

BCL Ep. 334 Summer Flashback: Building Virtue at Home and School with Dr. Timothy Dornlan

In this Base Camp Live flashback series, we're dropping in on an interview with Dr. Tim Dornlund, along with two of his high school students. At the time, Tim was a head of school in Alabama. And this conversation, although five years old, is one of those timeless topics and conversations where we're addressing this issue that often we hear in classical circles about how do we really build virtue in our children? You're gonna hear from Tim's perspective, as well as from these high school students.

It's a great way to be encouraged and learn some practical tools as we continue to raise the next generation. All this and more on this episode of Base Camp Live. Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation.

Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings. We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Base Camp Live.

Now your host, Davies Owens. Welcome to another episode of Base Camp Live. Davies Owens here with you.

For many of you listening right now, summer is here, or about to be here. You're very close to ending a school year. It's hard to believe it's the start of summer, which means it's conference season.

For many of you, I get to connect with you there at SCL and ACCS conferences and other places this summer. Love to hear from you, as always, info at BaseCampLive.com. We're in the midst of a flashback series, and why are we doing that? Well, if you've been around Base Camp Live for any time, first of all, we've been at this for a while, eight years now, and there's a lot of, as they used to say, gold in them there hills, a good Base Camp analogy, or image, I suppose, in that we do what's often called evergreen content, so it's timeless content. The idea being what we're talking about today, with virtue, should be the same yesterday, today, I don't know if forever, but it's worth going back to, especially when you get to hear from students.

So excited to give you just a glimpse back into this great conversation with Tim Dornlund. If you don't know Tim, he is a great friend. He's been around the classical Christian school movement for years, he's a prolific writer, he's worn many hats from being head of school to most recently serving as a staff member at the ACCS.

He's now officially on his way this summer to become head of school there at the classical school of Wichita, where I've been to speak before, and I love the families and administrative team that's there, so excited to have Tim joining that great organization. If you're not familiar with Tim, he's a prolific writer, as I mentioned, his book, *The Classical Christian Virtues*, The

Seven Virtues, that have really shaped classical education is one of many things that he's written about, and there's show notes you can go and take a look at all of that. But Tim is a great contributor to our movement, and I'm excited to give you an opportunity to have a chance just to listen in if you weren't around a few years ago when we actually had this specific conversation at that time.

As always, I wanna say thank you to the organizations that come alongside Base Camp Live and just provide resources and encouragement to us. Wilson Hill Academy is an amazing organization that provides classical Christian education online to students around the world. It's definitely a great solution for many who are looking for alternatives to brick and mortar schools, and also just great ways to supplement even educators in our traditional schools.

Of course, I wanna say thank you as well to Life Architect Coaching and Tammy Peterson and her team and the great resources that she provides. You can hear more about all of our great partners on the partner page of the Base Camp Live website. And of course, big shout out to all of us who are part of the Zipcast community.

So grateful for all of you who are already using Zipcast and what we call 1.0 this past school year, folks like James Cowart, head of school at Trinitas Christian School in New Castle, Oklahoma, and Jason Carr, head of school at Riverbend Academy in Ormond Beach, Florida. You guys, along with your faculty and parents and students have been a part of the Base Camp Live community and the Zipcast community. And so we are super excited.

We still have space this coming school year for this brand new 2.0 Zipcast platform. What a wonderful way week over week to not only give voice to your families if you're ahead of school speaking and recording kind of your fireside chat, but also getting to supplement with some great syndicated content that we produce. So all that at zipcast.media. Well, without further ado, we're gonna jump back in time to this amazing conversation with Dr. Tim Dernlund and his students.

Well, welcome to Base Camp Live. Davies Owens on the line with Dr. Tim Dernlund. How are you, Tim? I'm doing great, Davies.

It's good to be with you again. It is good to be with you again. If folks don't know a little bit of our story, so you had invited me down to this wonderful auction about a month ago.

And I remember flying out, I actually said this at the auction dinner on the monitor on the TV on the screen in front of me on the plane flying down, there was the map of the U.S. The virus was just starting to really take off. All of the states in the U.S. were red except for Idaho and Alabama. And maybe West Virginia and your Bayshore Christian School down there in Fairhope, Alabama.

And I thought, I've got to go through the Atlanta airport. So I'll just tie a bag on my head, run quickly through here and I'll be fine. So we had a remarkable auction dinner, you guys.

