

THE VICE OF LUST

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 4, Part 7, Teaching #31)

Instructions: Watch video, read aloud, underline what stands out to you most, discuss

Leader Guide...
See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

The secret sin that corrodes the soul from within is lust.

The vice of lust is a disposition of immoderate or immoral sexual desire.

Lust takes what God designed as sacred and turns it into something selfish. It replaces the covenant of love with the craving of the flesh. But let us not be deceived: “Inordinate love of the flesh is cruelty, because under the appearance of pleasing the body we kill the soul” (St. Bernard of Clairvaux).

God’s design is clear. He created sexual intimacy to be a beautiful, joyful, and powerful union between husband and wife—rooted in mutual self-giving, dignity, and love. Within this context, pleasure is not a sin; it is a gift—meant to draw spouses together in love, union, and life. But lust tears that beauty away from its sacred place. It seeks pleasure without love, desires union without commitment, and perceives people as mere bodies rather than brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a counterfeit of love that leaves the heart hollow and the soul stained.

Lust begins where the eyes linger and the thoughts drift. It thrives in secrecy and convenience. It tempts you to click, to watch, to fantasize, to take without giving, to consume without covenant. But what seems like a moment of indulgence always costs more than it claims. Lust promises delight but delivers bondage. It numbs the conscience, cheapens intimacy, poisons relationships, and darkens the soul.

Scripture warns, “Abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). And indeed, it is war. Lust is not a harmless vice—it is a battle against the very sanctity of your soul. It makes you a slave to fleeting cravings and distances you from the God who calls you to holiness.

But you are not powerless. You have been given the armor of grace.

Stand against lust with the virtues of chastity, self-control, and foresight.

Be chaste. Let your heart, mind, and body honor God’s design for sexuality. Save sexual pleasure for your spouse alone. Pursue a life of purity. It elevates love to its proper place and honors the sacredness of the other. “When you decide firmly to lead a clean life, chastity will not be a burden on you: it will be a crown of triumph” (St. Josemaria Escriva).

Practice self-control. Immediately bounce your eyes and mind away from lustful sights and thoughts. Do not to allow the temptation of lust to gain traction and lead to sin—not even for a second. The longer you linger, the weaker your will becomes. But the more you resist, the stronger your soul becomes. As it is written, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

(continues on next page...)

7 Chief Vices

Pride
Envy
Anger
Sloth
Greed
Gluttony
Lust



Watch Video: Scan the QR code to access the video for this teaching as well as additional resources such as related Scripture, quotes, and more.
Or, visit horseandchariot.com/the-vice-of-lust

Use foresight. Know your weaknesses. The devil knows when you are vulnerable and will attack in those moments. Avoid situations where the grips of lust can more easily grab hold. Don't let him catch you off guard. Build barriers before temptation arrives.

And above all, let your love for Christ exceed your love for lust. "To be pure, to remain pure, can only come at a price, the price of knowing God and loving him enough to do His will. He will always give us the strength we need to keep purity as something as beautiful for Him" (St. Mother Teresa). Only a greater love can drive out lesser desires. When the temptation is strong, turn your heart to Jesus—crucified and risen. He knows your battle. He sees your struggle. And He offers mercy, not condemnation.

Lust is difficult to defeat, but by the virtues herein and the Spirit within, you can overcome it. If you fall, be sorrowful, but don't lose hope, or the devil wins—repent and return to the path of purity. Let not shame keep you enslaved, for the one who rises again in Christ is stronger than the one who never fell. In time, the gaps between failures will grow wider, and the seasons of purity will run longer until only purity remains.

"Lust is a poor, weak, whimpering, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed" (C. S. Lewis).

So fight lust. Not with shame, but with love. Not with fear, but with faith. Not in isolation, but in grace.

Let your eyes be pure. Let your mind be guarded. Let your heart be whole. And let your soul be free—made clean not by your perfection, but by your surrender.

This is the battle for purity. This is the road to freedom. This is the victory over lust.

Lust distorts what God designed as sacred. It seeks pleasure without covenant, desire without self-giving love. What was meant to reflect divine union becomes self-centered consumption. Lust promises intimacy but delivers isolation; it offers delight but breeds bondage. Yet through chastity, self-control, foresight, and grace, the soul can be purified and restored to freedom.

1. Lust separates pleasure from love. It takes without giving. → Are your desires aligned with God’s design—or driven by selfish craving?

2. Lust begins in the eyes and mind. What lingers grows stronger. → Where do you allow your thoughts to drift unchecked?

3. Lust thrives in secrecy. Hidden habits harden the heart. → Are there patterns you conceal rather than confront?

4. Chastity honors sacredness. It protects the dignity of self and others. → Do you view others as souls to love—or bodies to consume?

5. Self-control strengthens the will. Immediate resistance builds lasting purity. → When temptation arises, do you delay—or decisively turn away?

