

## Unit 2: The Seven Virtues

### Lesson 2.1: What is a Virtue?

#### Teacher Preparation and Materials Needed:

**For the Lesson:** Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

*Recommended Orthodox Study Bible* [HERE](#).

*Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition* [HERE](#).

#### Scripture Reference:

No reference at this time.

#### Activities:

Implement based on available time. Detailed instructions and materials lists are provided in the lesson.

Activity: Plant Your Garden

Discussion Activity: “Name That Virtue”

#### Words of the week:

առաքինութիւն - arr-a-keen-oo-tyoon - virtue

դժուար - tuzh-var - difficult

թիւրիւն - tyoor-een - easy

#### Objective:

Students will understand that virtues are good habits that shape who we become, not just what we do. They will identify one specific virtue to practice this week and learn that growing in virtue is a lifelong journey empowered by God’s grace.

#### Moral Character Focus:

This lesson introduces the concept of virtue as inner strength and moral excellence. Students will learn that Christian growth isn’t merely about avoiding sin but actively becoming people of good character who reflect Christ’s nature through habits of holiness, wisdom, and love.

#### Memory Verse:

*“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;  
and to virtue knowledge...”*

**- 2 Peter 1:5-8**

# Lesson

## Lesson Opening & Creating Interest:

*\*Wisdom Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

### Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տու՛ր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց եւ ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos yev paneets yen kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

## Lesson Body: What is a virtue?

Okay, so you just spent weeks learning about the seven deadly sins—pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. Heavy stuff. All the ways things can go wrong. But here’s the good news: that’s not the whole story.

Christianity isn’t just about avoiding bad things. It’s about becoming something amazing. It’s about growing strong, becoming free, and actually turning into the person you were created to be.

Today we’re starting something completely different, and way more exciting. We’re talking about virtues.

If sins are the weeds that mess up your life, virtues are the good plants that make it beautiful. And the really cool part? You get to choose what grows.

## So... What IS a Virtue?

To start simply, a virtue is a good habit that makes you strong. The word “virtue” actually comes from the Latin word *virtus*, which means strength, excellence, courage, and manliness (related to the Latin word, *vir*, meaning “man”). In Armenian, we say “առաքինութիւն” (*arr-a-keen-oo-tyoon*), which means courageous, brave, pious, and pure in spirit.

### Here’s the difference between a rule and a virtue:

- A rule says: “Don’t lie.”
- A virtue makes us the kind of person who doesn’t want to lie, because honesty has become part of who we are.
- Virtues aren’t just things you do. They’re things you become.

## Why Should We Even Care About Virtues?

**Q:** *What do you want your life to be like when you’re 25? 35? 50?*

Most people want to be happy. They want good relationships. They want to feel peaceful. They want their life to mean something. Well, here’s the catch: You don’t just wake up one day with those things. You have to become the kind of person who can have them. If you want deep friendships, you need to become loyal and honest. If you want inner peace, you need to become patient and content. If you want people to trust you, you need to become reliable and true to your word. If you want to make a difference, you need to become brave and generous.

Virtues build the kind of person who can actually live a good life, not just talk about it. Jesus doesn’t just want to forgive your sins and send you on your way. He wants to transform you from the inside out. He wants to make you strong, free, and fully alive.

### Words of the Week:

առաքինութիւն - arr-a-keen-oo-tyoon - virtue

դժուար - tuzh-var - difficult

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### Memory Verse:

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## The Virtues We Will Be Exploring

Over the next few weeks, we will learn about virtues that are the exact opposite of the deadly sins. Think of them as the antidote or the cure against those poisoning seeds.

**Q:** *Let's give it a thought. How do virtues grow?*

Here's the thing: we are not born with virtues fully formed. We have to grow them, like working out to build strong muscles or learning an instrument, or endlessly practicing to become a good dancer, an athlete, or a scientist.

Think about it: nobody starts out great at anything. The first time you tried to ride a bike, you probably fell. The first time you played basketball, you missed most of your shots. The first time you played an instrument, it sounded terrible. But what happened? You practiced. You failed. You tried again. And slowly, your muscles remembered the movements, your fingers learned where to go, your brain figured out the patterns. What felt impossible at first became natural over time.

Virtues work exactly the same way. You're not born patient or kind or brave. These qualities have to be built through practice, just like any other skill. The first time you try to control your temper, you'll probably fail. The first time you try to be generous when you really want to keep something for yourself, it'll feel hard. But every time you practice, you get a little bit stronger. Every choice you make builds the habit. And eventually, with God's help and your effort, being patient or kind or brave becomes part of who you are, not just something you force yourself to do.

## Prayers for Being Virtuous

Clothe us, Lord our God, with the armor of righteousness, that we may be strong and victorious in the battle with Satan. And extinguishing all of his fiery arrows, make us steadfast against dark things of the night and keeps us from the demons' temptations in the day. And with the vigilance of the shining daylight, with virtue let us for the salvation of our souls, in honor and glory of the Holy Trinity. Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen. *(Prayer of the Midday Service)*

Hear our voice, O Lord our God, receive our supplications, the lifting up of our hands and the words of our prayers. Sanctify this our offering of the evening, that we may prepare it for thy pleasure with a sweet smell of fragrance. Increase in us, O Lord almighty, faith, hope and charity and all deeds of virtue, so that we may always devoutly obey thine ordinances by day and by night according to thy beneficent will, and that we may be worthy to beseech thee for the salvation of our souls and for our spiritual life, O Lord, and to find grace and mercy from thee and giving thanks to glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen. *(Prayer of the Evening Service)*