I was so glad you came in and spoke. It was just amazing to hear your message. And we did make the decision the day that you were here to go to teacher-directed home learning.

So you were literally just ahead of the wave of that tsunami as you ran out to get home. I know, exactly, I did. I felt like the guy on the beach who built the last sandcastle.

And I'm like, there's a big old wave coming. I better run fast. So we got out.

But all that to say, by way of introduction, you and I sat down with some of your students and talked about this wonderful book that you've published entitled Classical Christian Virtues. And we're gonna, basically what I want to do here just for a few minutes is kind of reintroduce this in light of our new reality. And then we'll kind of edit back over to the interview there that we did with you and the students.

But as you and I were talking about before, this is talking about how do we instill virtues in our students? That's one of the most foundational objectives we have as parents, as Classical Christian educators. But somehow that just felt a little bit off topic for a little while there as we were all trying to reinvent our lives in light of the pandemic. We all needed to get very pragmatic in a hurry for just a little bit.

But now I think we're ready to talk about virtue. Now we're ready to talk about it. And as you and I were just saying, and I think that's partially because I think we've, okay, we've been doing this for a month and we are having meals together more often than we ever have, which is good.

And as we've done, we've been doing a number of interviews with Keith McCurdy just on kind of going the distance and kind of parenting and teaching in the midst of all of this. But I think we're now ready to say, what are some ways we can go deep while we're in our homes and sitting around the kitchen table, what else can we talk about? So maybe just kind of by way of introduction, just talk about how you're seeing this book being used. You just sent a copy of the ebook out to your families.

We're gonna make that available too, but just share a little bit of your vision of this tool in the midst of our new reality. Oh, great. So we have the 60 virtues in the book and the vices on either side that you can fall prey to.

But in the ebook that you just mentioned, we sent out seven specific virtues that people can cultivate during the COVID-19 pandemic. And so it makes it really practical. One of them is calmness.

And so if you are developing the virtue of calmness, you're becoming more and more like Christ and being sanctified in that way. But if you fall off either side of that horse, you can fall into anxiety or inactivity. And I love the way, again, we'll get into the full interview, but just it's a very winsome way you've put this together.

Because people think of virtues and how do I explain that? So calmness is the virtue and you've got literally a negative, like a deficiency. So the deficiency is anxiety. There's a lot of that going on today.

That's not calmness. And then the excess of it would be too much in the other direction is you're so calm you become inactive. Or maybe we just call it Netflixing or something.

Or you just- Yeah, there you go. Just distracting yourself through life and not actually being calm or being focused. So, well, good.

So how do you see families maybe using this in a context of, you know, is it something you can do in a few minutes or what does this look like? Probably be best to take more than a few minutes. Certainly it's always a good time to touch on it. But like you said, as you're sitting around the table and want to just linger over the meal a little bit longer and contemplate and challenge each other, what is calmness? What does it look like? Have we been calm through this? Where have we been too anxious and had a deficiency? Or have we been sinking into the couch and Netflixing? So it stirs up some good conversation that can make it real practical and be fun for parents and kids to talk through together.

Wonderful, Tim. Well, thanks so much. We're going to jump into the interview and it's wonderful to have some of your students actually in there speaking firsthand from their use of this because you guys have, or you had, and when you were, and all together, your house students were using this as a tool.

They were guiding each other through. So it's a wonderful resource, Tim. Thanks so much for giving this as a gift to our community and look forward to, you'll have to create a volume two if this thing goes on for a while, but hopefully not.

Thank you, David. All right, thanks. In the studio with us here are students here at Bayshore.

Ellie, you want to introduce yourself? So you're in 12th grade? Yes, sir. And I've been at Bayshore since kindergarten, so I've really gotten to see the school grow, which has been really awesome. That is great.

And Ellis, you are also a senior. Yes, sir. I'm in 12th grade and I've been here since ninth grade.

Since ninth grade, okay. Yeah, where were you before that? My mom homeschooled me. Okay, all right.

So I've been homeschooling and then I came here in the ninth grade. So parents who spend any time looking at classical Christian schools and students who are in classical Christian schools, we like that word virtue. It shows up in all of our literature and our open house things, and people want virtue because it's, I guess, better than vice, if you had to pick one of the two.

