

# PASSIONS OF DIFFICULTY

*The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 2, Part 6, Teaching #14)*

**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 difficulties and trials—known as the *irascible* passions—are hope, despair, daring, fear, and anger. These are the inner stirrings that awaken when the road ahead is steep, when adversity blocks the path, or when evil threatens the good you seek.

Imagine your home, your family, your community suddenly invaded by a terrible evil—and the only way to survive is to embark on a long, grueling journey to safety. If you believe you can make it, *hope* arises within you, lifting your spirit and lighting the way forward. But if you do not believe it's possible, *despair* takes hold—heavy, crushing, paralyzing.

Suppose then, on that journey, you come under attack. If you believe you can stand and fight, *daring* surges like fire through your limbs. But if you doubt your strength to overcome, *fear* grips your soul, whispering lies and urging you to flee. Finally, if you complete the journey and reach safety, peace fills your heart. But if the evil overtakes you and thwarts your path, *anger* burns—not the sinful kind that lashes out, but the righteous anger that says, “This is not how it’s meant to be.”

This battle plays out in the soul. For the great evil we all must face—daily, hourly—is sin. And though many know the vices that bind them, few believe they can break free. The journey seems too long, too hard. So they remain in despair, quietly chained to sins that steal their peace and hollow out their soul.

But hear this: you are not meant for slavery and emptiness—you are made for freedom and fulfillment. Is there a vice separating you from who God wills you to be? Pray for the virtue of hope. Ask for the grace to believe the journey is possible. And when trials come—and they will—dare to rise in battle. Do not let fear keep you from your freedom. The moment you begin to fight, you are no longer a slave.

And should you stumble, let anger rise—not against yourself or others, but against sin itself. Channel that righteous anger to fuel your resolve. As Scripture says, “Be angry but do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26). For, “Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are” (St. Augustine).

God does not promise the road will be easy. But He promises it will be worth it. And with each step you take toward virtue, you take a step away from vice and into grace. You grow stronger. You grow freer. You grow into the character God wills you to be. “We shall steer safely through every storm, so long as our heart is right, our intention fervent, our courage steadfast, and our trust fixed on God” (St. Francis de Sales). And so—hope. Dare. Endure. Fight. For in Christ, victory is not only possible—it is promised.

## PASSIONS OF DIFFICULTY

### DIFFICULTIES & TRIALS

*HOPE — DESPAIR*

*DARING — FEAR*

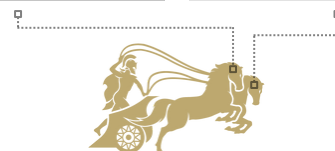
*ANGER*

### 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-difficulty](https://horseandchariot.com/passions-of-difficulty)



This teaching brings to light the irascible passions—those awakened in the face of trials. They are not flaws, but inner tools of strength. Hope, daring, anger—when rightly ordered—become divine fuel in your battle against sin. To live with courage and conviction is to harness these passions for spiritual victory.

**1. Hope when the journey is long.** It's not about the absence of hardship but the presence of belief. → Do you truly believe, deep down, that God can deliver you from the sin you battle most?

**2. Dare to fight, not flee.** Courage doesn't mean you feel no fear—it means you act anyway. → When resistance comes, do you rise with daring or retreat in fear?

**3. Let fear be a checkpoint, not a chain.** Fear is meant to alert you, not paralyze you. → Is fear stopping you from doing what you know God is calling you to do?

**4. Despair is the enemy of the soul.** It whispers that freedom is impossible—don't believe it. → Are there areas in your life where you've given up instead of pressing on?

**5. Channel righteous anger.** Not against people, but against sin, injustice, and spiritual bondage. → When you fall, does your anger push you toward repentance and resolve—or toward shame?

**6. Keep pressing forward.** The road to virtue is steep, but each step brings strength. → Are you measuring progress by perfection—or by perseverance?

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOUL STRENGTHENED IN TRIAL

Those who rightly order the passions of difficulty live with remarkable spiritual strength:

**1. Hopeful Resolve.** They keep moving forward, even in darkness.

**2. Holy Courage.** They don't wait to feel brave—they dare to act in faith.

**3. Calm in Chaos.** They feel fear but are not led by it.

**4. Zeal for Holiness.** Their anger is aimed at sin, not self or others.

**5. Fighting Spirit.** They fight not with fists, but with fasting, prayer, and perseverance.

**6. Endurance.** They don't quit when it gets hard—they lean into grace.

### Signs of Struggle with Passions of Difficulty...

- You feel like giving up before you even begin
- Fear stops you from doing what is right or needed
- You are numb to your sin—despair has dulled your will
- You suppress anger instead of using it righteously
- You view yourself as weak, defeated, or beyond change
- You avoid trials instead of growing through them

**Think:** I was made for more than survival—I was made to overcome. Hope lifts me. Daring strengthens me. Anger against sin sharpens my fight. With Christ, I do not walk the hard road alone. Every step taken in faith brings me closer to freedom and makes me more like Him.

**Pray:** Lord, awaken in me the passions of holy resistance. Breathe hope where I've grown tired, courage where I've cowered, and righteous anger where I've become complacent. Help me not to flee from hardship but to face it with faith. Strengthen my soul in the trial, and keep my eyes on You—the One who promises victory. Amen.

## SELF-EVALUATION &amp; 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 often give in to despair or fear when facing trials  
10 = I consistently respond with hope and daring

1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?  
(Which irascible passion—hope, despair, daring, fear, or anger—do you struggle with most and why?)

What benefits will you obtain from raising your rating? (Think about how courage, hope, and righteous anger could transform your response to adversity)

In moments of trial, do you tend to rise in daring or retreat in fear? When you fall into sin, does it lead you to despair or to righteous anger and renewed resolve?

What specific action step will you take this week to better respond to difficulty—by practicing hope, rising in courage, or channeling your anger into holy resolve?

Daily Affirmation: Today, when trials come, I will rise in hope. When fear tempts me, I will answer with courage. I will not despair—I will fight for what is good. And even in weakness, I will move forward in the strength of Christ.

## 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).