

IN DEATH, FIND LIFE

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 4, Part 8, Teaching #32)

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

Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

Any thought, word, or deed that knowingly defies the will of God—is sin. And sin, when unresisted and unrepented, is deadly.

Scripture warns, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Not just physical death—but spiritual death; the slow decay of the soul. For every sin, however small it may seem, bends your life ever so slightly away from God. And if left unchecked, that bend becomes a break.

Vice darkens the intellect, weakens the will, and disorders the passions. It poisons your discernment, enslaves your desires, and attempts to silence the Spirit’s voice within you. Sin may begin as a whisper, a habit, a compromise—but it does not stay small. Repeated sin becomes habit. Habitual sin becomes vice. Vice becomes your master. And you, its slave.

But you were not made for slavery. You were made for freedom.

And the way of freedom is the way of virtue.

Just as the seven chief vices are rooted in pride and ordered to the will of self, the seven chief virtues are rooted in faith and ordered to the will of God. One leads to destruction. The other to life.

Jesus said, “Those who lose their life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:25). In other words—

In death to self, you find life in Christ.

This is the great paradox of the Christian life: You must die to live. You must lay down your old self to become your true self. You must crucify the desires of the flesh to awaken the desires of the Spirit. “It is only by frequent deaths of ourselves and our self-centered desires that we can come to live more fully” (St. Mother Teresa).

So then—surrender. Surrender your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Not in theory, but in truth. Not once, but daily. Not partially, but completely. “The more empty of self we are, the more He can fill us” (Ven. Fulton Sheen).

This is not a moment; it is a process. A lifelong pilgrimage. A daily crucifixion of the ego, a daily resurrection of the heart. It is the work of shedding who the world wants you to be—and putting on who God has created you to be. Of weeding out vice and weaving in virtue. Of decreasing, so that Christ may increase.

The road ahead is not easy. It is narrow. It is steep. But it is filled with grace. And it leads to the only kind of life worth living—one that glorifies God.

The teachings of virtue to come will guide your steps. They will enlighten your intellect, strengthen your will, and order your passions. They will train you to walk not by impulse, but by the grace. Not for your own glory, but for God’s. And in doing so, they will awaken your soul to the life you were created to live.

(continues on next page...)

7 Chief Vices

Pride
 Envy
 Anger
 Sloth
 Greed
 Gluttony
 Lust



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/in-death-find-life

So take heart. The battle with sin is real, but so is the power of grace. And where sin once reigned, virtue can rise. Where death once ruled, life can flourish.

Let your old self die—not in despair, but in hope. For what you lose in self, you gain in Christ. And in Him, you will not only live—you will be made new.

Sin is not harmless. Every thought, word, or deed that knowingly defies the will of God bends the soul away from Him. Left unresisted, sin forms habit. Habit hardens into vice. Vice enslaves. But Christ calls you not to slavery—to freedom. The paradox of the Gospel is clear: in dying to self, you find life in Him. The path to renewal is surrender, daily crucifixion of ego, and steady growth in virtue through grace.

1. Sin bends before it breaks. Small compromises shape long-term direction. → Where are subtle patterns slowly bending your life away from God?

2. Habit forms destiny. Repeated sin strengthens vice; repeated virtue strengthens freedom. → What repeated action is shaping who you are becoming?

3. Self must decrease. Life in Christ begins with surrender. → What part of your will are you still holding back from God?

4. Death to ego brings resurrection of soul. Letting go creates space for grace. → Where is pride preventing new life in you?

5. Virtue restores order. It enlightens the intellect, strengthens the will, and directs the passions. → Which virtue most needs to rise where vice once ruled?

6. Grace empowers transformation. You cannot overcome sin alone. → Are you striving in your own strength—or surrendering daily to Christ?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOUL DYING TO SELF

Those who embrace death to self & life in Christ exhibit these traits:

1. Humble. They surrender their will to God’s will.

2. Repentant. They confess sin quickly and return to grace.

3. Renewed. They grow steadily in virtue over time.

4. Resilient. They rise again after failure without despair.

5. Spirit-Led. They seek transformation, not self-justification.

6. Alive in Christ. Their joy flows from union with Him, not self-exaltation.

SSigns of Clinging to the Old Self...

- You justify small sins instead of resisting them.
- You delay repentance or confession.
- You feel enslaved by repeated patterns of vice.
- You resist surrendering control to God.
- You pursue self-glory more than God’s glory.
- You feel spiritually stagnant but avoid deeper change.
- You fear losing comfort more than losing holiness.

Think: Sin promises freedom but delivers death. Surrender feels like loss—but brings life. When I crucify pride, selfish desire, and disordered habits, I make room for Christ to live more fully in me. In dying to self, I do not lose who I am—I discover who I was created to be.

Pray: Lord Jesus, I surrender my old self to You. Where sin has bent my life away from You, straighten my path by grace. Give me courage to crucify pride, to repent quickly, and to walk in virtue daily. Empty me of self so You may fill me with life. Let my death to sin become my resurrection in You. Where vice once reigned, let virtue rise. Make me new. Amen.

SELF-EVALUATION & ACTION STEP																					
<p>Of the areas you underlined throughout this teaching, which stood out to you most and why? (Reflect, write down, discuss)</p>																					
<p>Rate yourself from 1-10 1 = I often cling to sinful patterns 10 = I consistently surrender and pursue virtue & grace</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">6</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">7</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">8</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">9</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"></td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">←</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>(avoid 5)</i></td> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">→</td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			←		<i>(avoid 5)</i>	→				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10												
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<p>Why did you give yourself this rating?</p>																					
<p>What recurring sin most needs to die in your life right now?</p>																					
<p>Which virtue can you intentionally cultivate to replace that vice?</p>																					
<p>What daily act of surrender (prayer, Scripture reading, daily devotional, fasting, obedience) will help you decrease so Christ may increase?</p>																					
<p>Daily Affirmation: Today, I will die to self and live for Christ. By God’s grace, I surrender my pride, resist sin, and walk in virtue. What I lose in self, I gain in Him—and in Him, I am made new.</p>																					

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).