

FIFTH LAY TALK

TALK #8

CHRISTIAN ACTION

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 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 twenty to twenty-five 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

This talk introduces the theme of Christian action, which is further developed in the next three lay talks. The CHRISTIAN ACTION talk focuses on Christians' call to share Christ in word and deed—in all that we do. Through Christian action, we communicate God's friendship in Christ to persons we encounter and in situations of human need in society. (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.)

Each person's gifts and personality will determine the style of Christian action taken. Effective Christian action comes about when we feel comfortable with our faith and with the situation in which we find ourselves. Always remember, we share Christ and Christ's love with *people*, not with situations. You, as the speaker, represent a way of life in God's love; do not try to manipulate or control the pilgrims' response.

Christian action seeks to share Christ as fully and effectively as possible in every situation. In one situation, it may mean making friends and introducing them to Christ. In another situation, it may mean offering a helping hand, relieving suffering, and acting to change situations that cause human need. Many situations require attentiveness to all these aspects.

Offer personal illustrations to help pilgrims envision how they can engage in Christian action in a way that is natural to them. The talk will help pilgrims listen for how God may be calling them to action in Christ's name.

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

This talk is scheduled for Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

EXPANDED OUTLINE

CHRISTIAN ACTION

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 specific way you have changed your practice of Christian action and how this has changed your life. Feel free to name the fears or obstacles that had to be overcome.

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

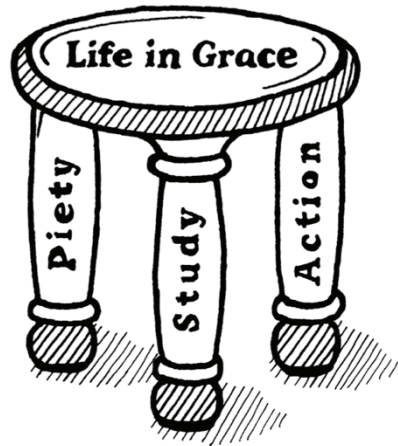
My name is _____, and the title of this talk is CHRISTIAN ACTION.

I. Insights

- A. Christian action characterizes a Christ-centered life, action that flows from personal relationship and commitment to Christ.
 1. Christian action means representing Christ and his church in works of compassion. (See Luke 10:29-37.)
 2. It bears witness to Christ wherever you may be, in all you say and do. (See Acts 1:8.)
 3. It carries on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world according to your gifts. (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.)

- B. Briefly review where we have come thus far in the weekend:
1. The LIFE OF PIETY talk encouraged us to give our hearts to God.
 2. The GROW THROUGH STUDY talk encouraged us to give our minds to God.
 3. In this talk on Christian action, we will begin to look at how we can give our hands and feet to God.

[Use the three-legged stool or tripod image to remind pilgrims of the three disciplines supporting a life in grace.]



- C. Jesus said, “I am the way [piety], and the truth [study], and the life [action]” (John 14:6). Christian action characterizes life in its fullness—a life overflowing with God’s love for people.
- D. This talk centers on the action of offering Christ to the world through the witness of your life.

II. Christian action is a natural response to God’s grace.

- A. God’s grace enlightens, unbinds, and strengthens us. Grace awakens us to the greatest reality of our lives—God’s redeeming love and the realization that we have a spiritual kinship with God (made in God’s image) and with all people.
- B. Naturally when we receive the very best—God’s grace—we desire to share it with others. God’s grace creates enthusiasm for passing it on.
- C. People respond uniquely to grace through Christian action according to the gifts God has given them.
1. We have been given the Holy Spirit. Those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit display spiritual qualities that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22). The fruit of the Spirit results from God’s grace coming alive in us; each is an avenue of Christian action.

2. Paul makes us aware that we receive spiritual gifts for ministry. He makes clear that the most excellent gift is love; without love, all other gifts are empty. (See 1 Corinthians 13.)
3. God offers these gifts not for the private ministry of a few exceptional individuals but for the ministry of the entire community of faith.
 - a. Consider what qualities and gifts God has given you for sharing Christ and his grace.

III. Christian action calls for a plan.

- A. Make a plan based on your actual situation and resources.
 1. Christian action does not happen by accident but by deciding to show forth Christ's love in specific ways in word and deed.
 2. Ask yourself: What situation needs God's love? What resources, both personal and physical, does the situation require? What will be the consequences of my action?
 3. Think and pray about your plan for action.
- B. Work your plan.
 1. Trust that when you step out in faith, you will experience the strength and support of the Holy Spirit. (See Matthew 10:20.)
 2. Do not allow difficulty to dishearten you. (See Matthew 5:10-11.) Remember God sometimes uses momentary failure for success in God's own time.
- C. Keep perspective.
 1. A Christian does not neglect family, job, church, or community to do the Lord's work.
 2. Christian action does not consist of occasional heroic acts; it is a way of life that occurs daily.
 3. The rest of life cannot stand still while you take Christian action. Likewise, Christian action cannot wait until you take care of life's necessities.
 4. Christian action is every action a Christian lives.
- D. Gain support for the plan.
 1. The Holy will guide and empower Christian action.
 2. Other committed Christians will join you in your efforts; the disciples went two by two. (See Luke 10:1.)
 3. Your local church can serve as your base camp/community for Christian action.
- E. Implement with authenticity.
 1. It flows from care for others, not from a need to be needed or a desire to control or manipulate others' response.

2. It flows naturally from personal faith experience and personality; it is not forced to fit some preconceived image of evangelism or witness.
3. Christian action does not convey a “better-than-thou” attitude.
4. Christian action takes place in your life arenas:
 - a. Individuals with whom you come in contact;
 - b. Groups, clubs, organizations with which you associate; and
 - c. People you know who need assistance and support.

