

RUN A GOOD RACE

The Christian Teachings of Virtue (Series 1, Part 1, Teaching #1)

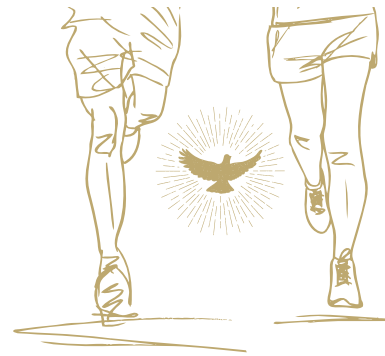
Leader Guide...

See the back page for detailed facilitator instructions.

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

God has called you to run a good race—to run it faithfully and virtuously to the trailing exhale of your final breath. This is not a race of worldly success. It is the race of your soul, the journey of your character, and the path to fulfillment in God. You were not made to live in vice, wander in circles, or be carried by the currents of ease—but to run with virtue, with purpose, with unwavering faith.

To do this, Scripture says, “You must rid yourself of everything that gets in the way, and of the sin which clings so tightly, keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom your faith depends from beginning to end” (Hebrews 12:1–2). For “The gate to life is narrow, the way that leads to it is hard, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14). Therefore, “Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet” (Hebrews 12:12–13). All the while knowing, “Difficulty produces endurance, and endurance produces character” (Romans 5:3–4)—the very character God wills you to be.



So run the race of life that lies before you with unshakable determination—understanding that God’s will for you is not to run in darkness, but in the light of goodness; not to run aimlessly, but with a higher purpose; not to run halfheartedly, but to run in such a way as to glorify God with your every step.

There will be moments when the weight of life presses against you—when desire entices, trials overwhelm, fear paralyzes, and temptation whispers that giving up would be easier. In these moments, the race is being won. For “nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring” (St. Catherine of Siena). The true test is not found at the starting line, but in the struggle—in the grit of your soul when faced with adversity. The runner who perseveres through the storm finds themselves strengthened by it.

So when faced with moments of difficulty, desire, trial, temptation, fear, anger, weakness, sadness—or whatever emotions and adversities life may throw at you—choose God’s will and not your own. That is true character. That is strength of soul.

And when you grow weary—and you will—remember, it is not your strength that sustains you, but the grace of God. For every drop of sweat, there is mercy. For every stumble, forgiveness. And for every lonely mile, a Savior who has run ahead and now runs beside you.

The narrow path awaits—laced with thorns, yes, but lined with grace. Run it well. Run it all the way to the end. And when your final breath meets the finish line, may it be said of you: well done, you ran a good race, you finished it in Christ.

But to run this race well, you must be formed—trained in mind, strengthened in will, and purified in heart. Virtue is the path. Grace is the strength. And Christ is the goal. The teachings ahead will show you how to walk this path—not in theory alone, but in practice. So press on. Open your heart. And let the light of virtue guide your steps, until the race becomes not just something you run, but something you embody—with every thought, every choice, and every breath.



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/run-a-good-race

The Christian life is not a sprint of emotion or a pursuit of worldly success—it is a lifelong race of faith, virtue, and perseverance. God has called you to run with purpose, to cast off the burdens of vice, and to press forward toward holiness. The path is narrow and often difficult, but grace strengthens every step and Christ waits at the finish line.

1. Run with purpose. You were created for more than comfort, distraction, or ease. → Are you living intentionally, or simply drifting through life?

2. Lay aside what slows you down. Sin and vice cling tightly and weigh heavily. → What habits, attachments, or distractions are hindering your spiritual progress?

3. Persevere through hardship. Difficulty is not proof you are off course—it is often proof you are growing. → How might your current struggles be strengthening your character?

4. Choose God's will over your own. Character is formed in moments of decision. → When faced with temptation or adversity, whose will are you choosing?

5. Rely on grace, not grit alone. The race is too long to run by your own strength. → Are you depending on God's grace daily, or relying only on yourself?

6. Keep your eyes fixed on Christ. He is not only the destination, but your companion along the way. → Is your focus fixed on Jesus—or on the distractions surrounding you?

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITHFUL RUNNER

Those who run the race of virtue exhibit these traits:

1. Purposeful. They live with eternal priorities in mind.

2. Persevering. They continue forward even when the path is difficult.

3. Disciplined. They remove obstacles that hinder spiritual growth.

4. Resilient. They rise after setbacks and keep running.

5. Grace-Dependent. They trust God's strength more than their own.

6. Christ-Focused. They keep their eyes fixed on their true destination.

Signs of Drifting Off Course...

- You prioritize comfort over growth and holiness.
- You repeatedly excuse sins or habits that hinder progress.
- You grow discouraged and consider giving up during trials.
- You live reactively rather than intentionally.
- You rely primarily on your own strength instead of grace.
- You become distracted by worldly success or comparison.
- You lose sight of Christ as the goal of your life.

Think: My life is a race, and every choice moves me closer to Christ or further from Him. The road is narrow and the climb is steep, but I do not run alone. God has given me grace for every mile, mercy for every stumble, and strength for every trial. My calling is not merely to start well—but to finish well, faithful to the end.

Pray: Lord, strengthen me to run the race You have set before me. When I grow weary, renew my strength. When I stumble, lift me up. When temptation calls me away, fix my eyes again upon You. Help me cast aside every weight that slows me down and every sin that clings so tightly. May I run with endurance, faith, and joy—trusting not in my own strength, but in Your grace. And when my race is finished, may I hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” 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 = I often drift off the narrow path of faith

10 = I am intentionally running the race of faith

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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(avoid 5)



Why did you give yourself this rating?

What weight or sin is currently slowing your spiritual progress?

Where are you most tempted to quit, compromise, or settle for less than God's best?

How will you intentionally keep your eyes fixed on Christ each day of the coming week?

Daily Affirmation: Today, I will run a good race. By God's grace, I will cast off what hinders me, persevere through difficulty, and keep my eyes fixed on Christ—running faithfully, purposefully, and joyfully toward Him.

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).