



The Good Teacher with Christopher Perrin and Carrie Eben

Lecture 2: Introduction
Discussion with the
Authors

Outline:

In this conversational reflection, Dr. Christopher Perrin and Carrie Eben unpack the foundational claim of classical education—that the cultivation of virtue is its primary aim. Drawing from Aristotle, the Christian tradition, and their own teaching practices, they explore how virtue is both the beginning and the end of education, influencing every pedagogical decision, every assessment, and every relationship in the learning environment.

Virtue as the Beginning and End of Education

- Virtue is not merely a by-product but the core purpose of education.
- It is the aim from which all other goals derive, including skill acquisition and intellectual development.

Virtue Woven Through Pedagogical Principles

- Every principle of teaching supports the cultivation of virtue.
- Pedagogical strategies should be measured by their success in helping students flourish as human beings.

Defining Virtue as Human Excellence

- Drawing from Aristotle, virtue is framed as the fulfillment of human capacity and excellence in action.
Virtue applies to both intellectual and moral dimensions of student life.

Cardinal and Intellectual Virtues in Practice

- Cardinal virtues like prudence, courage, and temperance are applicable to all areas of education.
- Intellectual virtues—wonder, curiosity, courage, humility—are essential to learning and can be explicitly incorporated into syllabi and classroom practices.



The Role of the Teacher as a Model

- Teachers must model the virtues they hope to cultivate in students.
- Being honest about one's own struggle with virtue is itself a form of virtue—humility, authenticity, and courage.

Planning with Virtue in Mind

- Lesson plans and syllabi can include explicit references to virtues being cultivated.
- Activities and assignments should be designed to foster specific virtues (e.g., courage through public speaking, wonder through inquiry).

The Moral Weight of Teaching

- The calling of a teacher is morally weighty because students will imitate their teachers.
- As Chesterton humorously put it, teachers are “the worst-appointed priestesses at once of both democracy and tradition”—charged with enormous responsibility