But I wonder, maybe just start out with, what is virtue and why is that important? And maybe

how have we misunderstood the word? What do you think? Go ahead. Sure. Yeah, sure.

Virtue is commonly used in our schools and like you said, not done a lot with. And sometimes it's easily replaced with character or value, and those things are different, especially in modern culture. So here at Bayshore, we thought, let's do something about it and not just talk about it, but start doing something with it.

Yeah, because I think that's one of those, there's certainly an argument to be made we can talk about, just simply going through the great books, the canon of Western literature and being in a Christ-centered environment. It's just the air you breathe, this kind of virtuous air, I guess. But do we really understand what is virtue and where it comes from? And Tim, your point is interesting.

I know David Goodwin has written on this and there's actually a chart he's put together on the use of the word virtue, which was a very common word in the early 20th century, was actually increasingly or decreasingly used kind of going to the 1950s. And then what was increasingly used was the word values. So you hear that talk a lot, like we do.

Welcome to our school, we do values or we do character formation and they put a word up on the wall and sort of, hey kids, let's all be nice today. And that's kind of their idea of, and yet. Or heaven forbid, a judgment-free zone, right? Well, that just makes it easier.

If you don't even need virtues or vices, everything goes here. But it's an interesting word because virtue sounds a little old-fashioned, don't you guys think? I don't know, it just. Yeah.

How would the two of you define a virtue? I mean, when you think about what is it? So I actually wrote my senior thesis on the theological virtues. That's why you're here on the interview. You brought in the expert.

Okay, wait a minute, you should have told me that. So you wrote your senior thesis on virtue. I wrote it on the theological virtues and then pointing in Lord of the Rings to how they point us to God and why that's important.

Okay. So when I think virtues, I automatically attribute it to God because to me, anything virtuous will point you to God because he's the true source of all virtue. And that's one thing that I found to be really good throughout this book study that we've been doing is that every virtue has a Bible verse that is usually has God in it.

So whether it's with bravery and God will fight for you or faithfulness where God will be faithful to you, it's always pointing to him. It never once points to us and how good we can do virtue. It's always to how God is the source of virtue.

I think that is, you should definitely make, you need to write a book of your senior thesis. But I mean that you've nailed. Yeah, is it gonna be a book? It is, she needs to.

No, I think so. Well, and I think you, Ella, that was really well said because I think the simplest way to explain this is that most of what passes as character formation today or values training is really in this modern lens of it's really whatever's individualistic to you. So you can have like evangelicals and their churches can have evangelical values and progressives can have their values, but it's all individually based.

And what you're saying is that a virtue is actually something that comes from the realm and the sphere of the transcendent. It's something way bigger than any one of us and we don't get to choose whether we like it or not. It is what it is.

It's a virtue. It ends up being moralism, which is just based on human characteristics rather than the divine. And Tim, that's a really good point because I think sometimes people criticize our schools or even this form of, you know, when we bring virtue into our parenting is we're just doing behaviorism or I mean moralism that ties to behaviorism.

Behavior modification, behaviorism. Yeah, it's just like. And that's absolutely what we wanna resist.

Right, and then it's just basically who's got, you know, who has the most power to say, my be nice is different from your be nice. So we just get into the muckety-muck of the modern world at that point because there's no anchor point for anything. That's right.

So a virtue's anchored is what you're saying, Ella, right? So, okay, so what are the other, and we're gonna. Anchored in the true good and beautiful. It's anchored in the true good.

In the transcendence. Right, but again, I think we use this language, but we don't really know what it maybe looks like. Now having said that, I know, I wanna hear, you guys had, in your studies before you got into this book, and again, we're gonna get into the deep details of how you guys on Thursdays, I understand, are actually as a school in your house program actually going through a virtue and really talking about it and fleshing it out.

But even prior to that, so again, I'm gonna bring it at the risk of bringing Aristotle into our discussion. Bring him in. You guys have studied Aristotle as good classical Christian students.

What did he, what did you discover about virtue? So we talked about, this is a different virtue that he talked about, and there's an excess and a defect virtue, and there's the golden mean of, kind of that sweet spot in the middle that is really what you're striving for. So the golden mean's not a vice, like don't be golden and mean. That's a really bad mean.

This is like the middle. This is the middle mean. This is, like I said, like the sweet spot, exactly where you wanna be.

