



# The Virtues and Character Development Project

*The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.*

I Thessalonians 5:24

## The story of *The Virtue and Character Development Project*

To see how God has been working in *The Virtues and Character Development Project*, the following story needs to be told. In April 2024, God began to lead toward a new project. At the starting point, there was a focus on developing resources to enable college students to develop habits (virtues) that become second nature, which would lead to good (i.e., godly) character. God used discussions with various family members, friends, and colleagues over the next several weeks to broaden the range of ages of the students, eventually to include those between age 5 (kindergarten students) and 25 (professional school students).

God directed conversations across the next several months to clarify the purpose of this project. In particular, it became evident that the resources to be created need to be targeted toward parents, teachers, and church leaders, i.e., those who work with the students. Furthermore, dissemination of the resources needs to be through churches, Christian schools, and homeschool groups. All resources will be available in digital format for download at no cost to the user.

To accomplish the goal of producing materials that could be used with students in the various settings, an organization was necessary. God brought individuals together for conversations that initially revealed several teams would be needed: Board of Directors, Advisory Team, Planning Team. The Board of Directors would be responsible for the operations. The Advisory Team would be responsible for verifying the materials produced would remain true to the mission. In addition, this team would evaluate the practicality of implementing the resources that are being developed. The Planning Team would be the primary group that will be creating age-appropriate activities for the various age groups that would enable virtuous habits to form, leading to godly character.

Across the summer of 2024, other elements were developed. A Statement of Beliefs was created so everyone who joining the project would understand the view of God that is central to the work. In addition, a position statement, i.e., the perspective behind the project, was developed. (Much of the thinking came from a paper written by Jennifer Herdt entitled, *The Virtues*, in which she connects the Biblical foundation with virtues, character, and human flourishing.) A Google account set up for the organization enabled a location for archiving documents (Google drive folders), as well as an email address.

By the end of August, 2024, the project was an official nonprofit organization registered with the State of Ohio as *The Virtues and Character Development Project*. The next step was to apply to the US Internal Revenue Service for tax exempt status. By mid-November, approval was granted and notification was received in less than 3 weeks. The speed with which these steps occurred confirm that God has been opening doors for His work. *The Virtues and Character Development Project* now is a tax exempt, nonprofit organization that will continue to grow and expand in the coming days.

As conversations about the work continued into the fall, colleagues whose native language is not English volunteered to translate all resources into their mother tongue. Presently, there are 8 languages identified, with more expected in the future. As a result, a Translation and Culture Team has been added to the project organization.

The need for other teams was identified across the months. (1) A Prayer Team that will focus on praying for the work and for requests that are sent to the organization by people who are using the resources has been created. (2) An Assessment Team will be needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the resources. (3) Identification of families, churches, Christian schools, and homeschool groups to test the resources remains to be completed.

God brought other volunteers into the organization who explained the need for online activity through a website, social media, and podcasting. Work with several consultants brought about social media accounts with LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. These will be tools to communicate with interested individuals of insights about virtues and character development, as well as when new resources will be available. A logo based on the symbol of a bonsai tree was created to have a visual reminder of the need for character development.

As the project was moving forward, it was clear that podcasting will be necessary. However, expertise in this area was lacking. Again, God provided direction. While attending a professional conference in April 2025, I was given the task of facilitating a session that focused on the first steps to take to start a podcast program. In addition, a colleague with extensive experience in creating podcasts was attending the same session. After the session, we discussed further what is needed in the development of podcast programming. This shows another example of how God is working to move the project forward.

The official launch was June 14, 2025, when a virtual meeting of the volunteers was held to share the vision that God has laid before us. The organization structure, operation, responsibilities, and timeline were shared. Several suggestions from the volunteers were given that will help us in the work. The website (<https://www.virtuesandcharacterdevelopment.org/>) was published online in August, 2025. The release of the first of the resources, the module on *Humility*, was released in September, 2025.

In conclusion, the project presently is focused on creating resources that will enable individuals to develop habits (virtues) that will lead to good (godly) character. These will be made available to those who will be working directly with students. This will include working with churches (pastors, teachers, and parents), Christian K-12 schools (administrators, teachers, and parents), homeschool groups, and institutions of higher learning (administrators, faculty, and staff). It is evident that God has been working to bring this project into being. In just 17 months, His idea was brought to life.