

The importance of  
values in the  
pardoner's tale and  
the wife of bath's tale  
by ge...



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Values are defined as things that you believe are important in the way you live and work. However, values of those in the middle ages differ from values today. Values such as religion, loyalty, forgiveness, and humility were present during this time period. Literature such as *The Pardoner's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and *Morte D' Arthur*, emphasize the importance of these values on the lives of the citizens.

In, *The Pardoner's Tale*, author Geoffrey Chaucer uses satire to criticize the middle age value of religion as well as how comfortable many of them was with death and the afterlife. During the middle ages, individuals did not question the authority of church nor its workers. Chaucer satirizes the pardoner in a comedic manner by describing how emasculant his appearance was by comparing him to a castrated male horse. Chaucer also explains how gullible the people were believing the pardoner although he was using fake relics. The text states, " You'll have me kissing you old Breeches too/And swear they were the relic of a saint" (Chaucer 292-293). The host is upset by the Pardoner's lies and call to the attention that his relics are fake thus making what he says in believable. People of the time were highly gullible, believing the pardoner will free them of their sins. Thus enabling them to go to heaven. However, the pardoner is not what he is expected to be, he is rather corrupt. Being that he is a representation of the church, this shows the church's desire for money in order to better their community. However, most of which the Pardoner kept. Religion was an important part medieval society.

Geoffrey Chaucer uses satirizes in The Wife of Bath, to show the importance of the middle age value of religion as well as forgiveness. The church emphasized the importance of chastity. Although very religious, Chaucer's character, Wife of Bath, would disagree on many ideas of the church regarding sexual actions for wealth during the time period. The Wife of Bath is a very shapely however outspoken women compared to most of the time who were considered property of their husbands. This being essential because she was known as a role model for the "feminist movement" during the middle ages. However, the feminist movement during this period was different from that of the 1800s. During this wave, women strived for equality. However, during the middle ages, feminism was known as having control over one's husband in a relationship. The text states, And-Jesu hear my prayer!- cut short the lives/ of those who won't be governed by their wives," (Chaucer 437-438). These lines present the moral of the Wife of Bath's tale to the other pilgrims as to the perspective of women during the time. Forgiveness is displayed through her tale of a rather lusty knight committing a crime which should have resulted in death. The text states, "But that the queen, and other ladies too,/ Implored the king to exercise his grace/So ceaselessly, he gave the queen the case/And granted her his life, and she could choose/ Whether to show him mercy or refuse,"(70-74). The queen and other females exercised grace and forgiveness by sending him on a quest to find what women desire most and postponing his death rather than killing him right away. Forgiveness is shown through this, and this aids to the society growing.

In *Morte D'Arthur* values such as loyalty and humility are present through this literature. The tale explains as to how King Arthur came to power as well as background of some of his knights. When first pulling out the sword from the rock, Arthur displays humility. Following this action, he gains respect from his relatives. The passage states, " Alas, said Arthur, my own dear father and brother, why kneel ye to me?" (Malory 6). After being told he proceeded to ask ' Why?' and agreed to pulling out the sword several times following before the community accepted him as their king. Although doubted, Arthur remained humble as well as forgiving to those who doubted him. Another value includes loyalty. After Launcelot steals Arthur's wife, Sir Gawain goes to war to defend Arthur. Although Launcelot is loved by all and never defeated, Gaiwan stood his ground. The text states, " Where art thou, Sir Launcelot? Come forth, thou false traitor knight and recant"(Malory 2). Although he knows that Launcelot is capable of winning, Gaiwan did not let this hinder his loyalty to Arthur. Forgiveness and mercy are strong values of the time, they are also knightly virtues, key characteristics of an exemplary knight.

Literature such as *The Pardoner's Tale*, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, and *Morte D' Arthur* depict the values of loyalty, humility, forgiveness and religion in the Middle Ages. Although they differ from values today, these values shape the community and exercise their beliefs. These are the beliefs that are important to them and displays how many lived during the time.