

What is Virtue?

The word virtue comes from two Latin words that mean "mature strength," based on integrity.

A person grows in virtue as he makes right decisions, one after another. Developing virtue is much like building muscles or gaining skill in a sport or music. Doing the right thing again and again creates a habit that becomes easier and easier to do.

A person of virtue will admit his mistakes, will do what it takes to correct them, and will work on improving the next time.

A person who is building virtue will guard himself from wrong influences and will be willing to be alone if that is needed in order to do the right thing. People of virtue are leaders because others can trust them to do what is right.



"Virtue"
vs. impurity

"Demonstrating honesty and integrity in my life by doing what is right."

I will:

- ◆ Do what is right and encourage others to do the same.
- ◆ Guard my eyes, ears, words, and thoughts.
- ◆ Learn to stand alone.
- ◆ Abstain from anything which might damage or pollute my mind or body.
- ◆ Treat others as I would want them to treat me.

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Sometimes choosing virtue is like canoeing upstream, but it can be done and the effort is worth it!

Memory Work

*I will do the things I know are right and make it clearly known.
I will keep myself from harmful things and learn to stand alone.*

*I'll watch my words, I'll guard my thoughts, the things I hear and see.
I will do to others as I'd like for them to do to me.*

*Commitments are important steps to guard us from disaster.
And just to show we know them well,
Let's say them even faster.*

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What does virtue look like?

1. Admitting to your mom that you broke her favorite vase.
2. Going home if your friend chooses to watch a movie that is bad.
3. Not taking part when your friends decide to damage property at school.
4. Trying to persuade those friends to stop their wrong behavior.
5. Choosing to sit by a lonely new student at lunch even though your friends are sitting at a different table.

Virtue in Nature

The Grapevine



Everyone loves big, plump grapes! Did you know that the vine keeper has to work hard to be sure his vineyard produces these wonderful, juicy grapes? We can learn how to grow in virtue by following the vine keeper's practices.

First, he puts the grape seed into very good soil, loaded with needed nutrients. Did you know that we need to be planted in good "soil" too? Our "soil" should be nurturing also-an environment of encouragement, positivity, love, peace and honesty.

The vine keeper makes sure the soil is loose so that the grapevine can put down good roots. Then the plant can stay upright in bad weather and in winds. For you to have strong roots, you will need to develop habits of making right choices, day after day, year after year. When difficult times come, you will be prepared to show virtue and integrity, because you will be deeply rooted in it.

The vine keeper has been very careful to plant the grape seed where the plant will receive lots of sunshine to give it energy to grow. A grapevine planted in the shade will not grow properly, because it cannot make the nutrients it now needs without sunlight. Likewise, if

you stay in the shade-in other words, hide things secretly-you won't grow either. Virtue is developed by honesty and transparency with our family, teachers, and friends.

As the grapevine grows, the vine dresser builds a fence with support wires for the long grape branches to wrap around. If those branches fell to the ground, the leaves would not receive the necessary sunlight. In a similar way, you have authorities to give you rules and guidelines so you will be safe and grow in the right direction, too.

Without water a grapevine would die! The vine keeper makes sure he waters the grapevines regularly. To grow strong in virtue, you also need "water": good role models, uplifting books and movies, wholesome music, and friends who want to do right.

There is a danger the vine keeper watches for! Birds, wanting to nest under the cool grapevines, carry a disease called "phylloxera." A vine will die from it in 3 or more years. We, too, need to guard our lives from influences that appear harmless or even delightful, but pull us in a direction that will be harmful.

Next time you see a beautiful bunch of grapes, remember what it took to produce it. And then think of the wonderful fruit in your life that will come from choosing and developing virtue!

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