strongest of the Greek words, imploring a deep mourning and longing with the intensity as if mourning for the dead (Augsburger, 1982, p. 63). In focusing on the living leader, this word shows the intensity at which we mourn for those around us. According to Augsburger, to mourn in this fashion is to care deeply. For today’s leader this means to care for the organization, the clients served, employees, superiors, and even competitors. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a beginning. Augsburger added that to mourn this deeply is to draw closer to God and for God to draw closer to you (p. 63).

The Greek word that translated as is *penteo*, which is the act or feeling of mourning or bewailing. This is an active tense verb that implies a continuation of action. Think of the leader who cares so much about his employees, his clients, his company, his market, his superiors, and his competitors that he literally is in mourning for their condition. This state of mourning also includes the characterization of deep concern. According to Kilroy (2008), concern for others is demonstrated by a leader who understands the value of employees’ rest, has compassion for employees, and seeks to right injustices. Frey (2003) supported this notion by defining his altruistic love construct as showing “genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others” (p. 695).

Concern for others is part of the concept of socially responsible entrepreneurship. According to Stryjan (2006), socially responsible entrepreneurs seek to meet the needs of society that the established governments are unable to meet. Stryjan’s argument implies that a leader’s concern for others extends beyond the organization’s boundaries. The virtue of concern for others seeks to do more than disregard others but stops short of controlling the lives of others.

### **Disregarding**

A leader who disregards followers is one who pays no attention or heed and one who ignores and treats others without proper respect or attentiveness. This type of leader also lacks thoughtful attentiveness to followers and their needs. The vice of disregarding followers’ needs and lacking the ability to care for their needs is destructive both internally and externally. Leaders should mourn/care for followers’ needs and openly communicate using relations-oriented behavior. According to Yukl (2006), a relations-oriented leader is effective in supporting and helping followers. Yukl shared that leaders “must be supportive in showing trust, acting friendly, and considerate, trying to understand followers’ problems, helping to develop followers and further their careers – keeping them informed, showing appreciation, and showing recognition” (p. 55). How can a leader show care for followers by disregarding their abilities and contributions to the organization? There may be confusion and dysfunction throughout the organization, but this does not excuse the vice of disregard. Depree (1989) posited that “good communication draws out of us an awareness of the meaning of working together; we cannot make decisions, we cannot get along – we simply cannot do business without learning what we expect from each other” (p. 94). Thus, communication, care, and support of followers are constructs worth considering in any organization. In 1 Peter 2:17 the author wrote, “show proper respect to everyone: [...] fear God.” Therefore, leaders should seek to lead with the virtue of

mourning for others in their times of need by showing care, communicating, and supporting followers.

### **Controlling**

A controlling leader is one who exercises authoritative or dominating influences over and directly oversees the tasks of every follower. The vice of control is one that can be overwhelming in any organization. The controlling leader cares; however, they are personalized-power driven. The controlling leader mourns for others through their “power to dominate followers by keeping them weak and dependent, the leader is rude to others – and they collect symbols of personal prestige such as fancy cars or big offices” (McClelland & Burnham, 1976, p. 103). The personalized power driven leader does not mourn for others in the decision process. According to McClelland and Burnham, “all important decisions are centralized in the leader, information is restricted, and rewards and punishments are used to manipulate and control followers” (p. 103). When leaders move with the vice of controlling followers, this causes the followers to become loyal to the leaders instead of the organization due to fear (Yukl, 2006). As such, “when the leader departs there is likely to be disorder and a breakdown in team spirit” (Yukl, p. 194). The Bible states in Jeremiah 8:21, “Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me.” In the same way, controlling leaders should seek to lead by mourning for others to create harmony in the workplace. In conjunction with scripture, leaders should seek to turn their followers’ “mourning into gladness and give them comfort and joy instead of sorrows” (Jeremiah 31:13).

### **Controlled Discipline as an Intermediate Between Laissez-faire and Overbearing**

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). According to Winston (2002), the Greek word for meek is *praus*, or humility, which continues the theme of humility from the first beatitude. However, this is not a repetition of the first beatitude; it is an application of humility to behavior as *praus* is also found in conjunction with action (Winston). The Greek term is rich in meaning and is more fully translated as “controlled discipline.” In line with this application of meekness to behavior, Aristotle spoke of meekness as the mean between anger and indifference (Augsburger, 1982, p. 63). Aristotle described one who is meek as being angry on the right occasion, with the right people, at the right moment, and for the right length of time (Boice, 1972, p. 37). Thus, one might say that the meek have a sense of duty and that they demonstrate controlled discipline.

