

THIRD LAY TALK

TALK #5

LIFE OF PIETY

Overview of All Talks

The Walk to Emmaus 72-hour experience delivers one message that is communicated through the music, meals, clergy meditations, attitudes and actions of the team members, and the talks. You will deliver one of the fifteen talks. In reality, you will deliver one-fifteenth of the Emmaus talk—one message with fifteen presenters.

Prepare your talk using the outlines provided. As a good general rule, two-thirds of the talk will come from the outline and one-third would be the speaker's original insights and illustrations.

The Emmaus model sequences the talks in a defined order; each builds on the next to provide pilgrims 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 you will develop your talk. The abbreviated outline helps you see the progression of the main points. *Neither outline is a script*; you will add personal examples to give life to the content. 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. You will incorporate the suggestions offered after your preview. Then your presentation no longer belongs only to you but to the team God is forming to deliver the Emmaus message.

This presentation is allotted a maximum of twenty to twenty-five minutes. Please honor the time limit out of a spirit of cooperation, charity, stewardship of time, and consideration for the listeners.

Overview for Speaker

A life of piety is a life lived in relationship with God. While devotional practices enable this relationship, they are not the relationship. Devotional practices nurture, and enrich the relationship with God.

Prayer, the act of relating to God personally, provides the ongoing communication language of the relationship. Meditation offers a time of listening to God and searching the depth of the relationship. Scripture serves as the source of knowing the mind, heart, and will of the One to whom we desire to relate. Worship celebrates our relationship and gives 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 shares 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 serve as arenas where we can experience our relationship with God.

Videos and recorded songs should not be part of the talk. Any projection during the talk should be kept simple.

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

EXPANDED OUTLINE

LIFE OF PIETY

Lead the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

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

Introduction (1–2 minutes)

Choose a brief, personal story or experience that relates to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult the Lay Director or 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:

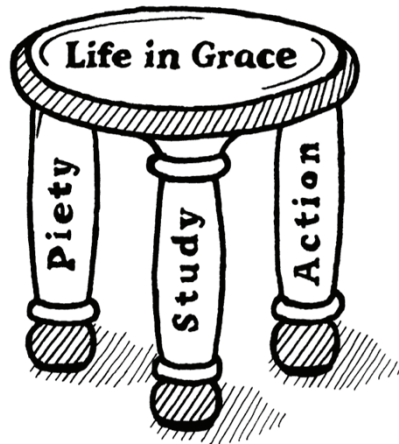
Option 1: Share a story of a time when you gave your heart to God and began to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Option 2: Share the life story of a person that illustrates the main theme of the talk.

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

I. Insights

- 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 our lives in relationship with God. A life of genuine openness to God rather than outward religiosity characterizes a life of piety.
- B. We live a life of piety when our relationship with God is 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 two legs lacks the stability to support a life in grace.]*



- C. We do not limit a life of piety to a narrow religious aspect of our lives; rather, a life of piety encourages us to extend the influence of our relationship with God to all other relationships.
- D. Jesus' relationship with God moved far beyond simply being a significant 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. (See John 7:16.) Every aspect of his life reflected his relationship with God. (See John 10:18.)
- E. As in all relationships, we get out of the relationship with God what we put into it. God offers us a relationship; we choose to receive the relationship and live from it.
- F. As in all relationships, we will experience highs and lows. Neither serves as a barometer of the quality or maturity of our relationship with God. Jesus experienced God's presence on the mountaintop (see Matthew 17:1-8) and the sense of God's absence while on the cross (see Matthew 27:45-46). So will we.

II. Characteristics of a high-priority relationship

Any high-priority relationship requires attention, time, honesty, deep commitment, and shared resources. These characterize a relationship with God.

- A. *Attention*—We give our undivided attention to God. Anything less diminishes the relationship. God gives attention to each of us in all the details of our life. God knows the number of hairs on our head. (See 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 spend meaningful time with God. Can we do any less?
- C. *Honesty*—In an honest relationship, we communicate truthfully and regularly. We share feelings and attitudes, even negative ones. It's been said that a friend is someone who knows all about us and still loves us. In our relationship with God, we hold no secrets; God already knows everything about us. Honest communication is

a two-way street that involves listening as well as speaking. How much do you listen to God?