So I, just to maybe, because it made sense when I flipped into your book, like one of the, actually the second virtue, and we're gonna get into what all's in here, but it's like bravery. So bravery, that sounds good. We all want bravery, but if, and it's literally, Tim, you write the book

with like, it's a chart I'm looking at, and there's a positive plus sign, and there's a negative.

So the positive is in excess of, that's like, that's kind of bravery gone bad, which becomes what? Recklessness, right, Ellis? You're very rash in your decisions. So somebody could just be, yeah, rash, brash rash, all of that, you know, kind of, and that's just bravery, kind of too much of it. You kind of tipped on one, so it's like you're walking down the road, and you fall in one side of the ditch, and you'd be positive, and you're reckless, and then the negative would be what? Timidity, which is just lacking courage or confidence.

Deficiency. So, I mean, I'm already looking at this. We're gonna take a break in a minute, and come back and start unpacking how this actually works, but this is where, you know, Tim, what you've done in this book is you've taken what feels kind of like ethereal things, like virtue, and you've nailed it down into, let's take one of them, like bravery, and then let's unpack how it, in excess, on one side of the ditch can become a vice, or the other side can be a vice.

So, it's a really fascinating way to frame this. I think it's helpful. Sure, and I'm a simple-minded man, so I was just trying to take Aristotle, and make it into something that I could understand.

Yeah, well, Ellis was losing me on the golden mean. I was tracking with you, but, but, I mean, again, we laugh, but I think sometimes in this classical Christian education is that we kind of stop at that conversation. Like, well, we taught the students the golden mean of Aristotle, and great.

Now they're out there being, you know, reckless and timid with each other, and nobody explained that maybe the middle of that would be bravery, and it seems like, too, the advantage of this is that even when we're disciplining, correcting, now, A, you've given us language to use, and B, maybe recklessness isn't just a kid that's a bad kid, or doing bad things, but a kid that's just actually got the DNA of some really good bravery. That's right, that's right, that's right. He has bravery in him.

We just need to temper it, and like Ellis said, hit that sweet spot. We're gonna take a quick break, and come back, and we're gonna dig into the way that you guys here at Bayshore are actually implementing this in the classroom, and in the house program, and find out, well, I wanna know if it's really making a difference. I think it is.

I want to take just a moment during our break and let you know about the great work that's being done by Wilson Hill Academy. They offer a vibrant, rich, and accredited classical Christian education available to families and schools almost anywhere. With a click of a button, students join master teachers and friends live online from all over the world to engage in deep and lively discussions, solve math problems, conduct science experiments, translate Latin, deliver thesis presentations, and so much more.

At Wilson Hill, students make lifelong friends and graduate well-prepared for college and beyond. Discover what's possible for your family or school at wilsonhillacademy.com slash

Basecamp. Hey, Basecamp Live listeners, a recent Pew Research study revealed that only 30% of millennial and Gen Z parents live within a 100-mile radius of extended family.

That means that many families are missing the wisdom and support of older generations, and more than ever, we need strong, consistent school communities to walk next to us, providing rich connection and helpful weekly tips. That is exactly why I created Zipcast. Zipcast gives schools a proven platform to communicate more personally and effectively with their parent community.

Imagine as a parent receiving a short weekly audio message from your school leadership, not just announcements, but real insights into what's on their hearts and minds, paired with practical wisdom from national parenting and educational experts like Keith McCurdy and Justin Early, along with experts on classical Christian education. We even include short testimonials and parenting tips from fellow parents all around the country. You can listen anywhere and at any time.

And now with Zipcast 2.0, schools can customize their messages even more, offering a truly personal and engaging way to build connection and shared vision. If you're a school leader not yet using Zipcast, I wanna encourage you to consider it for the 25, 26 school year. And if you're a parent at a school that is not yet using Zipcast, take a moment and encourage your leadership to explore it.

It's easy to use, affordable, and effective. And in today's fast-paced world, Zipcast is a proven tool used by over 60 schools this past school year to deliver encouragement, insights, and connections in just 10 minutes a week. We like to say it's about encouraging you on the go with what you need to know.

Check it all out at zipcast.media to hold your spot as we have limited spaces available for the upcoming school year. We're talking about this million-dollar classical Christian word, virtue. And the challenge, really, a lot of times, Ella, you were just saying over the break, a lot of times people graduate and head out into the world and they've got lots of head knowledge, but it doesn't really affect who they are and how they behave and live their life.

