

THIRD LAY TALK

TALK #5 LIFE OF PIETY

Overview of All Talks

One message is delivered during The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience; it is communicated throughout the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You have been selected to deliver one of the 15 talks. In reality, you will deliver 1/15 of the Emmaus talk—one message, fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. In general, 2/3 of your presentation will come from the outlines; the remaining 1/3 will come from your original insights and personal experience.

The talks are sequenced in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims with the complete message of Emmaus. Do not try to cover more than your assigned topic. The expanded outline intends to provide a solid understanding of the material from which your talk will be developed. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will need to add personal examples to give life to the content and make it real to the hearers. Use visual aids to help convey the main points.

The Holy Spirit, as well as feedback from the team after your talk preview, will provide additional guidance for your unique presentation of this talk. Once you incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview, your presentation no longer belongs just to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

This presentation is allotted a maximum of 20 to 25 minutes. Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, good stewardship of time, and consideration for the hearers.

Overview for Speaker

A life of piety is a life lived in relationship with God. While devotional practices are important to enabling this relationship, they are not the relationship. Devotional practices are personal ways of receiving, nurturing, and enriching the relationship with God.

Prayer is the act of personally relating to God, the ongoing communication language of the relationship. Meditation is a time of listening to God and searching the depth of this relationship. Scripture is the source of knowing the mind, heart, and will of the One to whom we desire to relate. Worship is how we celebrate our relationship and give witness to God's activity in our private and corporate lives. Other dimensions of the Christian life flow from this relationship. For instance, evangelism involves proclaiming God's love for all people and

inviting them to join in this relationship. Social action is sharing the love of this relationship with others by responding to their needs.

The life of piety is a life lived in total connection with God. On the one hand, drawing parallels with our human relationships can help us see the importance of caring for our relationship with God. On the other hand, our relationship with God can inspire and inform the character of our human relationships. Moreover, our human relationships are arenas where we can experience our relationship with God.

The talk is scheduled for Friday at 6:30 p.m.

Expanded Outline: LIFE OF PIETY

Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Opening Story (1–2 minutes)

Choose a story or experience from your own life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult with the Lay Director or the Spiritual Director for assistance. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention of pilgrims and move them into the theme of this talk. For example, you might do the following:

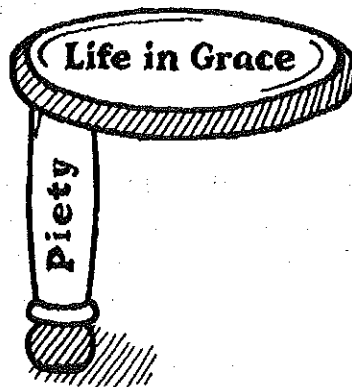
Option 1: Share a personal story of a time when you gave your heart to God and began to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Option 2: Share the life story of someone else that illustrates the main theme of the talk.

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is LIFE OF PIETY.

I. Introduction

- A. The phrase “life of piety” suggests a whole life, not just momentary acts, practices, religious routines, or schedules. The aim of a life of piety is not to become pious but to live all of one’s life in relationship with God. A life of piety is not outward religiosity but a life of genuine openness to God.
- B. We live a life of piety when we make a relationship with God our life’s priority. In the life of piety we give our hearts to God. *[Display the following image. Explain that a stool with only one leg is not stable enough to support a life in grace.]*



- C. A life of piety is not limited to a narrow religious aspect of one's life; rather, a life in piety is a life in which one's relationship with God influences all other relationships.
- D. Jesus' relationship with God was not just an important part of his life or even the most important part of his life; it was the source of a whole life lived from God's love toward other people. Jesus' words and deeds flowed from his relationship with God (John 7:16). Every aspect of his life reflected his relationship with God (John 10:18).
- E. As in all relationships, you will get out of the relationship with God what you put into it. God has fully offered us a relationship; it is up to us to receive the relationship and live from it.
- F. As in all relationships, you will experience highs and lows. Neither is necessarily a barometer of the quality or maturity of our relationship with God. Jesus had both the experience of God's presence on the mountaintop (Matt. 17:1-8) and the feeling of God's absence on the cross (Matt. 27:45-46). So will we.