Wesley (1825/2003), in his Sermon 22 on the Sermon on the Mount, provided some insight regarding the concept of meek:

The meek are zealous for the Lord of hosts; but their zeal is always guided by knowledge, and tempered, in every thought, and word, and work, with the love of man, as well as the love of God. They do not desire to extinguish any of the passions, which God has for wise ends implanted in their nature; but they have the master of all. They hold them all in subjection, and employ them only in subservience to those ends. And thus even the harsher and more displeasing passions are applicable to the noblest purposes.

Barclay (1958) stated that selfish anger is always a sin, but selfless anger can be one of the great moral dynamics of the world. The psalmist wrote of the meek inheriting the earth (Psalm 37:11). The Hebrew word used by the psalmist here is *anayv*, which translates as gentle in mind or

circumstances and connotes saintliness. The notion of controlled discipline implies that leaders are not laissez-faire leaders simply ignoring that which is about them, but also not overbearing in pushing their will upon others.

### **Laissez-faire**

A laissez-faire leader under the beatitude/virtue “controlled discipline” is one who abdicates involvement. This is a leader who settles problems as an appeaser at the expense of security, policies, and procedures through non-discipline means. According to Beebe and Masterson (2006), “a laissez-faire leader avoids dominating (disciplining) followers – they see themselves as no better or no worse than the followers” (p. 319). Yukl (2006) posited a laissez-faire leader shows passive indifference about tasks and followers; these leaders will ignore problems and ignore followers. This vice is not productive in leadership positions because a laissez-faire leader without controlled discipline of followers “leaves complete freedom for followers’ decisions with minimum leader participation” (Yukl, p. 320). Moreover, Loehr and Schwartz (2003) stated that leadership climate greatly affects followers and that such an organization, one lacking leadership support and commitment, has only a slim chance of success. Thus, leaders should lead with controlled discipline in organizations to ensure that followers understand policies and procedures and protocol of the infrastructure. The Bible offers a similar perspective on laziness and discipline-free leadership: “If a man is lazy, the rafters sag; if his hands are idle the house leaks” (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Therefore, leaders should seek to lead followers with controlled discipline to maintain the advancement and success of the organization; without controlled discipline leaders, the organization will not flourish.

### **Overbearing**

An overbearing leader is one who is (a) overwhelming, (b) dominant, (c) harsh, (d) haughty, and (e) arrogant. In contrast, a controlled discipline leader leads with a servant heart to build up followers and does not tear them down with overbearing, harsh, or dominant words. In II Corinthians 13:10 the author wrote, “This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority – the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.” The vice of overbearing leadership causes followers to resist authority, brings about high absentees, and causes a lack of trust within the organization. According to Farson (1996), leaders and managers who lead with control and manipulation cannot succeed because the leaders and managers are lost. Farson argued, “leaders and managers instead should approach situations sometimes as learners, sometimes as teachers, and sometimes both—this can turn confusion into understanding” (p. 38). A controlled discipline leader seeks to find solutions and reach an agreement with all vested stakeholders within the organization with a calming spirit. In Proverbs 29:11 the author wrote, “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.” Here again, the vice of overbearing and domineering leadership shows a lack of maturity and discipline. The scripture also advises, “Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain” (Titus 1:7). Leaders should adhere to God’s word and lead with discipline and understanding with a calm heart. In the words of Allen (1950), “the calm man, having learned how to govern himself, knows how to adapt himself to others; and they, in turn, reverence his spiritual strength, and feel

that they can learn of him and rely upon him” (p. 70). An overbearing leader who moves without the virtue of controlled discipline should consider the golden rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

### **Seeking What is Right as an Intermediate Between Complacent and Wayward**

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). According to Winston (2002), this beatitude speaks to the need of the leader to be in a right relationship with God, with the people around him, and with himself. It is important to see the intensity with which this beatitude calls the reader. The words hunger and thirst in the Greek are *peinao* and *dipsao*, meaning, respectively, “famished or crave for” and “to thirst.” These words infer an ongoing condition similar to the condition described in Psalm 42:1-2: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” The root word *dikaio*s and its derivative *dikaisoune* translate into “holy, just, right(eous), and equity” of character or act (Winston). Thus, we begin to see the unfolding of a virtuous leader from this beatitude. Baker (1963) described the person in this way: “the man who is blessed in this respect is the man who above all desires to fulfill the intention of his being and become what he ought to be” (p. 55).