Yeah, exactly. I know a couple years ago, when we graduated our first class, and then since then, we've seen graduates who have come out absolutely loving God, and you just see that in the fruit of what they're doing. But then we've also seen graduates come out either thinking they love God, but just knowing a lot about Him, which is not the same.

And then you can just see that through their fruit, just the way they're living in college. It's not God-glorifying, and it's not pointing to what they know. It's just pointing to, it's pointing to what they have in their head, but not in their heart.

And so that's a problem that our school saw, and our solution to fix it was having these small colloquy groups, which is basically like a Bible study. It was modeled after a Bible study, and it's

groups of 12 students where we meet once a week and talk about biblical things. And so to make sure that what we know about God, but we're also practicing it in our lives.

That is, there's a lot there. First of all, yeah, I think this is the reality, whether it's in our school or even with parenting, sometimes we just kind of back to just stating moralisms, and it doesn't really shape who we are. So you guys realize we need to get people together, because it's actually when you're together and you're discussing it, and then you go live it out a bit.

So a colloquy, which sounds like some kind of form of cauliflower. I'm not sure what that is exactly. So maybe we should back up and explain what is a colloquy? What are you guys doing with that? So in colloquy, it started out where it was all the girls or all the guys in your grade, and you'd meet once a week with a teacher, and it was up to the teacher's discretion what you studied.

So for instance, my group went through finding your identity in Christ, and then there were different chapters of things that different girls struggle with, whether it be finding your identity in social media, or in your friends, or in your boyfriend, or whatever. And we just went through a different topic each week and talked about that, and then. Yeah, so back last year when we started colloquy groups, Dr. Pierce went through my senior class with just the guys, and we went through the screw tape letters.

And that was really good and really interesting, and actually sparked my idea for my senior thesis, which was angels and demons, and how the supernatural affects our faith. So the first thing I'm hearing is that as a school, administration made a very deliberate decision to say we're gonna burn some time, if I can, maybe that sounds, actually you're burning it in a good way. You're taking our precious class time, yes we are.

And we're actually gonna get through the house program, so this is, so I understand this is during that hour or so that you're every Thursday coming in there. It's multi-grade, it's not just seniors, right? Is that right? Yes, yes, that's correct. And so historically you've done it around other topics, but then of late, when did this material come out? So at the beginning of this year, Dr. Pierce said hey, we're just gonna have just the boys in the senior house, which is a little bit smaller, it's around 10 people.

And he said we're gonna go through virtues. And so we started just talking about the virtues. Did you yawn when you heard that? We're gonna go through virtues.

I was kind of like, oh, you know, virtues, this is what every classical Christian school is about. You just gotta get through this virtue talk. Right, or else I have to get through this one hour before I can go learn something about history.

But it's actually proved to be super influence on my faith and my life. And is that because, so again, kind of modeling out what this looks like. So this is a book.

Tim, how many virtues do you cover in this book? 60 virtues, so 120 vices. Wow, vices, that

doesn't sound right. You're a human, you live.

You know how easy it is to sin and fall into vice and how hard it is to walk that razor's edge. That's not fair, it's one road and two ditches. Who made that rule up? Yeah, yeah.

So 60 virtues, okay. And then this, so kind of back to the structure of this, so Ellis, you guys are sitting there Thursday. Do you do one virtue per week? Yes, we go through one virtue per week.

So walk me through, is there a virtue that you recently done and kind of stuck out to you? Give me another one. Yes, so a few weeks ago, we went over the virtue of dependability. Okay.

And in excess, it's stubbornness, and then in deficiency, it's unreliability. Okay. And Dr. Pierce pulled up a quick statistic, and it was a very small amount of Americans have one or two friends that they can trust and be dependable on.

And I thought, I'm so blessed to be here because I have about five or six, seven, eight friends that I can trust with anything, and I can depend on them. You know, if I've got a flat tire in the middle of the night, you know, I can call them and they'll come help me. And it really is one thing.

So again, so dependability is on the road, and then you get the, what are the ditches? The excess is which is, what was it? Stubbornness. Stubbornness, and then the deficiency. Is unreliability.

Unreliability. So you took this, so there's a conversation you're having with your peers. Yes.

