

The Fifth Day Retreat

Remembering Our
Walk to Emmaus

Writing the Lay Talks

Manual by

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This is a process for writing the four lay talks that are a part of the Fifth Day Retreat for persons who have made a Walk to Emmaus. It is an optional process but designed to be helpful if you wish to use it in writing your talk. The fifteen talks of the Walk to Emmaus are carefully scripted because each one delivers a large amount of information in a short period of time. The two clergy talks of the Fifth Day Retreat are also scripted because they present new information to those on the retreat.

The purpose of the lay talks in the Fifth Day Retreat, however, is to remind and encourage people to remember the inspiration and energy of their Walk to Emmaus. This is not new information, but revisiting information which we already know in order to learn it from the perspective of one already familiar with the basic ideas. There are four lay talks which share the titles and topics with four Emmaus lay talks: *Priorities, Piety, Study and Christian Action*. The latter three make up the “three legged stool” of living our faith.

One purpose of the Fifth Day Retreat is to encourage those present to make intentional, written goals to more effectively live the Christian life as described in these four talks. The lay talks, therefore, are not about sharing information; they are about persuasion toward a more deeper, sincere commitment to Christ. A second purpose of every Fifth Day Retreat is to encourage participation in a Reunion Group which will strengthen the practice of our faith.

In order to strengthen the process of writing goals to achieve better priorities, each talk is followed by table talk built around a form called the “Repent and Replace” form. As a means of taking notes during the talk, individuals can note behavior they would wish to leave behind (repent) and new priorities and goals to replace those behaviors. This form is based on a proven management practice of asking participants to identify immediately after a presentation how they could intentionally use the material when they return home.

This process for the four lay talks is based on a time tested model for persuasive speaking developed by Alan H. Monroe over sixty years ago and taught in university speech courses since that time. The model is known as *Monroe’s Motivated Sequence* and this adaptation for preaching is known as *Monroe’s Mountain*.¹ In order to follow the process, find a quiet place to think and bring with you materials for writing.

Two approaches to writing these lay talks follow, one shorter and one longer and more detailed. The steps in the shorter process are expanded and discussed in more detail in the longer process, if you would like to review any section that is giving you difficulty.

Remember that the goal of your talk is ***not to make an exhaustive presentation on a subject*** but to ***give specific suggestions for encouragement*** to the pilgrims which will inspire them to set new goals for their spiritual growth in one part of the topic of your talk. Consequently, the content of a talk will vary greatly in each Fifth Day retreat because it reflects the experience of the presenter and what aspect of the specific topic they feel led to address. ***For this reason each Fifth Day Retreat will be intentionally different and pilgrims can benefit from attending the retreat year after year.***

The length of your talk will depend on the schedule chosen by the Lay Director and Spiritual Director.

FIFTH DAY RETREAT SCHEDULES	Basic	Shorter	Shortest
Basic Segment Length	60 min	45 min	30 min
Talk Length - up to	30 min	20 min	15 min
Table Talk + Break (5 min or more)	30 min	25 min	15 min

¹Additional information on *Monroe’s Motivated Sequence* can be found at http://www.disciplewalk.com/files/Ron_St._John_monroe_sequence_Handout.pdf. David Kueker’s version for writing sermons/talks is called “Monroe’s Mountain” and can be downloaded here: http://www.disciplewalk.com/files/Monroe_Mountain.pdf

THE SHORTER PROCESS

As this is a process of brainstorming, make a note of everything that comes to your mind. Later you will pick and choose the ideas you intend to use in your talk.

OUR RESPONSE: *REPENT* + *REPLACE* for _____
(Priorities/Piety/Study/Christian Action/Disciple Making)

What negative experiences and behaviors would you like to leave behind?

What positive or Godly experiences and behaviors could replace those you leave behind?

REPENT: _____ (1 John 1:9)

REPLACE: _____ (Matthew 12:43-45)

Step 1 - Problems: Considering the topic of your talk, list in the space above under REPENT the problems and challenges you have noticed in your own life and the lives of others which prevent you or them from being more effective at living this aspect of the Christian life addressed by your talk.

Step 2 - Solutions: In the space under REPLACE consider what you have learned through your experience to be useful ways to resolve or counter each of the problems you listed under REPENT. (If you have a great solution which has worked for you, consider why it works and what problem you might have had that it solves.)

