

Knightly Conduct

chiv·al·ry (shĭv'əl-rē)

n., pl. -ries.

1. The medieval system, principles, and customs of knighthood.
2.
 - a. The qualities idealized by knighthood, such as bravery, courtesy, honor, and gallantry toward women.
 - b. A manifestation of any of these qualities.
3. A group of knights or gallant gentlemen.

[Middle English chivalrie, from Old French chevalerie, from chevalier, knight.]

chivalry

Knighly class of feudal Europe, and especially the gallantry and honor expected of medieval knights. The ideal of courteous knightly conduct developed in the 12th – 13th century. It arose out of feudal obligation and stressed loyalty and obeisance by a knight to his God, his lord, and his lady, thus melding Christian and military virtues.

Chivalry was greatly strengthened by the [Crusades](#), a military endeavor on behalf of Christianity, which led to the founding of the earliest orders of chivalry, the [Knights of Malta](#) and the [Templars](#). In addition to loyalty and honor, the chivalric virtues included valor, piety, courtesy, and chastity.

Questions of love and honor were combined in the ethos of [courtly love](#). The knight's lady was meant to be unobtainable, ensuring chastity; the feminine ideal thus became melded with the Virgin Mary.

In the 14th – 15th century, chivalry came to be associated increasingly with aristocratic display and public ceremony, particularly in [jousting](#) tournaments, rather than with service in the field.

The Ten Commandments of the Code of Chivalry

From *Chivalry* by Leon Gautier

- I. Thou shalt believe all that the Church teaches, and shalt observe all its directions.
- II. Thou shalt defend the Church.
- III. Thou shalt repect all weaknesses, and shalt constitute thyself the defender of them.
- IV. Thou shalt love the country in the which thou wast born.
- V. Thou shalt not recoil before thine enemy.
- VI. Thou shalt make war against the Infidel without cessation, and without mercy.
- VII. Thou shalt perform scrupulously thy feudal duties, if they be not contrary to the laws of God.
- VIII. Thou shalt never lie, and shall remain faithful to thy pledged word.
- IX. Thou shalt be generous, and give largess to everyone.
- X. Thou shalt be everywhere and always the champion of the Right and the Good against Injustice and Evil.

A Code of Chivalry

Prowess: To seek excellence in all endeavors expected of a knight, martial and otherwise, seeking strength to be used in the service of justice, rather than in personal aggrandizement.

Justice: Seek always the path of 'right', unencumbered by bias or personal interest. Recognize that the sword of justice can be a terrible thing, so it must be tempered by humanity and mercy. If the 'right' you see rings agrees with others, and you seek it out without bending to the temptation for expediency, then you will earn renown beyond measure.

Loyalty: Be known for unwavering commitment to the people and ideals you choose to live by. There are many places where compromise is expected; loyalty is not amongst them.

Defense: (The ideal knight was sworn by oath to defend his liege lord and those who depended upon him.) Seek always to defend your nation, your family, and those to whom you believe worthy of loyalty.

The Code of Chivalry

From the Rifts: England Supplement

Courage: (Being a knight often means choosing the more difficult path, the personally expensive one.) Be prepared to make personal sacrifices in service of the precepts and people you value. At the same time, a knight should seek wisdom to see that stupidity and courage are cousins. Courage also means taking the side of truth in all matters, rather than seeking the expedient lie. Seek the truth whenever possible, but remember to temper justice with mercy, or the pure truth can bring grief.

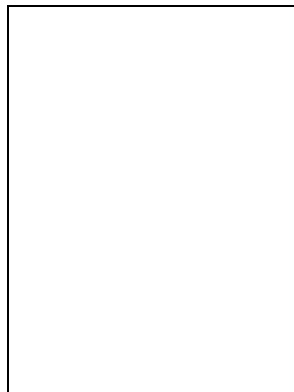
Faith: A knight must have faith in his beliefs, for faith roots him and gives hope against the despair that human failings create.

Humility: Value first the contributions of others; do not boast of your own accomplishments, let others do this for you. Tell the deeds of others before your own, according them the renown rightfully earned through virtuous deeds. In this way the office of knighthood is well done and glorified, helping not only the gentle spoken of but also all who call themselves knights.

Largesse: Be generous in so far as your resources allow; largesse used in this way counters gluttony. It also makes the path of mercy easier to discern when a difficult decision of justice is required.

Nobility: Seek great stature of character by holding to the virtues and duties of a knight, realizing that though the ideals cannot be reached, the quality of striving towards them ennobles the spirit, growing the character from dust towards the heavens. Nobility also has the tendency to influence others, offering a compelling example of what can be done in the service of rightness.

Franchise: Seek to emulate everything I have spoken of as sincerely as possible, not for the reason of personal gain but because it is right. Do not restrict your exploration to a small world, but seek to infuse every aspect of your life with these qualities. Should you succeed in even a tiny measure then you will be well remembered for your quality and virtue.



- Live to serve King and Country.
- Live to defend Crown and Country and all it holds dear.
- Live one's life so that it is worthy of respect and honor.
- Live for freedom, justice and all that is good.
- Never attack an unarmed foe.
- Never use a weapon on an opponent not equal to the attack.
- Never attack from behind.
- Avoid lying to your fellow man.
- Avoid cheating.
- Avoid torture.
- Obey the law of king, country, and chivalry.
- Administer justice.
- Protect the innocent.
- Exhibit self control.
- Show respect to authority.
- Respect women.
- Exhibit Courage in word and deed.
- Defend the weak and innocent.
- Destroy evil in all of its monstrous forms.
- Crush the monsters that steal our land and rob our people.
- Fight with honor.
- Avenge the wronged.
- Never abandon a friend, ally, or noble cause.
- Fight for the ideals of king, country, and chivalry.
- Die with valor.
- Always keep one's word of honor.
- Always maintain one's principles.
- Never betray a confidence or comrade.
- Avoid deception.
- Respect life and freedom.
- Die with honor.
- Exhibit manners.
- Be polite and attentive.
- Be respectful of host, women, and honor.
- Loyalty to country, King, honor, freedom, and the code of chivalry.
- Loyalty to one's friends and those who lay their trust in thee