And this, the wonderful way about how you wrote this, Tim, of course, you've got questions in here that are guiding questions. And it really, you know, all the way down to very personal, you know, I'm dependable when, or I'm, you know, kind of really reflective. So for you, Ellis, it kind of made you, you put it in the context of friendships, dependability friendships.

Yes, I did. And I was actually talking with Wyatt Bracken, another guy in the senior class, and each group, they go through the same virtue. So I was like, hey, what'd you talk about? He's like, oh, dependability.

And I was like, same here. So we had a really good conversation about that. And he's like, yeah, you know, he's like, I'm always up at 2 a.m., you know, you can call me with whatever.

And it was really great. And that really sparked more of a friendship between us. And we go to lunch every week and just talk about life.

And what I love about your thing, this is literally after the Thursday time is over. Yes. I mean, so to me, this is where it becomes, this actually may be working, Tim, because it's not actually, it's not a curricular thing.

And this is actually in lunch. Like, you guys now have new language and a new desire for

something. Oh, yes, yes.

So tell me more. This has fascinated me. So typically, at least once a month, Wyatt and Bracken and I try to go to Five Guys and just catch up on life.

Yeah. And just talk about- Which, by the way, is virtuous. Yes, yes.

Maybe it's the Five Guys. Oh, yes. If you eat too many fries, you're on one side of the ditch.

That's right. You're on the other side of the ditch. That's right, yeah.

Right. Yeah, okay. So we just talk about our struggles in life and our decisions that we have to make.

And, you know, oh, so-and-so really bothered me this week. And, oh, you know, hey, they bothered me last week. This is what helped me to get over it or whatever.

So in an example, if somebody's bothering you, did you link that back to, I know you all are only about 10 virtues into 60, I guess. Yes, yes, sir. You haven't gotten to the bothering virtue.

Is that in there? Haven't gotten to the bothering virtue, not yet. Is there a virtue for not bothering? That's 61. Oh, okay, that'll be volume two.

No, I'm sure there is. I'm sure there is, too. But seriously, Ellis, is there other, I mean, I'm fascinated by this.

So you all are eating at Five Guys and you're with your dependable friends who you can now define as dependable because you know what that actually means. Yes. And then are there, what were some of the examples of maybe where some of the things you read came out in that discussion with those guys? We talked, I mean, we've talked about just simple things like faithfulness, independability, how those kind of related.

But in order to be dependent on someone, you have to be faithful in them. And we talked a lot about that and yeah. Yeah, yeah.

I mean, again, I'm just trying to contrast the fact that you've got a tool that's so narrowly focused down these into ways that you can kind of mentally see them and then articulate what it looks like. Prior to that, as a classical Christian student, maybe what were you left, what did you have kind of in your toolbox for having these conversations? Like he's just a nice guy or I mean, what did you? No, I definitely have a closer friend, for sure. And I'm going definitely to strive for those relationships in other areas of my life.

And encourage my siblings to do so as well because it's really been really good for me. Wow, okay. I want that for my family.

I'm loving it. I mean, again, this is the proof is in the, when your curriculum gets to five guys,

you have succeeded. This is the new measuring stick, I think.

That's encouraging for me. This is my first test of hearing how it's going. Yeah.

This is great. So again, Tim, this was kind of just rough curriculum you put together to solve this problem. So in August, I realized we needed some curriculum around this.

I knew that we were talking a lot about virtues in classical schools, but I wanted us to do something about it. So as we drove our daughter up to Wake Forest to drop her off, my wife drove, and I started typing this book and got it done so that these guys could use it. Because we want to go from knowledge to belief to action.

So that there's not just a head knowledge, but it drives down to the heart and comes out of their fingertips. And it sounds like they're starting to latch onto it and realize that there's sin in the vice and sweet spot, as I said, in the virtue. And I think that really is back to what we said earlier, but this, I think, just even as adults, I mean, most of us, for sure, have never had this level of articulate thoughtfulness.

So we tend to sort of maybe over, maybe in some ways oversimplify. We think of all the deficiencies and say avoid all the deficiencies and then go do the other good things. We don't realize it's just really more of turning things on a dial.

Like all of these things need to be balanced, basically. So I think it's easier in my mind to recover recklessness back into bravery than seeing, like we said earlier. And it's even helped our discipline and discipleship here at the school.