IV. Friendship is the style for offering Christ to others.

“All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also” (2 Cor. 5:18, GNT).

- A. Reach out to persons with whom you naturally come in contact.
 1. **Start by making a friend.** Take initiative to get to know a person. Understand the person’s life situation, needs, and strengths. Listen and support.
 2. **Be that person’s friend.** Share your own life. Make yourself available in tough times as well as good times. Reach out, help, offer assistance, and show agape love. Let the person see that you have a living faith.
 3. **Introduce your new friend to Christ.** Share your relationship to the Source of life and love. Your new friend will need to have seen Christ in your life. Jesus calls us to be witnesses (see Acts 1:8) in our words and deeds.
 4. *Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ.* Sharing Christ becomes authentic and natural when we make it part of the course of our everyday interactions and sharing of ourselves in relationships.
- B. Reach out to those who need a helping hand. In this way, you manifest God’s friendship. (See Luke 10:25-37.)
 1. Respond to people’s needs, and seek to change situations that cause the need.
 2. Listen to those to whom Jesus listened: the young, the sick, the oppressed, the poor, and the excluded. The persons to whom we listen determine what we hear, and what we hear determines our Christian action.
 3. Stand with those with whom Jesus stood. In what ways do you choose safety, comfortable surroundings, and friendship with the powers that be? When do you step out and risk standing with those who need a friend or an advocate? Where we stand determines what we see, and the human reality we see determines our response.
- C. Reach out with Christ, and grow in God’s love toward all persons.
 1. As with prayer and study, make service a regular part of your life—a discipline—not something you do only when you feel moved. This discipline will help you outgrow self-centeredness.

2. Christian action requires that you consider other persons' welfare as important as your own. Identify with those in need, and do for others what you would want them to do for you. (See Matthew 7:12.)
3. Christian action involves a commitment to take up the towel (see John 13:14-15) and become a servant with Jesus Christ. Serve selflessly without concern for results and recognition.
4. *[Describe your plan of action.]*

V. Conclusion

- A. Remember that Christian action is a grateful response to God's grace, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that helps us grow in Christ's likeness.
- B. Participating in Christian action encourages you to live up to the image of God in which you were created—you live into your potential for loving God and your neighbor with your whole life.
- C. Your mission is to pass on the gift of grace you have been given.
- D. Christian action extends Christ's work.
 1. In Zell an der Mosel, Germany, a statue of Christ lost its hands during a World War II bombing raid. On the wall beside the statue is a sign that reads: "Christ has no hands but yours."
 2. God counts on you to continue the work of Christ in the world.

De Colores!

ABBREVIATED OUTLINE

CHRISTIAN ACTION

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)

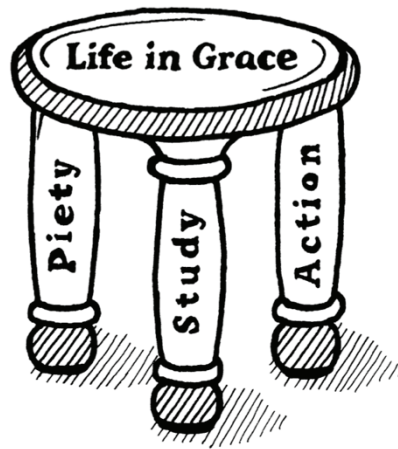
Choose a story or experience from your life that is brief, personal, and directly related to the main point of this talk. If you cannot think of an appropriate introduction, consult with the Lay Director or a Spiritual Director for assistance. A good introduction will engage the hearts, minds, and attention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

My name is _____, and the title of this talk is CHRISTIAN ACTION.

I. Initial Insights

- A. Christian action characterizes a Christ-centered life, action that flows from personal relationship and commitment to Christ. It bears witness to Christ and carries on his work wherever you are, in all you say and do.
- B. It carries on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world according to your gifts. (See 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.)
- C. Briefly review where we have come thus far in the weekend:

[Use the three-legged stool or tripod image to remind pilgrims of the three disciplines supporting a life in grace.]



- D. Jesus said, "I am the way [piety], and the truth [study], and the life [action]" (John 14:6).
- E. This talk centers on the action of offering Christ to the world through the witness of your life.

II. Christian action is a natural response to God's grace.

- A. God's grace awakens us to the greatest reality of our lives—God's redeeming love and our spiritual kinship.
- B. Because we have received such a gift, we desire to share it with others enthusiastically.
- C. People respond uniquely to grace through Christian action according to the gifts God has given them.
- D. Consider what qualities and gifts God has given you for sharing Christ and his grace.

III. Christian action calls for a plan.

- A. Make a plan based on your actual situation and resources; Christian action does not happen by accident
- B. Work your plan; the Holy Spirit will support you.
- C. Keep your perspective; integrate your action with other aspects of your life.

- D. Gain support for the plan; call on Christian friends and your local church.
- E. Implement with authenticity, acting out of natural concern.
- F. Christian action takes place in your life arenas: relationships, groups, and people who need assistance and support.

IV. Friendship is the style for offering Christ to others.

- A. Reach out to persons with whom you naturally come in contact. *Make a friend, be a friend, and bring your friend to Christ.*
 - 1. Reach out to those who need a helping hand.
 - 2. Reach out with Christ, and grow in God's love toward all persons.
 - 3. [Describe your plan of action.]

V. Conclusion

Christian action is response to God's grace, a discipline by which we live into our potential, a persons made in God's image. Our mission is to pass on the gift of grace we have been given.