

RENEW YOUR MIND

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 3, Part 5, Teaching #21)

Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

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

It is said, “Character is simply habit long continued” (Plutarch). In other words, take note—your habits are shaping you into someone. The only question is: are you becoming more virtuous... or more vicious?

The bonds of virtuous habit are formed by doing the good and right thing in every situation, big or small—whether you feel like it or not. Virtue grows from a single good act into a series of good acts, into a loose habit, into a firm habit, and finally into a virtue—fully habituated into your character and soul. This is the turning point, where it goes from being hard to do the good and right thing to becoming harder not to do the good and right thing when the opportunity presents itself.



But how do you know the good and right thing to do in every situation? How do you discern virtue in a world so clouded with confusion? It starts with the renewing of your mind.

The intellect is the inner weaver of character. What you allow to enter your mind—day after day—shapes the thoughts you dwell on, which shape the choices you make, which shape the person you become. Though grace is the loom, your thoughts are the thread. To become who God wills you to be, you must guard and guide your mind with intention—choosing to dwell not on what is fleeting or false, but on what is good, true, and eternal. For what fills the mind eventually shapes the soul—forming the pattern of your character.

Scripture says, “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

To form your intellect means to reorient your thoughts away from the false promises of the world and toward the truth of God. It means unlearning the lies of culture and relearning the ways of Christ. It is not a passive shift, but an intentional reprogramming—replacing noise with wisdom, scrolling with Scripture, trash with Truth.

This is the divine order of the soul: the intellect leads the will, and the will leads the passions. But if the mind is weak, the will falters. And if the will falters, the passions rule. So if you want to bring order to your soul, begin with your intellect. Train it. Fill it with virtue. Sharpen it on the whetstone of Truth. For a strong mind strengthens the will, and a strong will orders the passions, aligning the whole soul toward God.

Thus, the way to cross the valley from—*ignorance to wisdom, fearfulness to bravery, self-indulgence to self-control, unfaithfulness to faithfulness, living in illusion to living in truth*—is to build a bridge of knowledge and understanding in the Word of God.

“For the Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for theologians to swim in without ever reaching the bottom” (St. Jerome). This is what enlightens your intellect to the ways of Christ and the life of virtue. And in this renewal, you turn the rudder of your free will toward union with God’s will, opening the sails of your soul, allowing the grace of the Holy Spirit to fill you and carry you ever onward.

(continues on next page...)



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/renew-your-mind

This is how minds are sharpened. This is how characters are shaped. This is how lives are transformed.

“Let each of us accept the truth of the following statement and try to make it our most fundamental principle: Christ’s teaching will never let us down, while worldly wisdom always will. Christ Himself said that this sort of wisdom was like a house with nothing but sand as its foundation, while His own was like a building with solid rock as its foundation” (St. Vincent de Paul).

So choose to sharpen your intellect daily. Fill your mind with what is good, noble, and true. For it is only by a renewed mind that you will clearly see the narrow will of God—and joyfully live in it.

Your thoughts are not neutral—they are threads that weave the fabric of your soul. What fills your mind forms your character, for the intellect leads the will, and the will guides the passions. A renewed mind in Christ becomes the rudder that steers you toward holiness.

1. Habits begin in the mind. Thoughts shape choices; choices shape character. → What thoughts most often dominate your mind—and where are they leading you?

2. Truth must replace lies. The world misleads; Scripture reorients. → What worldly lies do you need to unlearn, and what truth will you replace them with?

3. Formation is intentional. Renewal doesn't happen by accident. → What daily practice can sharpen your intellect in God's Word?

4. A weak mind weakens the soul. Disorder begins with unguarded thoughts. → Where have you allowed mental drift to lead to spiritual drift?

5. Grace empowers wisdom. God's Spirit fills the sails of a renewed soul. → Are you inviting the Spirit to illuminate your mind and guide your will?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A RENEWED MIND

Those who make habit of renewing their mind exhibit these traits:

1. Clarity. Sees through the lies of culture into the truth of Christ.

2. Discipline. Chooses noble and godly thoughts over distractions.

3. Discernment. Knows how to test choices by God's Word.

4. Strength. Holds steady under temptation because the will is anchored in truth.

5. Fruitfulness. Bears outward virtue from inward renewal.

6. Docility. Yields readily to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Signs of a Mind Needing Renewal...

- You are more influenced by media or peers than by Scripture.
- Your thoughts drift toward negativity, impurity, or fear.
- You avoid study or prayer, leaving your intellect weak.
- You rely on emotion to guide choices instead of discernment.
- You struggle to resist temptation because your will lacks clarity.
- You feel scattered, restless, or spiritually dull.

Think: Renewal begins in the mind. Each thought is a seed—truth yields virtue, lies yield vice. If I want a soul aligned with God, I must train my intellect on His Word. Scripture sharpens me, grace empowers me, and Christ renews me. To fill my mind with truth is to set my soul on solid rock.

Pray: Lord, renew my mind in Your truth. Guard my thoughts from lies and distractions. Fill me with wisdom from Your Word, clarity by Your Spirit, and strength through Your grace. Shape my intellect to guide my will and order my passions, that my whole life may be aligned with You. 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 mind is often shaped by worldly influences
10 = My mind is daily renewed in God's Word

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?
(What mental habits—media, thought patterns, influences—are dulling your intellect?)

What truth from Scripture will you dwell on this week to counter a recurring lie?

How will you practically guard your mind
(limiting noise, memorizing Scripture, replacing distractions with devotion)?

What specific time each day will you devote to sharpening your intellect in God's Word?

Daily Affirmation: Today, I will renew my mind in God's truth. My thoughts will be shaped by Scripture, my will strengthened by grace, and my soul carried by the Spirit—until I see and live in the will of God with joy.

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).