So it's not just slapping demerits and things on an exuberant boy, realizing maybe it is some bravery or some courage or some different skills or virtues, rather, that have maybe gone too far or not far enough. And we just talk about that and seek to hit that golden mean. Well, and I think that's, even in terms of just, I mean, I hate to say self-esteem.

That's such a bad word in our world today in many ways. But in a sense, your identity of who you are and if you are wired in a very energetic, zealous way and you can be kind of reckless, there's a place for spontaneity and impulse. And these are good things.

But if you feel like all of that's bad stuff, I gotta throw that out and sit over here and be very quiet and never have any energy in me. Well, that's not actually what we're asking you to do. We're actually just to temper that and use it in a godly way.

Sure, sure. So why don't we take a quick break? I wanna come back. Ella, you've got some stories I wanna hear, too, of kind of how you see this lived out.

And we'll talk, too, about how to get this resource because this is something great that I think families can use around, I guess, around the dinner table or when they go out to Five Guys. One of the most frequent questions I hear from parents as I travel around the country is, at what

age should I give my child a phone? I get the question. It's very practical and very important to be able to communicate with our children.

And I think sometimes we think of it as an all or none. I won't give them any phone or I'll give them a fully functioning, internet-ready smartphone. There's a great solution that I'm a big fan of.

It's the Light Phone, L-I-G-H-T, Light Phone. It's built by folks that wanna help us find some sanity and the need for communication, which is very practical. The phone is very basic.

It allows you to make phone calls, to do two-way texting. It does allow podcast and allows some map features. But really, other than that, what else do you need for communication? So it's a perfect tool for adults and children alike who just wanna simplify and not have all the temptations of the full internet.

Check out the Light Phone on our partners page. And I know that it will be a blessing to your family as it has been to mine. Graduating can be intimidating.

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You know, there's a phrase that we hear probably a lot of times around the church, which is we wanna move from our head to our heart to our hands and sort of those three, when all three are working together, I think we have success. And if we leave it up in the head, that's only a third of the way there. So this feels like a tool that's moving us from a head knowledge of virtue to a heart appreciation for it, to a hand to go out and do something about it.

That's the goal. That's the goal and that's why there's a lot of questions in there about how you're acting these virtues out. Yeah, but again, it's not, and then we trip, sometimes we go from head straight to hands, we never got the heart in there, so we just went from head to moralism and so the heart part of it.

So Ellen, I wanna turn it back over to you. Again, walk me through, what has this Thursday been looking like for you? Where do you see it played out in the classroom, in the hallways? Yeah, so I gotta be honest, when I first found out that we were gonna be doing it with ninth through 12th grade girls in our house system, I was a little skeptical because I have a big issue with opening up with people that I don't know very well and I don't know a lot of the girls in the younger classes very well, except for a couple 10th graders. And so I was really skeptical of this, but I have just been astounded by how much trust opens up between the girls in that group.

We have about 12 and I've gotten to know all of them really, really well through this colloquy. And specifically, this past week, we studied the virtue of faithfulness and the excess of that is

ruthfulness and the defect of that is skepticism. Ruthfulness? Ruthlessness.

Ruthlessness. Ruthlessness, not faithfulness. Yeah.

And the other one is skepticism? Skepticism. Okay. Yeah, and our colloquy teacher, it right now is just going through a really rough season in her life and she shared that faithfulness to her has just taken on a whole new meaning in this, just seeing God's faithfulness as opposed to just the people in her life right now who are not fulfilling that virtue.

And she started out the chapter by this quote by James Hudson Taylor that says, a little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness in little things is a great thing. And she started us by asking, so how can we be faithful in the little things? And that was just really, really thought provoking and it was so interesting to see different people's ideas because we think about that question, but it's really hard to come up with tangible ways that we can play that out and that plays into the head, heart, and the hands. Like we can think about faithfulness and we can truly, truly want to cultivate it, but how are we faithful in the small things? So what did that look like? Did you all, do you don't go to Five Guys, I take it, to go have your conversations? I was gonna say.

Did you, I mean, seriously, do you go, is there an off-campus conversation? Where has this created some interesting interactions? Well, it really did help me realize, and we talked about this, that so I've been in a class with several people from my class since kindergarten and that spiked the conversation that I know I could call anybody in my class, even if I'm not with them all the time, even if we're in totally different friend groups, I know that they'll be faithful in the small things. And I know Ellis touched on this earlier. For instance, my friend Emma, I've known her since kindergarten and we have two completely different friend groups.