Step 3 - Experiences: Consider your own personal experience of problems. What are the three most difficult in your opinion, for which you have a good story of your struggles with them? Number them and jot down some notes to remind you of the story you might tell. (Your sharing of your problems and struggles will give the pilgrims permission to talk openly about **similar problems and struggles** at their tables. The best choice for sharing are problems that they, too, are likely to struggle with - it's not as beneficial to shock them with how difficult your life has been. Highly personal or confidential problems from your testimony are not as useful in a Fifth Day Talk as they are not likely to be problems the pilgrim is struggling with.) You might choose three specific problems or three aspects of one problem.

Step 4 - Methods: Consider the solutions you listed under replace - do you have a good story you can tell how you or someone else solved that problem that will **clearly visualize the steps** for the pilgrims of at least one method they could use to resolve the same problem in their lives? (If you feel led to talk about a particular problem or struggle you have had but aren't sure of a good method to resolve it, feel free to consult your pastor, the Lay Director or Spiritual Director on the Fifth Day Retreat or another Christian leader you believe might have an answer for you.)

Step 5 - Balance: Look over your choice of problems and solutions - are the ones you chose the best to share, in your opinion? As you pray over them, do they have a balance and seem right to you?

Step 6 - Scripture: Consider a scripture for your talk which will **link** the problems and solutions you discuss. The following are suggested with a theme to emphasize, but you may be led to use a different passage and/or emphasize another theme.

<i>Priorities: Mat 7:21-23, Luke 6:46-49</i>	<i>(Strengthened by learning obedience to follow through.)</i>
<i>Piety: John 15:1-11</i>	<i>(Strengthened by learning how to abide in Jesus.)</i>
<i>Study: John 8:31-36</i>	<i>(Strengthened by remaining focused on reading scripture.)</i>
<i>Christian Action: Matthew 16:21-25</i>	<i>(Strengthened by carrying a cross that benefits others.)</i>

My scripture is:

My theme is:

Step 7 - Application: **Ask** the pilgrims to do several clear specific things to **encourage them** to immediately apply the lessons of your talk to their spiritual life.

What will you ask?

Step 8: Assembling Your Talk. You may use an outline or write out your talk word for word. Copy your ideas onto another sheet of paper or develop them on your computer

The two halves of your talk are your chosen problems and solutions/methods. Each should take less than half of your time as you practice your talk as they are linked by the scripture. Don't skimp on describing the problems as this builds understanding and empathy that are necessary to solve them.

Begin with your struggles, read and explain the scripture you've chosen that links them, then share vivid examples of how you or someone resolved that spiritual problem. End by asking the pilgrims to do some specific tasks as soon as they get home to improve their spiritual lives.

THE LONGER PROCESS

As this is a process of brainstorming, make a note of everything that comes to your mind. Later you will pick and choose the ideas you intend to your in your talk. Print this section and make your lists for each step on separate pieces of paper so that there is plenty of room to add new ideas. (Or you can insert text in the file using your computer word processor whenever the process suggests using a separate piece of paper.)

Step 1. Imagine yourself seated on a plateau with a marvelous view. From this viewpoint, you can clearly see to your left the spiritual needs and problems that people struggle with as they attempt to climb up to your current position. You can also clearly see to your right the wonderful benefits of living the spiritual life with God's help as people descend the far side, living by a more clear understanding of what God wants from us. You can see God's people moving from left to right, up the mountain of struggle, seeing things from God's viewpoint at the top, and then the easy walk down the other side as they live life by God's rules.

Step 2. Reflect upon your own Walk to Emmaus.

What spiritual needs and problems hampered your life prior to your Walk? What insights did you gain on your Walk which helped you to more clearly understand the spiritual needs and problems you had? Did you bring with you on the walk a question or a hope that God would help you? List those needs, problems and understandings you gathered below, using extra paper as needed..

Reflect on the walk itself; how did you experience God's presence during your time at the top of the mountain of the Walk to Emmaus. Which talks spoke to you? What lessons did you learn? What experiences will you always treasure? What was, in retrospect, most meaningful? Least meaningful? List these answers as they come to you below or on a separate sheet of paper..

Imagine the far side of the mountain, as you returned to your normal life with the ideas and energy fresh from your Walk. What were your hopes and dreams for life after your Walk? What were your intentions and plans? What were your goals, if you had specific goals? List these answers as they come to you below or on a separate sheet of paper.