The Problem (Sin)	The Solution (Virtue)	What It Means
Pride	Humility	Knowing who you are—not too high, not too low
Envy	Kindness	Celebrating others instead of resenting them
Anger	Patience	Staying calm even when you're tested
Sloth	Diligence	Doing what needs to be done, even when it's hard
Greed	Generosity	Giving freely because God provides
Gluttony	Self-Control	Your soul leading your body, not the other way around
Lust	Chastity/Purity	Loving others with respect and holiness

## The 5 Stages of Growing a Virtue:

- 1. Desire** – You realize you want to be different  
*"I don't want to be the angry kid anymore. I want to be someone who stays calm."*
- 2. Practice** – You start making small choices in that direction  
*"Next time I get frustrated, I'm going to take three deep breaths before I respond."*
- 3. Failure** (yes, really) – You mess up. A lot. And that's okay.  
*"I lost my temper again. But I'm not giving up."*
- 4. Grace** – You ask God for help, and He actually gives it  
*"Lord, I can't do this on my own. Make me patient."*
- 5. Habit** – Over time, it becomes easier and more natural  
*"Wow, I didn't even freak out when that happened. I'm actually changing."*

**Important truth:** You won't be perfect. And that's not the point. The point is that you're becoming better little by little, choice by choice, day by day.

### Why This Is Actually Hard

- Humility sounds boring when pride makes you feel powerful
- Patience is annoying when you just want what you want now
- Kindness feels impossible when someone's being a jerk to you
- Self-control is hard when everyone else is doing whatever they want

### But here's what no one tells you:

- The sins that feel good in the moment? They wreck your life over time.
- The virtues that feel hard at first? They set you free.
- Pride isolates you. Humility connects you.
- Anger ruins relationships. Patience builds them.
- Greed makes you anxious. Generosity gives you peace.
- The easy path leads to a hard life.
- The hard path leads to a good life.

## Activity: Plant Your Garden

\*Each student creates a “Soul Garden” poster.

**Materials:** Colored paper, markers, scissors, glue, pens

### Instructions:

1. Draw a garden plot with soil at the bottom and sky at the top
2. Create 3-5 flowers (cut from colored paper or drawn)
3. On each flower petal, write:
  - One virtue you want to grow (patience, kindness, courage, etc.)
  - One way you’ll “water” it this week (prayer, asking for help, practicing in a specific situation)
4. On the stem or roots, write:
  - Why this virtue matters to you (“I want to stop fighting with my sister” or “I want people to trust me”)
  - Optional: Add weeds as reminders of the sins you’re working on removing
5. Share (if comfortable):
  - Go around and let students explain one flower they drew and why they chose it.
  - Display: Create a classroom board titled “Our Garden: Growing in Grace” where everyone’s flowers can be posted.

## Discussion Activity: “Name That Virtue”

**How it works:** Read out these quick scenarios one at a time. After each one, students call out which virtue is being shown.

### Scenarios:

1. Your teammate misses the winning shot. Instead of getting mad, you tell them “We’ll get it next time.”

Answer: Patience

2. You find \$20 on the ground at school near someone’s open backpack. You give it to them.

Answer: Honesty/Justice

3. Your little sister asks you to help with homework when you’re in the middle of a game. You pause and help her.

Answer: Kindness/Diligence

4. Everyone’s making fun of the new kid. You sit with them at lunch.

Answer: Courage/Kindness

5. You really want the last slice of pizza, but you let your friend have it.

Answer: Generosity/Self-Control

### Follow-up:

Ask the class: “Which of these would be hardest for you to actually do? Why?”

Let 3-4 students share briefly, then wrap up by reminding them that recognizing when virtue is hard is the first step to practicing it.

# Review

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## Memory Verse Review:

*“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge...” (2 Peter 1:5-8)*

## Words of the Week:

առաքի՛նութի՛ւն - *arr-a-keen-oo-tyoon* - virtue

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## Life Application

***What are we going to do with what we have learned today?***

This week, pay attention to one specific moment each day when you have a choice between an easy path (sin) and a hard path (virtue). Notice how you feel before you choose, what you decide, and how you feel afterward. Remember that every small choice is helping you become the person God created you to be.

## Lesson Review:

***Questions:***

1. What does the word “virtue” mean? *(A good habit that makes you strong, moral excellence)*
2. What is the memory verse for this lesson? *(“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely... think about these things.” Philippians 4:8)*
3. What’s the difference between a rule and a virtue? *(A rule tells you what to do, a virtue makes you the kind of person who naturally does good things)*
4. Name three of the seven virtues that oppose the deadly sins. *(Humility, kindness, patience, diligence, generosity, self-control, chastity/purity)*
5. What are the five stages of growing a virtue? *(Desire, practice, failure, grace, habit)*
6. Why is failure part of growing in virtue? *(Because we learn from mistakes and it teaches us to depend on God’s grace)*
7. Why do virtues matter for your future? *(They help you become the kind of person who can have good relationships, inner peace, and a meaningful life)*
8. Can you grow in virtue on your own, or do you need God’s help? *(You need God’s help through His grace and the Holy Spirit)*

\* *Departing Prayer, written by St. Nersess the Grace-filled (Shnorhali).*

**Close with prayer:**

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesher-ee, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sa-sanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.