We see each other at school and on Sundays at youth, but that's about it. And even then, I know that I could call her up at any moment and she would be at my house, just if I needed her. And so it really spiked a conversation of how are we faithful in the small things and how do we know people are gonna be faithful in the small things? Yeah, and what does it look like? Again, just giving you common language.

So what are any other, again, there's so many, 60 of them, in fact, others that you've landed on in discussions that really stood out to you? We talked a lot about dependability too, which plays into faithfulness. Yeah, it does. We talked a lot about keeping each other faithful and keeping each other steadfast in our Christian walks.

For example, several of my friends, we've talked about this idea of dependable and keeping each other accountable, like we have dependability partners is one thing our youth group does that's kind of been inspired by this discussion on dependability and how. But did the name come after the virtue was defined? Did you literally go name the group or was it already dependable but nobody? It was already called dependability partners. Okay, so you gave a little more substance to the name now.

Yes sir, yes sir. I was just gonna say for the guys in our D group, we kind of changed it, we call it accountability. Okay.

And yeah, so Wyatt got to go with five guys and Nathan is also another accountability. But again, the exercise of defining more deeply and substantively something like accountability caused you to rethink even what you're calling the group. I mean, okay.

Absolutely. Yeah. But we talked a lot about, and I've seen this played out.

I mean, I'll get texts from certain girls in my class and just checking on me throughout the week, being dependable and I know we're also attuned into how each other are doing that if somebody's struggling, you can tell without them having to say that. And that's one example of faithfulness that I've really seen. Our class has just been so faithful in the small things this year.

We've had a lot of people who have struggled with some really hard things and every single time we've had people there for them, which is something that I've just really been amazed by is how you just see thinking about faithfulness and studying virtue. It's really helped me go back and identify like, oh, wow, they were being really faithful to me in that moment and I didn't even realize it. So it's really brought a new appreciation to how I view my friendships and how I view my relationships.

That is really, it's just the power of defining words because it's interesting. There's a whole, I've been, as a church guy growing up, I mean, we throw around a term, Christianese, which is kind of just, we have a vocabulary that Christians speak that may or may not ever get out of your head, to your heart or your hands. And I think in modern times here, Christianese has gotten truncated down to a limited amount of words.

So the goal of this book is to help expand that back into these great words of virtue and vice and I'm really enjoying listening to Ellis and Ella talk because they really are becoming more human in the study of these virtues. And that's the goal, is to help them become more human and we talk a lot about developing a Christian culture and a Christian community and just hearing about their friendships that are developing and how they're using this is encouraging to me. So I'm hearing a lot of this for the first time with you too, Davies.

We'll have to definitely do a part two, but let's probably get a point in here just as we're kind of starting to wind it down a bit, but I want to hear, so for you personally, and we kind of jumped right in on this, but I mean, you've been, had a school role, I think third school here. Yes, yes. But prior to that, you have a fascinating background.

You weren't the guy that came straight out of school and stayed in the library the whole time. And you've had some pretty, no, sir. You're not afraid to wrestle people out here.

No, sir. Yeah, wrestling was a big part of my life. I wrestled till I was 30 years old, tried to make a couple Olympic teams and I coached at a lot of big 10 universities, coaching national champions and all American wrestlers and breaking down the technique and making it

practical.

You've even started a wrestling team here at the school. Yes, yes. We had 40 boys on the wrestling team.

Ellis was one of them. There you go. We actually wrestled.

We were over in Greece together a couple of weeks ago and we wrestled in one of the small coliseums over there. It was really great. That would have been worth seeing.

Up in Corinth. It was fantastic. You have a video of this? Sounds pretty intense.

It was awesome. So you're putting bravery to the test. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Who wants to take on Dr. Dirling? Again, I love that you're coming and you're kind of filtering the world through the practitioner's eyes as we've talked about. Sure, sure. For me, I just need to make the theory of things practical.

I just need to do that for myself and I think it's helpful for others. Yeah, because again, it's very easy to just leave it in the classroom and not take it back out. Ellen, Ellis, thanks so much for being here.

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Hey, we're gonna be back again next week for another episode. Please join us. We wouldn't want you to miss.