Imagine the foot of the mountain, rejoining your normal life. Was the transition into daily life after your Walk easy or difficult? What happened to those hopes, dreams, intentions and plans in real life? Perhaps some strengthened; perhaps some withered. List these answers as they come to you on a separate sheet of paper.

Step 3. Review the original Walk to Emmaus resource materials for the talk which you have been asked to present. With your perspective, which phrases, concepts or paragraphs seem particularly helpful or powerful to you now? Make a note of them below and on a separate piece of paper if necessary.

Consider other Emmaus talks you have heard or delivered. What would they have to contribute to your talk? (The Fifth Day Priorities talk is also related to Perseverance and could be resourced by ideas in any of the fifteen lay talks and five clergy talks.)

- - - Use this page if you are preparing the PRIORITIES TALK - - -

Step 4. The top of this imaginary mountain, Monroe's Mountain, is a place where we contemplate the meaning of scripture. You may have been assigned a scripture that is to be the basis for your talk by the Spiritual Director, or you may have been asked to choose an appropriate scripture for your own talk. If a scripture has been assigned, it is usually the scripture from the Scripture Litany which opens the Fifth Day Retreat related to your particular talk. Here they are:

#3: Our Priorities - Mat 7:21-23, Luke 6:46-49

"Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord, ' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** On that day many will say to me, '**Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?**' And then will I declare to them, '**I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.**'

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord, ' **and not do what I tell you?** Every one who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: **he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built.** But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; **against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.**"

Lord Jesus, **help us to be those who follow you and obey you as our Lord, sincerely and honestly. We are tired of the hypocrisy that surrounds us and is within us.**

Consider how this scripture illustrates human problems. What are the human problems it points to, both ancient and modern? Write them here:

Consider how this scripture illustrates help from God - advice and a divine solution for human problems. What is the divine solution it describes? What advice does it give to us? Write your answer here:

- - - Use this page if you are preparing the PIETY TALK - - -

Step 4. The top of this imaginary mountain, Monroe's Mountain, is a place where we contemplate the meaning of scripture. You may have been assigned a scripture that is to be the basis for your talk by the Spiritual Director, or you may have been asked to choose an appropriate scripture for your own talk. If a scripture has been assigned, it is usually the scripture from the Scripture Litany which opens the Fifth Day Retreat related to your particular talk. Here they are:

#6: Our Piety: John 15:1-12

"I am the true vine, **and my Father is the vinedresser**. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, **and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit**. You are already made clean **by the word which I have spoken to you**.

Abide in me, **and I in you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, **neither can you, unless you abide in me**. I am the vine, **you are the branches**. He who abides in me, **and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing**.

If a man does not abide in me, **he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned**.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, **ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you**. By this my Father is glorified, **that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples**.

As the Father has loved me, **so have I loved you; abide in my love**. If you keep my commandments, **you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love**. These things I have spoken to you, **that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full**. This is my commandment, **that you love one another as I have loved you**.

Lord Jesus, **teach us to abide in you; teach us how to love one another as you love us**.

Consider how this scripture illustrates human problems. What are the human problems it points to, both ancient and modern? Write them here:

Consider how this scripture illustrates help from God - advice and a divine solution for human problems. What is the divine solution it describes? What advice does it give to us? Write your answer here:

- - - Use this page if you are preparing the STUDY TALK - - -

Step 4. The top of this imaginary mountain, Monroe's Mountain, is a place where we contemplate the meaning of scripture. You may have been assigned a scripture that is to be the basis for your talk by the Spiritual Director, or you may have been asked to choose an appropriate scripture for your own talk. If a scripture has been assigned, it is usually the scripture from the Scripture Litany which opens the Fifth Day Retreat related to your particular talk. Here they are:

#7. Our Study: John 8:31-36 - "Continue in my word..."

Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, **"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."** They answered him, **"We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to any one. How is it that you say, 'You will be made free'?"** Jesus answered them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not continue in the house for ever; the son continues for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."**

Lord Jesus, **teach us to learn from you by regularly reading your words in the Bible.**

Consider how this scripture illustrates human problems. What are the human problems it points to, both ancient and modern? Write them here:

Consider how this scripture illustrates help from God - advice and a divine solution for human problems. What is the divine solution it describes? What advice does it give to us? Write your answer here:

- - - Use this page if you are preparing the CHRISTIAN ACTION TALK - - -

Step 4. The top of this imaginary mountain, Monroe's Mountain, is a place where we contemplate the meaning of scripture. You may have been assigned a scripture that is to be the basis for your talk by the Spiritual Director, or you may have been asked to choose an appropriate scripture for your own talk. If a scripture has been assigned, it is usually the scripture from the Scripture Litany which opens the Fifth Day Retreat related to your particular talk. Here they are:

#8: Our Christian Action: Matthew 16:21-25

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples **that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.** And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "**God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you.**" But he turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.**" Then Jesus told his disciples, "**If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**"

Lord Jesus, **help me to carry my own cross as you carried yours, for the benefit of others.**

Consider how this scripture illustrates human problems. What are the human problems it points to, both ancient and modern? Write them here:

Consider how this scripture illustrates help from God - advice and a divine solution for human problems. What is the divine solution it describes? What advice does it give to us? Write your answer here:

Step 5. Prayerfully read your scripture several times, followed each time by the short prayer. Meditate on what it means to you. Write your thoughts from your meditation on a separate sheet of paper.

Imagine that you are a member of a large audience. What specific questions might they ask a Bible teacher about the details of this passage. Are there words that need definitions? (Check your dictionary.) Are there specific terms, things or places from Bible days that people might ask about that you could look up in a Bible dictionary or reference work? (*How much is a denarius worth? How deep is the Sea of Galilee? What is a Levite? Why did they dislike Samaritans?*) Do the research and/or ask your pastor for answers. Below and on a separate sheet of paper if needed, list the questions and answers you discovered.

Step 6. Imagine yourself again with the clear perspective that comes from sitting on a mountain top. Believe that the scripture is God's attempt to address a human need or human problem. Taking a clean sheet of paper, please look for how that problem is identified in the scripture passage and list what you find. Where is pain and suffering? What causes it?

Step 7. Think about your own experiences with that spiritual need or problem. Do people struggle with it today? Do you struggle with it as well? List some examples on a clean sheet of paper of how people struggle with it from your own life and experience.

You can also add to the list some experiences of others, celebrities, fictional characters from movies, television or books or even people from the Bible. How many examples of people struggling with this problem can you find and list?

Step 8. Review what you have written on your insights on the scripture and what you have written on how you observe that need or problem operating in people's lives today. Do you see a pattern in these examples? Given what you've observed, can you now define the spiritual need or problem accurately in your own words? Try to focus what you have noticed. Write your definition below.

Here are some examples which you might find useful:

Priorities: Nothing is certain or reliable in a life that is contrary to God's principles; one problem follows another.

Piety: Failure and pain are certain in a life disconnected from Christ.

Study: A life separated from God's word is full of self-deception and denial of sin.

Christian Action: A life of selfishness and self-indulgence fulfills the will of Satan.

My definition of the human need or problem I see in this scripture for my talk:

Step 9. Imagine yourself again with the clear perspective that comes from sitting on a mountain top. Believe that the scripture is God's attempt to provide a divine solution for a specific human need or human problem. Taking a clean sheet of paper, please look for God's advice on how we should live. List what you find. Where is love, joy, peace, victory and triumph? What causes it?

Step 10. Think about your own experiences related to God's advice about a divine solution. Have you ever practiced God's advice? List some examples on a clean sheet of paper of how people are obedient in this way from your own life and experience.

Do you know of others who have followed God's advice? You can also add to the list some experiences of others, celebrities, fictional characters from movies, television or books or even people from the Bible. How many examples of people following God's advice can you find and list?

Step 11. Review what you have written on your insights on the scripture and what you have written on how you observe God's divine solution operating in people's lives today. Do you see a pattern in these examples? Given what you've observed, can you now define the divine solution accurately in your own words? Try to focus what you have noticed. Write your definition of God's solution below.

Here are some examples which you might find useful:

Priorities: Nothing is more certain or reliable than a life live obediently in harmony with God's principles; when problems arise, we have the means and energy to solve them by obeying God.

Piety: A fruitful life is certain when we are connected from Christ because God's resources and wisdom flow through us from our roots in God outward toward the situations in our lives that need help.

Study: A life continually informed by God's word reveals human problems and divine solutions clearly, allowing us to make choices informed by God's wisdom. Jesus called these people disciples.