This is not the only verse in the Bible that calls man to seek and to do what is good. Two proverbs help further understand this concept. Proverbs 11:27 states, “He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it”; and Proverbs 21:3 instructs, “To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” This beatitude contrasts Smith’s (1776) foundational belief that the butcher, the brewer, or the baker only do what they do because of what each gains from the transaction. Instead, this beatitude describes that the righteous leader does what he or she does because it is the right thing to do. This is a heart issue in that a leader may seek out a long-term relationship with another organization because it is good for both and not because it is good just for the leader’s organization. The notion of seeking what is right implies that a leader does not passively accept what happens and become complacent. The leader who seeks what is right also avoids the active condition of deliberately turning away from what is right, or becoming wayward.

### **Complacent**

A complacent leader is one who is pleased with how things are going, one who is self-satisfied with one’s own merits and is unconcerned or unworried about things. Complacency is a vice wherein leaders in the decision-making process are seeking neither right nor wrong conclusions within the organization; they are satisfied with the status quo. Moreover, Blackaby and Blackaby (2006) stated, “people who are unwilling or unable to make decisions are unlikely leadership candidates – decision making is a fundamental responsibility of leaders” (p. 136). A complacent leader should seek God’s word on complacency. In the Bible, Zephaniah 1:12 states, “At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, ‘The LORD will do nothing, either, good or bad.’” Complacent leaders must instead seek what is right “by obtaining a legitimate purpose in their heart, and set out to accomplish it, the leader should make this purpose the centralizing point of his/her thoughts” (Allen, 1950, p. 42). As effective leaders manage by seeking what is right, the vice of complacency should not be part of their leadership style. As Yukl (2006) posited,

“leaders must lead in their day-to-day interactions by role-modeling” (p. 277). Therefore, when leaders are complacent, subordinates become complacent followers without a purpose or vision.

### **Wayward**

A wayward leader turns away from what is right or proper willfully. This vice is a deliberate act of knowing the right way but refusing to walk therein. To elaborate on waywardness, consider the people of Israel in the Bible. In Hosea 14:1 the prophet said, “O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.” In seeking what is right, leaders must ensure that followers seek what is right, for the right reason, at the right time (Winston, 2002). As noted in Proverbs 1:32, “For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.” Therefore leaders must seek what is right, “looking neither to the left nor right – but seeking out a straight pathway” (Allen, 1950, p. 44) in their respective organizations.

### **Merciful as an Intermediate Between Lenient and Ruthless**

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7). According to Winston (2002), this beatitude focuses on the law of reciprocity (Robertson, 1992), meaning that one who is merciful will be shown mercy. The Greek word used here, *eleemon*, translates equitably into English as “compassionate” or “merciful.” There are two interesting aspects of the use of *eleemon*. The first is that it is an active tense. The leader must be merciful in the current sense of the word. The second point of interest is that this word is only used one other time in the entire New Testament—in Hebrews 2:17: “... a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” Other forms of mercy, such as *eleeo*, do occur elsewhere in scripture. Shakespeare wrote that “mercy seasons justice,” and this is the essence of this beatitude to the leader. Mercy implies that an understanding heart is applied to the situation of judgment.

In the online Encyclopedia of Self, mercy is defined as “forbearance to inflict harm under circumstances of provocation, when one has the power to inflict it; compassionate treatment of an offender or adversary; clemency” (Zimmerman, 2001). This definition seems to connect with the beatitude of controlled discipline and helps illustrate how the beatitudes work together.