- D. *Deep commitment*—If we continually skim the surface with significant people in our lives, the relationship suffers. The same is true with God. Lip service or an occasional mealtime prayer will not build a relationship with God. We willingly give of ourselves to make the relationship a priority.
- E. *Sharing*—A healthy relationship supports every part of our 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 grow and bear fruit. Our joyful and productive lives please and glorify God. (See 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, the act of personally relating to God and sharing thoughts and feelings is the communication language of the soul. Meaningful relationships only come about through communication; a meaningful relationship with God only comes with an active prayer life. You decide to pray. The times when we feel least in the mood may be the times when we most need to pray. Set aside a place and time to pray. We open our hearts to God and allow time to listen for God’s response. God will be with us.
 - 1. In a life of prayer, we learn more about God, others, and ourselves. Prayer provides 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. We may reflect on a passage of scripture, enter imaginatively into scripture, or remain silent in God’s presence. In meditation, we center our hearts and minds on Christ. We silence our many words so we may hear God’s word and know God’s presence in our midst.-
- D. *Worship*—Worship is the fount of Christian life and community. Individually 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. Jesus said, "Do this [eating the bread and drinking the cup] in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).
- F. *Spiritual direction*—This practice supplements the other practices. Spiritual direction involves investing time with a mature Christian 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 creation, and God. Jesus' relationship with God gave him spiritual sensitivity to people and situations around him.
- B. *Desire*—The fire of God's love in our hearts powers a life of piety. We desire to fulfill the relationship, to see it flower in personal and social ways. See Psalm 42:1-2 and Ephesians 3:14-19 where the writer desires to be "filled with all the fullness of God."
- C. *Action*—A life of piety bears fruit in action. (See James 3:17.) Our relationship with God takes form in our daily decisions and lifestyle. Our engagement with reality clarifies, strengthens, and tests our relationship with God.
- D. *Direction*—A life of piety focuses on God, the 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 discover direction. In a disoriented world, we find our center in Christ.
- E. *Naturalness*—A life of piety stays in touch with the real world. God does not call us to leave our everyday life but empowers us to show love where we are. God asks that we 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 despite the cost.
- G. *Joy*—A life of piety can provide inner joy that transcends outward circumstances. As Christians, we experience joy in knowing our union with God in Jesus Christ. We serve the Lord out of joy rather than duty (like the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son/loving father).

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

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

V. Conclusion

The life of piety is a 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 daily prepare us to be partners in Christ's ministry.

De Colores!

ABBREVIATED OUTLINE

LIFE OF PIETY

Lead the Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Please turn to page 48 in your Worship Booklet, and join me in the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

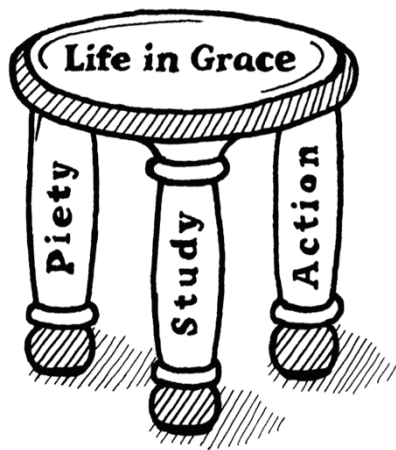
Introduction (1–2 minutes)

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

I. Insights

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 to bring everything in our lives into relationship with God.

- A. A life of piety makes our relationship with God our life's priority. *[Display the following image. Explain that a stool with only two legs lacks the stability to support a life in grace.]*



- B. A life of piety encourages us to extend the influence of our relationship with God to all other relationships.
- C. Jesus' relationship with God moved far beyond simply being a significant part of his life; it was the source of a whole life lived from God's love.
- D. As in all relationships, we get out of the relationship with God what we put into it. God offers us a relationship; we choose to receive the relationship and live from it.
- E. As in all relationships, we will experience highs and lows. Jesus experienced highs and lows in his relationship with God.

II. Characteristics of a high-priority relationship

Any high-priority relationship, including a relationship with God, requires the following characteristics:

- 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 requires telling the truth and attentive listening
- D. *Deep commitment*—If we continually skim the surface with significant people in our lives, the relationship suffers.
- E. *Sharing*—Provides strength for our life, including other relationships.

II. Spiritual practices that enhance the relationship

Prayer—Personally relating to God; the communication language of the soul.

- A. *Searching the scripture*—The source from which we learn the heart, mind, and soul of the One who calls us into relationship.
- B. *Meditation*—Meditation focuses our attention on God in a way that moves beyond words.
- C. *Worship*—Worship is the fount of Christian life and community.
- D. *Holy Communion*—The sacramental meal where, in obedience to Jesus' command, we share the bread of life and the cup of salvation.
- E. *Spiritual direction*—An investment of time with a mature Christian who can guide us.

III. Qualities of a life of piety

- A. *Awareness*—of ourselves, others, all 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*—inner security, freed from fear to follow truth and do right.

G. *Joy*—exhibits the joy of the Lord in all situations.

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

V. Conclusion

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

De Colores!