Christian Action: A life like Christ's requires us to take up a cross that meets the needs of others; in this way we balance our lives by loving our neighbor as ourselves and so fulfill the commandment of God by serving others.

My definition of the divine solution I see in this scripture for my talk:

Step 12. Imagine how your life would be different and better if you followed the advice of God's divine solution. Visualize this in concrete terms - what would you be doing? What could a camera record and see? What would someone hear you say?

Below and on a separate sheet of paper if needed, make a list of these examples of how life would be experienced if people obeyed God's divine solution and followed God's advice.

Step 13. This vision of what is possible encourages us. But what would be the first steps? What would we specifically need to begin to do the day following the retreat to live out God's divine solution in our lives? What would be your plan to practice God's advice?

Below and on a separate sheet of paper if needed, make a list of specific tasks that a disciple would begin to do the next morning.

Step 14. Assembling Your Talk

You now have a smorgasbord of reflections on the meaning of the scripture that has been assigned to you for your talk. Now it is time to select the best ideas from among the many that you have generated and put them in order for your talk. In the spaces below, list the items you will use in your talk as answers to the following questions.

Attention Step: review your list of personal experiences from your Walk to Emmaus. Which story is most interesting and fits best with the topic of your talk? Write something to describe it here:

Then share your name and the title of your talk.

Human Need/Problem Step: Write your statement of the Human Need/Problem here:

Visualization: From your list of how you and others experience this human problem, what would be the three most vivid and personal examples of people suffering from this problem that you could share? That would touch the hearts of the pilgrims and help them to understand and empathize with people having this problem here? That would help them to know that they also experience this problem? List them here:

Strong example:

Stronger example:

Strongest example:

Scripture Step: Read the scripture you have been assigned with depth and conviction. Explain the details based on your answers to the questions that you believe people would ask.

Divine Solution Step: Write your statement of the Divine Solution here:

Visualization: Select the three most vivid and powerful examples of what our life would be like if we lived according to God's divine solution. Help the pilgrims to visualize the goodness of living that life so that they will want to live it. List them here:

Strong example:

Stronger example:

Strongest example:

Application Step: From your list of specific actions we could take to make this vision real, select some specific examples that you would recommend to others and ***that you intend to begin to do starting tomorrow.***

Step 15. Write an outline.

Recopy your answers from Step 14 on a fresh sheet of paper to use as your outline.

If you want to then write out a full manuscript of your talk from the outline, you can do so.

Your talk will be more powerful if you use the outline because of your eye contact with the pilgrims.

Assemble all your notes for this talk in a file folder with your outline on top. You will likely find your reflections on your experience helpful in preparing other talks for your Emmaus community..

Consider handouts, overheads or how you might use a Powerpoint type presentation in your talk. (Check with your lay director to make sure this equipment will be available at the retreat.)

Step 16. Suggestions in How to Practice and Present Your Talk.

1. If you use the process above, the list on the previous page is your outline for your talk.

2. Tell your stories about your Walk to Emmaus, human needs and problems, and the visualization of the divine solution in your own words while looking directly at the pilgrims.

Don't try to write it out word for word or attempt to memorize it. You will have more influence what you say is delivered as you would tell a story in a conversation.

If you are reading a joke, story or statistics, hold the piece of paper in your hand and let it be obvious that you are reading it. If you are reading something someone else wrote, give credit.

3. Read your statements of the human need/problem or divine solution word for word. Revise them till they say exactly what you want the pilgrims to remember. When the whole talk is assembled together, it may become clear how you can strengthen the impact of these statements.

4. Confession is powerful. The impact of your talk will be significantly enhanced by sharing an experience of struggle and even failure. Your sharing of real life examples of a problem you have with this topic will give those at a table permission to share their own struggles and challenges authentically.

Don't go overboard; it's important that the pilgrims perceive how they, too, could struggle with this problem. If your confession shocks the pilgrims too much, they will be unable to concentrate on your talk. Remember, what you share should be related to struggles with the topic of your talk.

Be very careful if you share the struggles of others that you do not embarrass them; it's better to tell your own story than someone else's. Please remember that the confessions of others during a Walk to Emmaus are confidential; if it is absolutely essential that you tell someone else's story, ***it's important to adjust the story's details so that the other person can in no way be identified.***

5. Remember that your role is to share your experiences in a way that encourages others; allow God to use your thoughts and remember that it does not depend upon you. It is Christ who changes people's lives.