To further understand mercy, it might be helpful to see mercy as being related to but different from justice and grace: mercy is not getting what you deserve; justice is getting what you deserve; and grace is getting what you don’t deserve. All three are important in describing relationships with other people as well one’s relationship with God. According to Winston (2002), human justice is rough and blundering, full of rules and regulations. There seems to be little regard for the person or for the long-term learning that might come out of a situation that demands mercy. Mercy commands that the leader first examine the heart of the employee. The leader must consider whether the employee saw an action as wrong, or if perhaps the employee was unaware of the consequences of the behavior. If the employee confesses the wrong action and shows repentance (a turning away from the action), then the leader ought to show mercy in his judgment. Why? Because the focus of correction is correction, not vengeance. If repentance is shown, then the first major step for correction has occurred. Thus, the merciful leader avoids both vices of leniency and ruthlessness.

## Lenient

A lenient leader is one who is agreeable, tolerant, permissive, soft, soothing, lax, and easy. Leniency from leadership positions is a vice that could be detrimental because followers need boundaries and understanding of policies and procedures. In the words of Goffee and Jones (2009), followers need space, but structure and discipline must be set with boundaries for open expressions and concerns: “one without the other is dangerous and ultimately unproductive” (p. 10). The apostle Paul instructed Christians to seek God’s will in decisions in Ephesians 5:15-17: “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Blackaby and Blackaby (2006) posited, “many leaders find saying no is one of the hardest things they do – because they are susceptible to the messiah complex” (p. 157). As such, leaders should be merciful toward followers’ needs, desires, outcomes, and issues. However, leaders need to understand that their success is not based on how much they personally accomplish, but on how wisely they perform their leadership role (Blackaby & Blackaby).

Even Jesus had to be about his Father’s business. Blackaby and Blackaby (2006) used scripture to illustrate how people tried to pull Jesus to be lenient to their needs:

In (Luke 9:12, 33; Mark 10:13, 37) Jesus was sought after by his disciples on how he should invest his time. Religious leaders had other designs for him (Mat. 12:38; Luke 13:14). Even, the sick, the poor, and the hungry had ideas on how Jesus should spend his days (Mark 1:37; Luke 18:35-43; John 6:15). Once leaders clearly understand God’s will, deciding how to invest their time and decisions becomes much simpler. (p. 155).

Leaders should consider God’s way in being a virtuous merciful leader, knowing when to say no and understanding that God will not place anything in their paths that they cannot bear. In I Corinthians 10:13 Paul wrote, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” Consider the words of Wilkes (1998) when lenient decisions are prominent: “leadership means staying true to the mission, not necessarily to the wishes of the people – even the majority of the people” (p. 174).

## Ruthless

A leader having no compassion or pity, one who is cruel and merciless, is a ruthless leader. A ruthless leader can also be described as narcissistic according to Yukl (2006): “The leader is so preoccupied with their own ego needs, narcissists have little empathy or concern for the feelings and needs of others” (p. 192). According to Wilkes (1998), “The heart makes it happen in leadership – a serving heart allows God to reveal and define the life-driving mission in a person’s life” (p. 21). Ruthless leaders will have difficulty leading because their heart is aloof and careless toward the needs of followers. A ruthless leader should consider the Bible regarding their pride and haughty demeanor toward followers. The author of Isaiah 13:11 wrote, “I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.” Farson (1996) posited that “Leaders and managers instead should approach situations sometimes as learners, sometimes as teachers, and sometimes both – this can turn confusion into understanding” (p. 38). A merciful leader seeks to find solutions and reach an agreement with all vested stakeholders within the organization with a

calming spirit. Moreover, the scripture also warns, “Do not lead them ruthlessly, but fear your God” (Leviticus 25:43). A ruthless leader who is merciless with poor interpersonal skills toward followers will be viewed as reckless and as one who lacks understanding; they will not remain in a leadership position. The Bible supports this perspective: “The ruthless will vanish...” (Isaiah 29:20). Therefore, a leader who leads with the vice of ruthlessness in leadership positions should consider the beatitude of the merciful to ensure they will be granted mercy by God and others.

