A LESSON IN CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?

CIVIC VIRTUE

The Biblical Standard

How Christ shapes our motives and daily choices

THE LESSON'S CENTRAL CONTRAST

CIVIC VIRTUE

01 Fairness and social order

02 Mutual responsibility

03 Help when possible

04 Respect for others

05 The common good

What is fair and good for my community?

THE LESSON'S CENTRAL CONTRAST

THE BIBLICAL STANDARD

01 Christ's authority

02 Undeserved grace

03 Love without return

04 Surrender of self

05 Dependence on God

How can I reflect Christ's grace?

LUKE 6:27–28, 32

Love beyond cooperation

“LOVE YOUR ENEMIES”

Luke 6:27

CIVIC VIRTUE

Treat opponents with justice and civility.

CHRIST’S COMMAND

Seek their good without expecting a return.

DAILY PRACTICE

Pray for a difficult person and offer practical help.

MATTHEW 6:14–15

Forgiveness reflects received grace

FORGIVENESS WITHOUT KEEPING SCORE

Matthew 18:21–22

CIVIC VIRTUE

Accountability and restitution matter.

CHRIST'S COMMAND

Forgive others in light of God's forgiveness.

DAILY PRACTICE

Release resentment and the desire to retaliate.

MATTHEW 6:1–4

Righteousness without public credit

GIVING

Meet a need without seeking recognition.

PRAYER

Seek God in private rather than impressing others.

MOTIVE

Let love for God guide the act, even when no one sees.

Would I still do this if no one ever knew?

A COMPARATIVE INQUIRY

TWO MORAL HORIZONS

SECULAR IDEAL

The Christian Standard

Modern Canadian civic virtue and historic Christian orthodoxy

DOMAIN 01

Sexuality and bodily autonomy

CONSENT AND COVENANT

Two moral frameworks

SECULAR ETHICS

Mutual consent and pleasure guide intimate choices.

CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY

The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

THE CONTRAST

Premarital intimacy and cohabitation, or union within lifelong marriage.

DOMAIN 03

Marriage and permanence

CONTRACT OR COVENANT

The meaning of a vow

CIVIL CONTRACT

Companionship and fulfillment ground a voluntary partnership.

SACRED COVENANT

Marriage is an enduring spiritual vow before God.

THE CONTRAST

No-fault divorce for fulfillment, or sacrificial endurance modeled on Christ.

DOMAIN 02

End-of-life care and choices

CONTROL AND SANCTITY

Human life has inherent value because it belongs to God

SECULAR COMPASSION

Self-determination and relief of suffering support the case for MAID.

CHRISTIAN HOPE

God authors and numbers human life.

CARE

Palliative care supports comfort.

DOMAIN 04

Conflict and accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY AND FORGIVENESS

Speech and response

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Boycotts, boundaries and public confrontation protect rights.

RADICAL RECONCILIATION

Unilateral forgiveness takes priority over retaliation.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Bless those who slander and relinquish social retribution.

DOMAIN 05

The purpose and ownership of wealth

PROPERTY

Ethically earned income belongs to the self, supporting comfort and lifestyle.

DUTY

Wealth carries spiritual responsibility and accountability before God.

GENEROSITY

The Christian standard calls for sacrificial giving to people in poverty.

Private entitlement and spiritual stewardship frame different duties.

Pluralism and absolute truth

THE SECULAR STANDARD

In a multicultural democracy like Canada, a core civic virtue is religious pluralism: the belief that all spiritual paths are subjective matters of cultural identity or personal preference, and no single faith can claim exclusive universal truth

THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD

Christians are called to treat all people with gentleness and respect, but they cannot accept that all truth claims are equally valid. Proclaiming that Jesus is the unique and exclusive way to God often puts the Christian in direct friction with the secular demand that religious claims remain entirely private or relativistic.

Summary across domains

Domain	Secular Canadian ideal	Christian standard
Bodily Autonomy	Consent and mutual pleasure	Sacred temple and marital covenant
End-of-Life	Sovereignty over exit (MAID)	Divine ownership
Marriage	Equal contract for happiness	Indissoluble spiritual covenant
Conflict	Social accountability and boycott	Unilateral forgiveness and blessing
Wealth	Personal property and lifestyle	Stewardship and eternal accountability
Pluralism	Faith as personal preference	Christ as the exclusive divine way

Sovereignty of self or of God

Secular Standard

“Is this my right, does it fulfill me, and does it respect others?”

Christian Standard

“Does this surrender my preferences to God’s revealed design?”

QUESTIONS OF AUTHORITY

Personal rights

Personal fulfillment

Respect for others

God’s revealed design

Surrender of preference

Different ultimate allegiances

01 The two ideals locate moral authority differently.

02 Their disagreement extends beyond politics and culture.

03 Their ultimate purposes shape choices across daily life.