

YEAR OF GROWTH

VIRTUE WEEK 4

EXERCISE

How To Grow in Virtue:

It is important to understand the meaning of virtue and to see examples of the characteristic in Scripture. Yet, it is also important to do the work necessary to have virtue and to develop stronger strength of character. Our focus will be on passages that teach what one must do to have and to grow virtue.

Day One – Sunday

Reflect on the definitions of the words that God used to describe virtue. Think back over the previous lessons and Old Testament examples of virtue. Read again the passages that you have written. Recall the verses you have memorized. Focus on the meaning of virtue and prepare to explore more Bible examples of virtue.

Day Two – Monday

1 Peter 1:13-17 – Prepare

Remember that the word “virtue” has to do with manly strength in one’s morality. The Bible uses several phrases that illustrate this kind of maturity and might. To “gird up one’s loins” was to prepare for a manly feat of strength. It referred to the tucking of one’s tunic into his belt so it would not hinder him in running or battle.

If we want to be morally strong, we must prepare ourselves – we must gird up our loins. Peter declared that this was a preparation of the mind. We must think soberly – correctly, with a biblical view of the world. We must think hopefully – with trust in the promise of grace and victory at Jesus’ return. And we must think resolutely – determined that no matter the cost, we will live a life of virtue.

Day Three – Tuesday

Acts 24:14-16 – Exercise

Just like physical strength, possessing and developing moral strength requires exercise. Paul exercised himself to live with a good conscience in his relationship with God and man. This did not happen by accident. It required preparation of the mind and hard work! The word for ‘exercise’ means, “To train or strive; to take pains, to labor; to form by art.” To live a life of virtue, one must practice being virtuous (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 5:14; 12:11).

Day Four – Wednesday**Matthew 25:14-30 – Overcome Fear**

Doing what is right often results in ridicule, hardship, suffering, and persecution. To do right in the face of such threats requires courage. One who is fearful will not live a virtuous life.

Consider Jesus' parable and the man who was given one talent. He knew who the lord was and what was expected of him – he knew the right thing to do. However, because he was afraid, he did nothing with his talent but hide it. By choosing to do nothing he chose to do evil. The Lord called him wicked, slothful, and unprofitable. Virtue must be chosen and practiced. To do this, fear must be overcome.

Day Five – Thursday**2 Timothy 2:1-7 – Embrace the Battle**

Each Christian must realize that he or she is in the midst of a daily battle against forces of evil. At stake is one's eternal soul and the souls of all around him. However, more than just understanding this fact, the Christian must embrace the fight. As soldiers in the Lord's army, we must choose virtue because it is right – but also because it is the winning battle tactic! The war must be fought by overcoming with good (Romans 12:21). Be morally strong to please God and to defeat the enemy.

Day Six – Friday**Ephesians 6:10-20 – Stand**

Virtue includes having the strength to stand on the battlefield, against the enemy, and for the Truth of God. Prepare for the fight. Put on the whole armor of God. And, having done all this, stand firm, strong, and immovable! It will not be easy or painless; but stand! Stand on the side of right. Stand with the faithful defending against the enemy and attacking with Truth! Stand with the Lord of Hosts! Live with virtue and have the strength to stand!

Day Seven – Saturday**Philippians 1:12-18 – Remember Your Influence**

In very difficult situations, Paul chose virtue. He had the strength to serve the Lord faithfully even though it cost him dearly. He was arrested, slandered, mocked, and jailed for preaching the Gospel. Yet, he chose to continue to do right. Part of his motivation was the power of a godly influence. Because Paul stood firm, others had become Christians. Because of his example of virtue other Christians were emboldened to preach the Gospel just as he had.

Consider how many would have been discouraged if Paul had given up and abandoned the Gospel. When you stand it encourages others to stand. Your strength of character motivates others to be strong. Never underestimate the power of a virtuous influence.