### **Pure in Heart as an Intermediary Between Ambiguous and Unyielding**

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8). According to Winston (2002), being pure in heart speaks directly to the integrity of a leader. The Greek word *katharos* used in this beatitude means to be clean, clear, or pure, with a similar implication of being undefiled or unblemished. The intent is the same as the Greek word *amiantos*, referred to in 1 Peter 1:4, which translates as “pure” or “undefiled.” The Greek word *kardia*, from which we get “heart” in this passage, also translates as “thoughts” or “feelings” (the mind). Thus, it follows that the leader should be clean and undefiled in his thoughts and feelings. Winston contended that this definition goes beyond the ability to act well, to behave, or to control our thoughts. It is not acceptable to have unclean thoughts and then simply to suppress them. The concept of pure is that there is no contamination at all. As an example, the Pharisees of Jesus’ time tried to act pure while covering up their iniquities, but Jesus exposed their true thoughts and feelings.

Winston (2002) posited that another way of looking at this beatitude is in reference to the focus of the leader, since the definition of pure can also be “unmixed.” This beatitude calls leaders to focus their attention on the mission of the organization, to not be looking here and there. The justification or reward for purity of heart, as stated in the beatitude, is to see God. This beatitude implies that only the pure of heart—those with integrity, those with a focus on God—will be able to see God. The leader can only see God if there is nothing between him and the Master. The leader may have other loyalties, but these loyalties must be subordinate to God. The leader must be single-minded and focused first on serving and loving God. To further understand this, consider Kierkegaard’s (2009) statement that purity of heart is to will one thing. The focused leader avoids being both ambiguous and unyielding.

### **Ambiguous**

An ambiguous leader may have more than one interpretation; such a leader can be doubtful, uncertain, and difficult to understand. A leader who leads with the vice of ambiguity is unfocused and lacks structure within the organization, and he or she may be considered lacking in integrity by followers. The personal integrity of leaders is the primary determinant of interpersonal trust (Yukl, 2006). As such, followers must see behaviors from their leaders that are reflective of values, honesty, ethics, and trust (Yukl). Moreover, when followers notice that their leader is ambiguous with integrity in the organization, their loyalty dissipates. One must note that an ambiguous leader cannot lead by example due to unfocused actions. Such a leader’s actions may be counterproductive to the mission, values, and goals of the organization, leaving followers uninspired to commit to the organization (Yukl). In Proverbs 19:1 the author wrote, “Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.” An ambiguous leader will be considered by followers as one with perverse lips because of their unfocused and doubtful communication. Leaders should seek to lead with the virtue of being

pure in heart by focusing on every vested stakeholder of the organization with honesty and truth. Allen (1950) said it best: “thoughts of doubt and fear never accomplish anything, and never can” (p. 44).

### **Unyielding**

An unyielding leader is one who is firm, tough, and uncompromising; a leader who never bends, is inflexible, and refuses to give or be persuaded. The leader who leads with the vice of being unyielding in organizations will likely find their career unpleasant and complicated with followers. In the words of Blackaby and Blackaby (2006), “leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others” (p. 117). Therefore, an unyielding leader who is firm and uncompromising in the organization may influence followers to become inflexible and set in their ways. Leadership is about nurturing positive attitudes with followers no matter how difficult the task (Blackaby & Blackaby) to ensure that the organization moves to the next level of success without constraints. Moreover, a leader who leads without yielding should consider the word of God regarding leadership. In Romans 12:8 Paul wrote, “if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” Hence, a leader who leads with the vice of being unyielding in their decision-making should consider the Bible and lead instead with diligence and a pure heart.

### **Peacemaker as an Intermediary Between Pacifist and Warmonger**

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). The leadership value of peacemaker is derived from the Greek word *eirnopopio*, which is demonstrated in the leader who seeks to build and sustain unity in the workplace (Winston, 2002). Kilroy (2008) posited that leaders demonstrating an attitude of peace follow Howell’s (2006) concept of creating a peaceful environment; a peacemaking leader values listening to and understanding the thinking of others—even in situations that are not conducive to peace (Kolbell, 2003). Kilroy added that the leader learns from conflict while working toward unity and the organizational objectives.

