

DISORDERED PASSIONS

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 2, Part 8, Teaching #16)

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



Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

With a well-ordered soul, one's intellect directs their will, which virtuously guides their passions to do God's will—no matter the trial, temptation, feeling, or emotion they may face.

With a disordered soul, however, the reins of the will grow slack. The passions, no longer led but leading, run wild—clouding the intellect and overpowering the will. Instead of acting virtuously, one becomes ruled by impulse, emotion, and desire. They know what is right but struggle to choose it. The momentary pleasure of sin outweighs the eternal promise of virtue.

Scripture says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). But how can one prevail over evil without the strength to master their passions? When the soul is not rooted in virtue, the mind lacks clarity, and the will lacks strength—making sin not only likely, but easy. Hence, it is said, “The good man, though a slave, is free; the wicked, though he reigns, is a slave, and not the slave of a single man, but—what is worse—the slave of as many masters as he has vices” (St. Augustine).

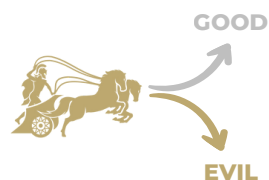
Yet when one's purpose in life is to seek to glorify God in all they do by pursuing a virtuous life, the soul becomes rightly ordered. They begin to love what is good and fitting—prayer, service, moderation, sacrifice. And as that love grows, so too does their desire for the things of God. Conversely, the one with disordered passions begins to hate and avoid those very same things. They desire comfort over calling, indulgence over discipline, and self-will over God's will.

It is said, “Life is neither good nor evil, but only a place for good and evil” (Marcus Aurelius). In other words, your life is not the final outcome—it is the battleground. The passions are your horses, and the reins are in your hands. Let vice take the reins, and you will chase what destroys you. But let virtue take the reins, and you will chase what sanctifies you.

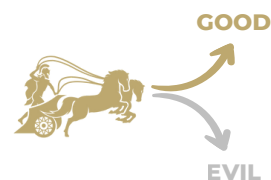
Through the daily practice and pursuit of virtue, you learn to harness the powerful horses of your passions—not to suppress them, but to steer them with wisdom, strength, and self-mastery. Then, even in the midst of trial or temptation, your passions become fuel for the fight—a fight not for yourself, but for Christ.

“May God grant us a desire for God that supersedes all other desires” (A.W. Tozer). This is how a warrior of God prevails: not by silencing the soul, but by ordering it rightly through grace—directing every passion toward the good.

DISORDERED VS ORDERED PASSIONS



A life of vice
disorders our passions
to pursue evil and
evade the good.



A life of virtue
orders our passions to
pursue the good and
evade evil.



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/disordered-passions



This teaching reveals the devastating effects of disordered passions—and the freeing power of virtue. The soul was never meant to be ruled by emotion or desire. When the intellect is darkened and the will grows weak, sin becomes easy and goodness feels distant. But when grace is welcomed, and order is restored, the soul becomes strong, focused, and filled with holy purpose.

1. Check who's holding the reins. When passion leads, the soul unravels. → Are your emotions calling the shots, or is your will—rooted in truth—directing your life?

2. Sin thrives in disorder. A chaotic soul is fertile ground for temptation. → Are there areas of your life where disordered desires keep leading you into sin?

3. Virtue restores what vice distorts. Right action starts with right order. → Are you practicing daily habits that reorder your thoughts, will, and emotions toward God?

4. Let the soul be led, not dragged. Grace empowers self-mastery. → Are you asking for God's help—not just to resist sin, but to desire what is holy?

5. Desire must be purified. What you long for reveals who you're becoming. → Do you love what God loves—or are you clinging to what dulls your soul?

6. Make the soul a sanctuary, not a battlefield. Virtue brings interior peace. → Are you cultivating peace within—or letting your passions keep you at war with yourself?

CHARACTERISTICS OF ONE WITH REORDERED PASSIONS

Those who bring order to their soul by the power of grace display these signs:

1. Moral Clarity. They see sin for what it is and reject it.

2. Strength of Will. They can say no to impulses and yes to virtue and grace.

3. Emotional Integration. Their feelings support right choices rather than undermine them.

4. Holy Desires. They hunger for prayer, virtue, and the things of God.

5. Inner Stability. They are not tossed around by moods or cravings.

6. Freedom. They are not ruled by the flesh, but led by the Spirit.

Signs of Disordered Passions...

- You know the right thing but can't bring yourself to choose it
- Emotions and desires frequently override your better judgment
- You feel distant from God and resistant to spiritual practices
- You avoid discipline, sacrifice, or anything uncomfortable
- You resent calls to virtue, seeing them as burdens not blessings
- You feel spiritually weak or enslaved by habits you hate

Think: My soul was made to be ruled—not by passion, but by truth. Every time I let impulse lead, I drift. But when I grip the reins and steer my passions with grace, I begin to live—not just survive. I was made not for chaos, but for clarity; not for slavery, but for sanctity.

Pray: Lord, I confess that my soul has often been led by disordered desires. Help me to see clearly, choose rightly, and love deeply. Restore the order within me. Strengthen my will to follow You, illuminate my mind with truth, and purify my passions so they move me toward what is good. Teach me to desire You above all, and to live each day with a soul ordered by virtue and empowered by grace. 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 passions often lead me away from God's will
10 = My passions are guided by virtue and grace

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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← (avoid 5) →

Why did you give yourself this rating?
(Which passion most often clouds your intellect or weakens your will, and in what situations?)

What benefits will you obtain from raising your rating? (Consider how ordered passions might enhance your spiritual clarity, emotional stability, and pursuit of God's will)

When faced with the choice between comfort and calling, indulgence and discipline, self-will and God's will—what do you tend to choose, and why?

What specific action step will you take this week to begin ordering your passions—whether through prayer, sacrifice, virtue-building habits, or a commitment to resist one specific vice?

Daily Affirmation: Today, I will not let my passions take the reins. I will take them up with clarity and strength. My soul shall be ordered for God's glory, not chaos. I will choose virtue over vice and purpose over impulse.

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).