II. Characteristics of a High-Priority Relationship

Characteristics of any high-priority relationship are attention, time, honesty, deep commitment, and shared resources. These are also characteristics of a relationship with God.

- A. *Attention*—We must give our undivided attention to God. Anything else diminishes the relationship. God gives attention to each one of us, in all the details of our life. God knows the exact number of hairs on our head (Luke 12:7).
- B. *Time*—All meaningful relationships take time to develop. Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in the garden; Jesus took time away from his family, his disciples, and his ministry to the multitudes in order to have meaningful time with God. Can we do any less?
- C. *Honesty*—In an honest relationship, we communicate truthfully and regularly. We share true feelings and attitudes, even negative ones. It's been said that a friend is someone who knows all about you and loves you just the same. In our relationship with God, there can be no secrets; God already knows everything about us. Honest communication is a two-way street—it involves listening as well as speaking. How much do you listen to God?
- D. *Deep commitment*—We cannot continually skim the surface with people who are significant in our lives, or the relationship suffers. The same is true with God. Lip service, an occasional mealtime prayer, etc., will not build a deep relationship with God. We must be willing to give deeply of ourselves, to make the relationship a priority.
- E. *Sharing*—A healthy relationship provides strength for all of one's life. Likewise with God, out of the depth of that relationship will come resources for living through life's

ups and downs, for living a life that will make a difference in the world. A deep relationship with God becomes the root relationship from which all other relationships will grow and bear fruit. God is pleased and glorified when our lives are joyful and productive (John 15:1-11).

A relationship with God, characterized by attention, time, honesty, deep commitment, and sharing, becomes the source of a life fully and joyfully lived in God's grace.

III. Spiritual Practices That Enhance the Relationship

- A. *Prayer*—Prayer is the act of personally relating to God, of sharing thoughts and feelings. It is the communication language of the soul. Just as you cannot have a meaningful relationship with someone if you do not communicate with him or her, so you cannot have a meaningful relationship with God without an active prayer life. You must decide to pray. The times when you are not in the mood may be the times when you most need to pray. Set aside a place and time to pray. Open your heart to God and allow time to listen for God's response. God will be with you.
 - 1. In a life of prayer, we learn more about God, others, and ourselves. Prayer is a deeper form of communication and relationship than our minds alone can give us.
 - 2. Paul wrote, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Our goal is for prayer to become a lifestyle—a life lived in the presence and power of God.
- B. *Searching the scripture*—Scripture is the source from which we learn the heart, mind, and soul of the One to whom we want to relate. In scripture we read the witness of God's activity in the lives of others, and our eyes are opened to God's activity in our lives as well. When we approach the Bible with open minds and imagination, we find our own story—we find God speaking to us and our world.
- C. *Meditation*—Meditation focuses our attention on God. It may involve reflecting on a passage of scripture, entering imaginatively into scripture, or being silent in God's presence. In meditation, we center our hearts and minds on Christ. We silence our many words in order to hear God's word and know God's presence in our midst. Meditation is an important part of prayer and our relationship with God.
- D. *Worship*—Worship is the fount of Christian life and community. In privacy and in gathered community, we express our love and praise to God, confess our sin, receive God's grace in forgiveness, hear God's truth proclaimed, and respond with a deeper commitment. Worship reminds us of who and whose we are.
- E. *Holy Communion*—In the celebration of Holy Communion, we remember the love God shows us in Jesus Christ. We actively participate in the drama of forgiveness and thanksgiving, receive the bread of life, and receive restoration as brothers and sisters

in God's family. Communion is one of the highest forms of Christian worship. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

- F. *Spiritual direction*—This practice helps us get the most out of all the other practices. Spiritual direction involves investing time with a clergy or layperson who is a mature Christian, someone who is willing and able to guide us in the paths that can help us grow in grace and deepen our relationship with God. A mutual relationship of spiritual guidance is called spiritual friendship.

