

## *Towards Moral Perfection: A Self-Improvement Journal*



Benjamin Franklin believed the improvement of one's "bad habits" was an admirable goal. Toward that end, he embarked upon a self-improvement journey, chronicled in his *Autobiography*. He did not quite achieve the results he hoped for, but he learned a great deal about himself in the process.

As you are aware, Ben identified thirteen "virtues" to cultivate. He hoped focusing exclusively on one virtue at a time for a week would enable him to more easily achieve his goal of moral perfection. Your mission is to choose one virtue you would like to cultivate and focus on this virtue for one week. Each day, you will write a journal entry about your experiences in cultivating that journal: successes and failures. The journals may be typed or handwritten. I encourage you to be creative with your final product. You may use one of Ben's virtues or you may choose one of your own. In the past, students of mine have chosen to work on talking back to their parents, while others have found Franklin's aim for order in all things to be a challenge worthy of their attention. Think of something that you specifically would like to improve about yourself.

Like Franklin, you may find that you aren't as successful as you'd like to have been. That's okay. The important thing in life is that we continue to try to improve and that we strive for success. You may find it helpful to keep a journal like Franklin's, with days of the week noted across the top and making note of pertinent encounters with your goal. For example, if you are striving for industry and you find yourself idly flipping channels on the television instead of engaged in more useful activity, make note of that in your notebook. I would suggest you might compose your journals close to the end of the day, so you can reflect upon the entire day. You can use the notes you've written. You will have seven journal entries in total, one for each day of the week. Think about the project for tonight, decide which virtue you will tackle, and begin working on it tomorrow. The due date for this project is \_\_\_\_\_.