6. Foresight prevents falls. Guardrails protect before weakness strikes. → Have you built practical boundaries around your known vulnerabilities?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A PURE & GUARDED SOUL

Those who overcome lust and pursue virtue exhibit these traits:

1. Chaste. They honor God’s design for sexuality in thought and action (for spouse alone).

2. Self-Controlled. They resist temptation swiftly and firmly.

3. Honorable. They treat every person with dignity and respect.

4. Guarded. They protect their eyes, mind, and environment.

5. Hopeful. They rise again quickly after failure without despair.

6. Christ-Centered. Their deepest longing is communion with God.

Signs of Lust Taking Root...

- You entertain lustful thoughts rather than dismiss them.
- You consume sexualized content in secret.
- You justify impurity as harmless or normal.
- You view others primarily through physical attraction.
- You struggle with shame yet avoid confession or accountability.
- You feel spiritually distant after indulgence.
- You rely on willpower alone instead of grace.

Think: Lust is not love—it is a counterfeit that leaves the heart empty. God created desire to draw me toward covenant and communion, not consumption and isolation. When I guard my heart and mind, I protect my freedom. When I fall, mercy invites me to rise again. Purity is not repression—it is rightly ordered love.

Pray: Lord, purify my heart. Guard my eyes, steady my mind, and strengthen my will. Where I have misused desire, grant repentance and restore my dignity. Help me to love others as You love them—with honor, reverence, and self-giving charity. When temptation rises, remind me that You are greater than my cravings. Let Your grace be stronger than my weakness, and let my deepest desire be union with You. Amen.

SELF-EVALUATION & ACTION STEP											
<p>Of the areas you underlined throughout this teaching, which stood out to you most and why? (Reflect, write down, discuss)</p>											
<p>Rate yourself from 1-10 1 = I am frequently overcome by lustful desires 10 = I consistently practice chastity and self-control</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">6</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">7</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">8</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">9</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">10</td> </tr> </table> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 0;">← (avoid 5) →</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
<p>Why did you give yourself this rating?</p>											
<p>What situations, environments, or emotions most trigger temptation for you?</p>											
<p>When you fall, do you quickly repent and return to Christ—or linger in shame?</p>											
<p>What spiritual discipline or habit (prayer, fasting, Scripture, bouncing eyes, confession) will you strengthen this week to guard purity?</p>											
<p>Daily Affirmation: Today, I will choose purity. By God’s grace, I will guard my eyes, discipline my thoughts, and honor His design for love. My body is not for lust—but for holiness, freedom, and communion with Christ.</p>											

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

Courageous Facilitator,

Your willingness to step forward and lead is a gift of grace to your community and a brave act of faith. God bless you for answering the call to inspire others to grow in virtue and pursue the character of Christ.

The Holy Spirit thrives in fellowship and community, working powerfully through the connections and shared experiences of small groups. That's why these lesson plans are designed to cultivate genuine relationships, inspire meaningful conversations, and foster a spirit of transformation through shared wisdom and grace.

Facilitating these lessons is both simple and impactful. While many forms of teaching rely on one-way communication, where one person speaks and others listen, true transformation happens through two-way communication. In this format, ideas aren't merely taught—they're explored together. You'll guide, but everyone will share and learn from one another, creating a rich environment where the Holy Spirit can move and grow each mind, heart, and soul.

These lesson plans succeed because they:

- **Encourage connection** in a collaborative small group setting that fosters action and accountability
- **Empower every voice** with opportunities for each participant to share and contribute
- **Inspire growth** through educational, inspirational, and transformational teachings

Your role as a facilitator is to:

- **Follow the instructions and trust the process**—the wheel is already built, you're here to guide it.
- **Honor the schedule** by being punctual and respecting the time of your group.
- **Lead with love** and rely on God's grace to inspire, guide, and uplift everyone in the group.

Your courage to create a space for growth and fellowship will not only bless others but will deepen your own journey of faith and virtue. Together, with God's help, lives will be transformed.

To God be the glory!

FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

1. Getting Started (5-10 mins)

- Give everyone a few minutes to join before getting started. Be friendly and greet people as they arrive. Get them talking! Come prepared with some good ice-breaker questions you can ask during this time.
- 3-5 minutes in, do quick introductions for anyone new to the group. What brought them to the group? Spend a moment getting to know them.
- Open with a short prayer (facilitator or volunteer).

2. Watch & Read the Teaching (5-10 mins)

- Watch the video of the teaching as a group.
- Have a volunteer read all of page 1. Have others follow along and underline what stands out to them most.

3. How it Applies (5-10 mins)

- Have a volunteer read all of page 2. Have others follow along and underline what stands out to them most.

4. Reflection & Discussion (20-30 mins)

- Have everyone quietly take 5 minutes to complete the "Self-Evaluation & Action Step" on page 3.
- Then, going around the group, have each person take a minute to share what stood out to them most about the teaching and why.
- If time allows, continue the discussion using the remaining self-evaluation questions as a guide.

5. Wrap Up (5 mins)

- Remind everyone to do the daily affirmation until you meet again next time.
- Ask for any prayer requests from the group.
- Close with a short prayer (facilitator or volunteer).