IV. Qualities of a Life of Piety

- A. *Awareness*—A life of piety leads us to growing awareness of ourselves, others, all of creation, and God. Jesus' relationship with God gave him deep and spiritual sensitivity to people and situations around him.
- B. *Desire*—A life of piety is powered by the fire of God's love in our hearts. We desire to fulfill the relationship, to see it flower in personal and social ways. See Psalm 42:1-2 and Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19—to be "filled with all the fullness of God."
- C. *Action*—A life of piety bears fruit in action (James 3:17). Our relationship with God takes form in our daily decisions and lifestyle. Our relationship with God is clarified, strengthened, and tested by our engagement with reality.
- D. *Direction*—A life of piety focuses on God, our Alpha and Omega. Jesus knew "that he had come from God and was going to God" (John 13:3). As we live from the relationship God offers, we find direction. In a disoriented world, we become centered in Christ.
- E. *Naturalness*—A life of piety stays in touch with the real world. God does not call us to leave reality but empowers us to show love where we are. God does not ask us to be religious in unnatural ways but to be ourselves and share ourselves in grace.
- F. *Courage*—A life of piety exhibits the inward and eternal security that comes from a relationship with God. Freed from fear, we can follow the Spirit's promptings, do as Jesus commands, and live for God's love in spite of the costs.
- G. *Joy*—A life of piety can provide inner joy that transcends outward circumstances. As Christians we experience joy in knowing that we are united with God in Jesus Christ. We can serve the Lord out of joy rather than a sense of duty (like the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son/loving father).

A person who lives from a relationship with God displays awareness, desire, and action. Such a person has direction, acts natural, faces life courageously, and remains joyful in all circumstances.

[Tell a story from your experience of living the life of piety.]

V. Conclusion

The life of piety is a whole life lived in joyful relationship with God in Christ. Devotional practices and experiences of God are not ends in themselves but groundwork for the process by which Christ comes alive in us (for example, qualities of a life of piety). They prepare us daily to be partners in Christ's ministry.

De Colores!

Abbreviated Outline:

LIFE OF PIETY

Begin by leading the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Please turn to page 48 in your Worshipbook and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Opening Story (1–2 minutes)

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is LIFE OF PIETY.

I. Introduction

- A. "Life of piety" suggests a whole life, not just momentary pious acts and religious routines. The aim is a whole life lived in relationship with God.
- B. A life of piety makes the relationship with God life's priority. Piety means giving our hearts to God. *[Introduce a visual of a three-legged stool with only one leg. Explain that a stool with only one leg is not stable enough to support a life in grace.]*
- C. A life of piety is a life in which our relationship with God influences all other relationships.
- D. Jesus' relationship with God was the source of a whole life lived from God's love.
- E. As in all relationships, you will get out of the relationship with God only what you put into it. It is up to you to receive the relationship and live from it.
- F. As in all relationships, you will experience highs and lows. Jesus experienced highs and lows in his relationship with God.

II. Characteristics of a High-Priority Relationship

Characteristics of any high-priority relationship, including a relationship with God, are:

- A. *Attention*—We give the relationship our undivided attention.
- B. *Time*—We make time to be with the ones we love.
- C. *Honesty*—Honest communication involves telling the truth and attentive listening.
- D. *Deep commitment*—We cannot continually skim the surface with people significant in our lives, or the relationship suffers.
- E. *Sharing*—Provides strength for all of our life, including other relationships.

III. Spiritual Practices That Enhance the Relationship

- A. *Prayer*—Personally relating to God; the communication language of the soul.
- B. *Searching the scripture*—Source from which we learn the heart and will of the One who calls us into relationship.
- C. *Meditation*—Meditation focuses our attention on God in a way that is too deep for words.
- D. *Worship*—Worship is the fount of all Christian life and community
- E. *Holy Communion*—The sacramental meal where, in obedience to Jesus' command, we share the bread of life and the cup of salvation.
- F. *Spiritual direction*—Spiritual direction is a relationship with one who can guide us.

IV. Qualities of a Life of Piety

- A. *Awareness*—Of ourselves, others, creation, and God.
- B. *Desire*—To fulfill the relationship with God.
- C. *Action*—Bears fruit in our decisions and lifestyle.
- D. *Direction*—Focused on Christ, following the Way.
- E. *Naturalness*—In touch with reality; being ourselves.
- F. *Courage*—Exhibits inner security; freed from fear to follow truth and do right.
- G. *Joy*—Shows the joy of the Lord in all situations.

[Talk about a personal experience of living the life of piety.]

V. Conclusion

The life of piety is a whole life lived in joyful relationship with God in Christ.

De Colores!