According to Winston (2002), peace does not sustain itself. Winston explained that peace is a classic view of a system; according to systems theory (Miller, 1978), entropy, or the slow self-destruction of a system, is inevitable barring intervention. In the same way, a leader has to continually intervene to maintain peace. Much like the adage that says one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch, a little strife ruins a peaceful organization. Therefore, a leader must intervene in situations where someone creates strife. The peace-maker lives between and avoids being either a pacifist or a warmonger

### **Pacifist**

A pacifistic leader is one who strongly and actively opposes conflict and especially war. To describe a pacifistic leader, one must expound upon a leader that avoids conflict; such behavior will bring short-term fixes but long-term issues within organizations. Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2008) pointed out that while avoiding may not bring any long-term benefits, it can be an effective and appropriate strategy in conflict situations due to heated

parties' involvement. However, they emphasized this temporary avoidance must be revisited "after the parties have cooled down and regain perspectives" (p. 301). Pacifistic leaders who continue to avoid conflicts as a temporary expedient fix (Ivancevich et al.) and who never strategize for problem solving collaboration with the parties involved can be assured the conflict will arise again. This vice of avoiding conflict is not a strong attribute of leaders. As such, leaders should seek to move in peace in times of conflict by accommodating, problem solving, and compromising with all parties of the organizations involved in the conflict. Consider the Bible's words regarding this type of leadership. In Titus 3:8-10, the author exhorted the reader to avoid foolish controversies, arguments, and quarrels about the law; however, the letter goes on advising leaders to warn a divisive person twice before having nothing to do with him. Therefore, a pacifistic leader should seek to lead with the virtue of peacemaking in the midst of conflicts within organizations. Avoidance is a vice that will only create more internal problems long-term when followers are not warned and conflicts are not addressed appropriately.

### **Warmonger**

A warmonger is one who stirs up war, urging or attempting to stir up conflict in the midst of peace. A warmongering leader engaged in conflict-resolution typically represents a maximum focus on concerns coupled with a minimal focus on the concerns of followers (Ivancevich et al., 2008). This approach can have negative consequences for both the leader and followers as they compete and refuse to collaborate in arguments within the organization. Moreover, the scripture states in Proverbs 10:12 that "Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs." The author restates this advice in Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer turns away anger, but mean words stir up anger." Leaders should resist the vice of warmongering in leadership positions and seek peace in all decision-making processes with followers. On the other hand, an aggressive approach can be a useful tool in organizations to handle unpopular courses of actions (e.g., layoffs, implementing new schedules, enforcing unpopular policies and procedures; Ivancevich et al.). However, leaders' actions should be guided by the virtue of keeping the peace without confusion and harsh words, as the scripture states in Galatians 5:10: "I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be." Therefore, leaders should be peacemakers within organizations and resist warmongering and creating confusion with followers.

### **The Beatitudes as a Semantic-Differential Scale**

This article has presented the seven beatitudes each as an intermediary between two vices. The authors contend that the vices equate to the two ends of a semantic differential scale with the beatitude as a virtue in the middle of each scale (see Table 1). Semantic differential scales, according to Snider and Osgood (1969), generally use a seven-point scale with two adjectives anchoring each end of the scale. A critique of the semantic differential scale is the lack of validity and reliability tests that are found with other scales (Lee, 1971). However, semantic differential scales are used for self-reports of attitudes or present-states of feelings; thus, validity would be limited to face-validity and reliability would vary from time to time in that the participants' attitudes and present-states may change (Snider and Osgood). This concern about validity and reliability should be a concern for future research testing the scales.

Table 1  
*Beatitudes as a Virtues Semantic-Differential Scale.*

Defect				Virtue				Excess
Lowly	1	2	3	Poor in Spirit	5	6	7	Haughty
Disregarding	1	2	3	Concerned for Others	5	6	7	Controlling
Laissez-faire	1	2	3	Controlled Discipline	5	6	7	Overbearing
Complacent	1	2	3	Seeking what is Right	5	6	7	Wayward
Lenient	1	2	3	Merciful	5	6	7	Ruthless
Ambiguous	1	2	3	Pure in Heart	5	6	7	Unyielding
Pacifist	1	2	3	Peacemaker	5	6	7	Warmonger

Future research should look at qualitative interviews of experts in the areas of the beatitudes as they relate to leadership in an effort to confirm and refine the vices that bracket the virtues/beatitudes in the scale. Scale development should follow. The value of this present study lies in building on Winston's (2002) and Kilroy's (2008) works to help understand the beatitudes as each relates to leadership thought and behavior. The developed semantic differential scale may be of benefit to 360-type leadership evaluation/assessment, as well as in self-testing as an aid to leadership development.

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