

ORDER OF THE SOUL

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 2, Part 4, Teaching #12)

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



HORSE & CHARIOT

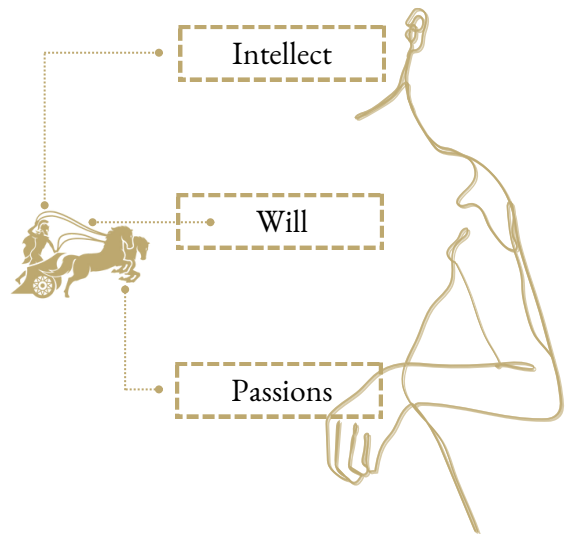
Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

Your soul is not a mystery to God—it is His masterpiece. And within that masterpiece is a divine design. Virtue teaches: the human soul, like the illustration of the horse and chariot, is composed of three parts—intellect, will, and passions. In a well-ordered soul, the intellect directs the will, which directs the passions—not the other way around. This is the proper “Order of the Soul” (St. Thomas Aquinas).

The upper two parts of the human soul are the intellect and the will; the passions reside in the lower part of the soul and are constantly bouncing around due to our natural appetites and emotions.

It is taught that the three parts of the human soul are unique when compared to the souls of angels and animals. Angels are led entirely by intellect and will—they have no passions, as they have no appetites or emotions (such as hunger, lust, or rage in the human sense). They operate in perfect union with God’s will. Animals, on the other hand, are led primarily by their passions—not their intellect and will—acting on natural instinct and appetite, not by cognitive reasoning, rationale, or moral principles. This is why, when someone is intoxicated, they often act like an animal: their intellect is darkened, and their will is weakened.



Angels do the will of God. Animals do the will of the animals. Humans have free will. This is what truly makes us unique: we have the freedom to choose whether to be like the angels or the animals, to do the will of God or the will of self, to follow our passions blindly or to wisely direct them for good. It is said, “Only the free will is capable of good or evil. But when the will sighs [and stands firm] under the trial of the tempter and does not will what is presented to it, there is not only no fault but there is virtue” (St. Padre Pio).

So, you have a choice. You are neither beast nor angel. You are a human being, made in the image of God, endowed with a soul that can choose between chaos and order, between impulse and intention, between self-will and surrender to divine will. Your intellect is the charioteer. Your will is the reins. And your passions are the mighty horses. Let your intellect seek the truth. Let your will be strengthened by grace. And let your passions be guided—not suppressed, but led—toward the good. For, “To be human is to be challenged to be more divine. Not even to try to meet such a challenge is the biggest defeat imaginable” (Maya Angelou).

This is what it means to be fully alive: to be ordered, not disordered. To live not as a slave to feeling, nor a prisoner of impulse, but as a virtuous warrior—strong, self-controlled, and surrendered to God.

So take up the reins. Grip them with conviction. Look ahead with the clarity of truth. Let the wind of grace be at your back, and the strength of your passions drive you not toward sin, but toward sanctity. This is the noble work of the soul. This is the way of virtue. This is the path that leads to fulfillment—on earth, and forever in Heaven.



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/order-of-the-soul



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This teaching calls you to embrace the dignity of your design. You are not ruled by instinct or programmed by nature. You are made with a soul that can be ordered, disciplined, and directed toward God. Living by the order of the soul is how you honor your Creator and become truly human.

1. Recognize the design within. You were made with intention—your soul has structure and purpose. → Do you see your intellect, will, and passions as gifts to be developed or burdens to be managed?

2. Choose to rise above instinct. You are not an animal, and you are not an angel—you are a soul with a choice. → Are you letting your passions lead, or are you choosing to lead them toward what is good?

3. Seek truth before action. A disordered soul acts without thinking. → Do you slow down to reflect and pray before reacting or deciding?

4. Let grace strengthen your will. You cannot order your soul by willpower alone. → Are you inviting God to empower your decisions each day?

5. Reject passivity. Disorder is not neutral—it drifts toward vice. → Are you actively pursuing virtue, or are you allowing your soul to drift?

6. Live from the top down. Let your soul be ruled by truth, not emotion. → Are your feelings directing your choices, or are they being directed by truth and love?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A WELL-ORDERED SOUL

Those who live according to the true order of the soul reflect these signs of maturity:

1. Clarity of Thought. They seek truth and allow it to shape their worldview.

2. Freedom of Will. They choose what is right, not what is easy.

3. Emotional Stability. They feel deeply but are not easily swayed.

4. God-Centered Living. Their actions reflect surrender to divine will, not personal impulse.

5. Deliberate Action. They live with purpose, not passivity.

6. Moral Strength. They resist temptation because their soul is anchored in virtue.

Signs of a Disordered Soul...

- You often act before thinking or praying
- Emotions override judgment and self-control
- You feel spiritually scattered or directionless
- You know what's right but don't follow through
- You find comfort in impulse but discomfort in discipline
- Your passions frequently lead you into sin or regret

Think: I am not a slave to instinct or emotion—I am a soul created by God, capable of truth, discipline, and love. When I live from the top down—intellect over will, will over passions—I live in harmony with how I was made. That is when I feel most free, most alive, most human. That is when I am most like Christ.

Pray: Lord, bring order to my soul. Help me to think with clarity, choose with conviction, and live with purpose. Teach me to lead my passions with wisdom, not to be led by them. Strengthen my will by Your grace, and anchor my emotions in Your truth. Let me rise above impulse and follow You in freedom. Shape me into who You created me to be: fully human, fully alive, fully surrendered. 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 = My intellect, will, and passions are often disordered
10 = My intellect, will, and passions are rightly ordered

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?
(Which part—intellect, will, or passions—most often disrupts the order of your soul?)

What benefits will you obtain from raising your rating? (Reflect on how greater inner order could affect your spiritual life, decisions, and sense of peace)

Do you more often resemble the angel (led by intellect and will) or the animal (led by passion), and why?

What specific action step will you take this week to better align your soul in virtue—strengthening your intellect, disciplining your will, or redirecting your passions through grace?

Daily Affirmation: Today, I affirm I am made in the image of God—with the power to choose what is right. My intellect shall seek the truth, my will shall choose it, and my passions shall follow it. I will live not by impulse, but by intention and grace.

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).