Study Three, Week Four

The Four Core Values

The Four Core Virtues inform our basic philosophy of living, how we make decisions and how we do things. The Four Core Virtues also inform others about what kind of men we are.

We have lain the groundwork for **A SAR Gentleman** with the first two foundational principles represented by the two arms of the Maltese Cross, the SAR Emblem. We turn now to the second level which is built upon the previous studies. The second level, the four arms of the Maltese Cross, refer to a particular Core Value or Principle of **A SAR Gentleman**. The Four Core Values are as follows:

“**Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice”**



We begin our discussion with the core value of **Prudence**.

As stated in the “Overview”***,* “**Prudence is more than carefully doing things correctly. It means [*wisdom*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom), the ability to carefully discern the appropriate course of action to be taken in each situation at the appropriate time and informed by the Bible’s wisdom and God’s teachings.”

During the Revolutionary War, as well as subsequent wars and conflicts, consideration of the enemy was central. The overall objective of the conflict

was treated as paramount. Intelligence was gathered on the enemy. Then came planning; several leaders reviewed the plans frequently.

As objectives became difficult in later wars, planning was increased. Less and less was left to haphazard preparation or quick judgments which would surely doom the project to failure before it started.

Prudence is a *core* value. Prudence, or *wisdom* is necessary to making viable plans. If you are a woodworker or carpenter, you probably know a good rule of thumb: “measure twice, cut once.” Having experienced that rule personally, I have learned the principle. I know this frustration. I have learned the wisdom of making a correction before doom raises its ugly head. Perhaps you have learned the same lesson experientially. It is very like “don’t count your chickens before they hatch.” The principle applies to a great many situations.

General Anthony Wayne discovered this lesson at least on one occasion. It may be supposition, but it appears that Wayne had a bit of a reputation of having a fiery temper, was masterful in a fight, able to hold his liquor, and being a womanizer. He knew how to take advantage of his opponent in a close face-to-face fight. He was also a successful surveyor and community planner when necessary. General Washington saw these characteristics in young Wayne and tried to urge him into becoming a good army officer.

Wayne was given the responsibly of defending against the British at Paoli, Pa. British Maj General “No Flint” Grey gained his nickname in that battle. Grey ordered his men to remove their flints from their guns and use only bayonets. This was a rather devastating method of debilitating and defeating the enemy. Although Wayne did nothing wrong procedurally, he lost the battle and several of his men in the fray. When the Military objective became Stoney Point, NY that guarded the Hudson River entrance, the tactics used against the Colonials in the Paoli, Pa loss came to mind.

Washington formed an elite force of nearly 1500 men to carry out an attack. It was ordered that the rifles be unloaded, flints removed. “Bayonets only” was a common British tactic and one that caused Wayne problems two years earlier. Now it would be used against the British.

Under the cover of darkness, the surprise attack at Stoney Point posed challenges. To avoid friendly fire, men wore pieces of white paper on their hats to distinguish each other in the darkness. Additionally, the first men arriving in the enemy camp called out a watch word to further identify each other.

In 25 minutes, the battle was over. The Continentals lost 15 men killed and 83 wounded. The British report said they suffered 20 killed and 58 missing. Many may have fallen into the Hudson and were lost to the sea. In total, nearly 1500 British were captured along with arms, cannon, and other accoutrements.

The plan was a success and proved to be the beginning of ensuing victories over the British. The plan further affirms the necessity of *Prudence*: doing due diligence in *intelligence, planning, preparation, and implementation.*

Prudence is a common approach from Revolutionary War battle plans to modern military plans to everyday business approaches. It is the beginning of the planning stage and becomes the bedrock of the work that follows.

Prudence has led the George Washington Chapter to participate in “Wreaths Across America.” Prudence then led the Chapter compatriots to seek ways to provide easier access to honor Revolutionary War patriots in cemeteries. In applying that *core value*, the George Washington Chapter’s program now provides easy access to patriots’ biographies using their smart phones.

If you have been part of the SAR for several years, you have seen the same steps used to move the Museum of the American Revolution at SAR Headquarters in Louisville, KY from dream to a world class brick-and-mortar presentation. That has meant a needs assessment, and included exploring the needs for a building, dividing the usable area according to purpose, and funding among others. At several steps in the process, Compatriots reviewed, rethought, and modified the project, guided especially by prudence.

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Without knowing it, you may have used *prudence* to guide your meeting plans and programs. You may have been part of someone else’s project as they used *prudence* to quietly guide them in their decisions.

Questions to guide your thinking

Have you been part of a plan or project that has used *prudence* to achieve success for your family, business, chapter, or society?

Perhaps you have used this method to plan for a new home or a special vacation?

Perhaps you were part of a state or chapter plan to reach out and promote the SAR and its mission of teaching the principles of freedom and liberty using the Patriot Chest?

Perhaps, like that George Washington Chapter of PASSAR, you have participated in conceiving and implementing a plan like installing informational signs at cemetery entrances using QR codes to display the listing of Revolutionary War patriots buried there.

Perhaps you have participated in the implementation of a state or chapter newsletter.

Or you have been part of the dues-collection process.

Give some quiet thought on how you rely on *prudence* in your personal life. Pay attention to both the positive and negative uses and results. It will enlighten you.

**Prudence** or *wisdom* is one of the Four Core Virtues of A SAR Gentleman.



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