

PASSIONS OF DESIRE

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 2, Part 7, Teaching #15)

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



Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

The passions in the face of desires and temptations—known as the *concupiscible* passions—moderate things like eating, drinking, what one thinks about, looks at, says, and so on. These passions are love, hatred, desire, aversion, joy, and sadness. Note: the passions of love and hatred here refer not to moral virtue or vice, but to the natural attraction to what is fitting and the repulsion from what is not.

To bring these to life, imagine some friends invite you out for a night on the town after a tough week. If you feel you can enjoy the evening while remaining in control, you experience *love*—recognizing the gathering as good and fitting. That love then stirs *desire*, moving you to attend. If, on the other hand, you sense the night may lead to excess indulgence and regret, you experience *hatred*—not of the people, but of the situation, as it appears unfit for you. That hatred then stirs *aversion*, moving you to decline. If you go, enjoy yourself, and remain temperate, you experience *joy*. But if you give in to excess—of eating, drinking, or lack of self-control—you are left with *sadness*.

This is the pattern of the passions. And yet, many repeatedly give in to desires they know they should resist. They continue doing what, deep down, they despise. And so, they walk through life with an undercurrent of sadness—because they remain enslaved by vice.

But the way of virtue is the way of freedom and fulfillment. It does not silence desire; it sanctifies it. The virtuous one does not ignore the passions but orders them—redirecting the loves of the heart, the desires of the flesh, the aversions of the will—toward God, not the body. Knowing, “The life of the body is the soul; the life of the soul is God” (St. Anthony of Padua). Thus, the will of self, the pull of the flesh, and the pressure of the world no longer rule them. Instead, they are ruled by grace. Their passions are not repressed but redeemed.

This is how you become who God wills you to be—not by killing the passions, but by sanctifying them. Ordered rightly, these passions become fuel for your journey, drawing you not into sin but deeper into the beauty of a virtuous and fulfilled life.

And so, “Desire to see God, be fearful of losing Him, and find joy in everything that can lead to Him. If you act in this way, you will always live in great peace” (St. Teresa of Avila). Learn to watch the movements of your desires. Reflect on what you are drawn to and why. Examine your aversions and what they reveal about your heart. Then choose what is good, not what is easy. Practice temperance. Practice clarity. And when the passions rise—as they always do—let your will, illuminated by grace, take the reins and guide them well. For in this ordered harmony, the soul begins to flourish, and life becomes a steady ascent toward the joy, freedom, and fulfillment God desires for you.

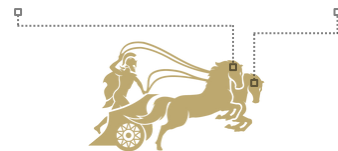
PASSIONS OF DESIRE

DIFFICULTIES & TRIALS

HOPE — DESPAIR
DARING — FEAR
ANGER

DESIRES & TEMPTATIONS

LOVE — HATRED
DESIRE — AVERSION
JOY — SADNESS



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/passions-of-desire



This teaching shows that the concupiscible passions—those related to desire and pleasure—are not obstacles to holiness but opportunities for sanctification. When rightly ordered, they become a path toward joy and self-mastery. The Christian life doesn't destroy desire—it purifies and elevates it toward what truly satisfies: God Himself.

1. Desire is not the enemy—disorder is. You were made to long for the good. → Are your daily desires drawing you closer to God or toward self-indulgence?

2. Love what is truly fitting. Attraction is natural—but not everything “good-looking” is good. → Are you discerning the true good before you allow desire to take root?

3. Aversion can protect your soul. Saying no to temptation is a sign of wisdom, not weakness. → Are you avoiding what leads to sin—or simply trying not to get caught?

4. Pursue joy, not just pleasure. Lasting joy follows temperance; fleeting pleasure often ends in regret. → Does your joy deepen over time, or does it fade once the feeling is gone?

5. Sadness often reveals disorder. Guilt, apathy, or regret may be symptoms of misdirected desires. → Are you examining the emotional aftermath of your choices—and what it reveals about your heart?

6. Redirect your cravings toward God. Only He can fulfill what your soul truly longs for. → Are you training your heart to hunger for holiness—or just trying to suppress desire?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOUL WITH ORDERED DESIRES

Those who sanctify their desires through grace and temperance exhibit these marks:

1. Clarity of Affection. They love what is fitting and reject what corrupts.

2. Holy Desire. Their longings are shaped by what leads to God, not away from Him.

3. Disciplined Enjoyment. They can celebrate without excess and rest without laziness.

4. Contentment. They are not slaves to cravings—they are satisfied in God's will.

5. Emotional Honesty. They examine their aversions and joys with wisdom.

6. Joyful Moderation. Their lives are marked by deep joy, not shallow indulgence.

Signs of Disordered Desires...

- You chase momentary pleasure but feel empty afterward
- You're drawn to things you know lead to regret or sin
- You avoid moderation, swinging between indulgence and guilt
- You find it hard to say no—even when you want to
- Your aversions are driven more by fear or pride than by truth
- You often feel restless, sad, or unsatisfied for no clear reason

Think: Desire is powerful—but only when ordered does it lead to peace. My cravings do not define me; what I do with them does. When I allow grace to guide my longings, and temperance to shape my choices, I find freedom. And in that freedom, I find joy—not the joy of indulgence, but the joy of a life aligned with God.

Pray: Lord, take my desires and purify them. Help me to love what is good, to desire what is holy, to reject what draws me away from You, and to find joy in all that brings me closer to You. Teach me to pause before I indulge, to reflect before I react, and to choose what leads to peace. Let my longings not rule me, but serve You. In every craving, turn my heart toward the only One who can truly satisfy. Amen.

SELF-EVALUATION & ACTION STEP

Of the areas you underlined throughout this teaching, which stood out to you most and why?
(Reflect, write down, discuss)

Rate yourself from 1-10

1 = I am often ruled by disordered desires and emotions
10 = I consistently redirect my desires toward the good

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?

(Which concupiscible passion—love, hatred, desire, aversion, joy, or sadness—tends to become disordered in your life?)

What benefits will you obtain from raising your rating? (Reflect on how ordered desire could impact your peace, relationships, and spiritual growth)

In what areas of life do you most often give in to desires you know are harmful, and what sadness or regret tends to follow?

What specific action step will you take this week to better train your desires—by practicing temperance, saying no to excess, or choosing what leads to God over what merely pleases the flesh?

Daily Affirmation: Today, my desires will not be my master—I will direct them toward God. I will choose what leads to peace, not regret. I will practice temperance, pursue what is good, and rejoice in the joy that comes from living well.

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).