

VIRTUE vs VICE

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 3, Part 2, Teaching #18)

Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

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

Virtue enables you to know the good, do the good, and pursue the good in everything you think, say, and do—so that your every thought, word, and action becomes an echo of God’s will. One good choice does not make you virtuous—it makes for a good deed. But when you choose what is good and right again and again—until it becomes part of who you are—that is virtue. Virtue is goodness made habitual: good habits in the concrete. It is moral excellence solidified into the soul.

Vice, on the other hand, is just the opposite. A bad choice here or there does not make you vicious, but repeated negligence or willful wrongdoing hardens into habit. Eventually, your soul is shaped not by grace, but by disorder. Vice is sin made habitual: bad habits in the concrete. It is the distortion of your character—the slow unraveling of who you were made to be.

VIRTUE

Good habits in
the concrete.

VICE

Bad habits in
the concrete.

It’s been said, “You can outdistance that which is running after you, but not what is running inside you” (Rwandan Proverb). You can hide from others. You can disguise your actions. But you cannot outrun your own soul. Day by day, your habits are shaping you—either into the likeness of Christ or into something far from Him. You are becoming, right now, either a person of virtue or a person of vice.

So ask yourself: What habits are being etched into your soul? What patterns govern your thoughts, your speech, your reactions, your desires?

The path of virtue leads to fulfillment because it draws you into alignment with the God who made you. The path of vice leads to emptiness because it pulls you away from your very purpose—to glorify God in all you do. Vice says, “Follow your own way.” Virtue says, “Follow His.”

And so, to grow in virtue is to grow in Christ. His characteristics—humility, patience, self-control, courage, wisdom, love—become your own. This is not the work of a defining moment. It is a daily climb. But with each small victory, the soul is reordered, the path is made straighter, and you are drawn closer to the life God wills for you.

The choice is yours. Step by step, you are walking toward virtue—or away from it. And the soul you are becoming is not shaped by a single act, but by the habits you cultivate—day after day, choice after choice. “Don’t let your sins turn into bad habits” (St. Teresa of Avila).

Choose wisely. Choose virtue. For in choosing virtue, you are choosing the will of God—and in doing so, you will find the very thing your heart longs for: the fullness of life. There are many virtues to learn, and many vices to unlearn. But as your intellect grows in virtue, it lights the way for your will to follow and grace to flow—leading you to the peace of a clear conscience, and the joy of becoming who you were always meant to be.



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/virtue-vs-vice

Virtue is goodness made habitual; vice is sin made habitual. Every choice is a brushstroke on your soul, forming either Christlike character or a distorted self. You cannot outrun what lives inside you (Rwandan Proverb). Formation is daily: practice the good, reject the evil, cooperate with grace.

1. Habits shape identity. You become what you repeatedly choose. → Which daily habit most shapes who you're becoming?

2. Small choices, eternal direction. Tiny obediences steer the whole life. → Where can you trade one small compromise for one small act of faithfulness?

3. Replace, don't just resist. Vice is uprooted by the opposing virtue. → Which vice will you target, and what concrete, contrary act will you practice?

4. Grace perfects effort. Discipline trains the soul; grace transforms it. → Where will you ask the Holy Spirit to do what effort alone cannot?

5. Integrity over image. Virtue is for God's glory, not people's praise. → Where are you performing goodness outwardly but neglecting your heart?

6. Perseverance after failure. Falls are feedback, not fate. → After your last stumble, what redemptive step will you take today?

CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWING IN VIRTUE

Those who strive to grow in virtue exhibit these qualities:

1. Integrity. Words, thoughts, and actions align.

4. Docility to Grace. Quick to repent, quick to obey.

2. Perseverance. Keeps choosing the good, especially when it costs.

5. Clarity of Conscience. Peace replaces duplicity.

3. Self-mastery. Desires are ordered to what is true and good.

6. Charity in Action. Love of God and neighbor becomes instinctive.

Signs of Drifting into Vice...

- You rationalize "small" sins and delay repentance.
- You are different in private than in public.
- Your choices are driven by impulse, not truth.
- You avoid accountability and hide patterns.
- Prayer and Scripture slip; excuses grow.
- Discouragement becomes permission to quit.
- Bad habits feel "normal," and virtue feels "extra."

Think: Habits are chisels. Each thought, word, and deed carves my soul toward Christ—or away from Him. Virtue is not a moment but a momentum, formed by countless yeses to God. "Don't let your sins turn into bad habits" (St. Teresa of Avila). Today's pattern is tomorrow's person.

Pray: Lord Jesus, form in me the habits of holiness. Expose the patterns that pull me from You and strengthen the virtues that draw me near. Grant me courage to choose the good, humility to repent quickly, and perseverance to begin again. By Your grace, make my daily choices an echo of Your will. 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 habits commonly pull me toward vice
10 = My habits regularly reflect virtue

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?
(Which recurring sin or disorder is becoming a habit?
Name it plainly.)

What opposing virtue will you practice to replace it (e.g., truthfulness for deceit, temperance for excess, patience for anger)?

What tiny, daily action will embody that virtue this week (time, place, trigger)?

Who will lovingly hold you accountable, and when will you check in?

After setbacks, what is your pre-decided return routine (repent, reset, one concrete act of virtue)?

Daily Affirmation: Today, by grace, I will practice the good until it becomes my nature. My choices will echo God's will—habit by habit, step by step—until Christ's likeness is formed in me.

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).