

# **Christian Study: Giving Our Minds to God**

## **Overview**

The Christian Study rollo is meant to provide some means for answering the questions, “How do I find this life of grace?” It is a call to experience Christ through the reading of God’s Word and through the Holy Spirit’s transforming our hearts and minds. In this rollo the speaker witnesses to a personal, living search for knowledge of God. This rollo should guide us to the path which leads to a lifetime of growth and learning, a daily renewing and growing our friendship with God, and a reaching toward the created potential given us by our Father. This path is not only to be followed now, but all our lives. The maximum length of this talk is 30 minutes.

Immediately following the rollo, the Rector should allow the Pilgrims a short time for personal reflection before introducing the discussion time. This time of reflection is to allow the Holy Spirit to inform their thoughts.

## **Purpose of this Rollo**

The purpose of this rollo is to encourage in the listeners the desire to study as a means of growing our relationship with God.

## **Objectives**

- To re-introduce the three-legged stool concept of a balanced life – piety, study and action; study is the second leg.
- To define Christian study as the on-going pursuit of knowing God – giving our minds to God.
- To encourage the desire to grow and deepen our knowledge of Christ and the Christian faith
- To demonstrate that our life in grace must be conscious and enlightened.
- To provide personal examples of spiritual reading and studies.

## **References**

The Holy Bible

## **Visual Aids**

The three-legged stool.

## **Opening Prayer**

Please turn to page \_\_ in your Pilgrim's Guide and pray with me.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant, that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Through Christ our Lord.

Please continue to pray with me:

We believe, Lord, that you are here present. Although our eyes do not see You, our faith senses You. Take any stray thoughts from our minds. Help us understand the truths You wish to teach us in this meditation. Let us make up our minds to put them into practice. Your servants are listening; speak Lord, to our souls. Amen

### I. Introduction

#### A. Self

1. Name
2. Church name
3. Pilgrimage/Via de Cristo/Emmaus/Cursillo
  - a. Date
  - b. Table Name
  - c. Today's Table Recognition
4. Family
5. Church Involvement – name a few activities
6. Occupation/Vocation
7. Hobbies/Interest

#### B. Quick review of previous rollos [*Note to Speaker: The following points may be put into your own words. Keep this review brief.*]

1. Ideals (Speaker's name \_\_\_\_\_). We need to evaluate your ideals.
2. Grace Given (Speaker's name \_\_\_\_\_). To accept God's grace, Jesus Christ, our Christian ideal.
3. Laity and the Church (Speaker's name \_\_\_\_\_). We are to be the Church where we live and have our being, to leave a Christ-like life, revealing Christ to the world.

4. Grace Received (Speaker’s name \_\_\_\_\_). God initiates the life of grace and we respond. Our “yes” is the beginning of the abundant life.
5. Piety: Giving Our Hearts to God (Speaker’s name \_\_\_\_\_). To give our hearts, our whole life, to God.

C. Topic

1. Title of this Rollo is **Christian Study: Giving our Minds to God.**
2. Purpose of this rollo:
  - a. To re-introduce the three-legged stool concept of a balanced life – piety, study and action; Christian study being the second leg.
  - b. To define Christian study.
  - c. To inspire the listener to study in order to know God and live the life of grace.

II. What is Christian study?

A. **Christian study is not the same as the study of Christianity.**

1. There is a difference between hearing the gospel and being inspired by it.
2. There is a difference between knowing the abstract study of religion and a study which seeks to “take on the mind of Christ. [*Note to Speaker: Phil 2:5f*]. Our goal is to discover and continually rediscover the mind of Christ such that we can be faithful followers.

B. **Christian study is:**

1. **The ongoing pursuit of knowing God – giving our minds to God.**
2. **The process of learning to love, to know and to respond to God’s truth.**

C. Re-introduce the three-legged stool concept of a balanced life. [*Note to Speaker: Using the stool, demonstrate the need to have three legs in order to stand. One cannot fully live a Christian life with one or two of the elements of Christian living missing.*]

1. Living a Christian life requires us to balance the three elements of Christian living.
  - a. Piety
  - b. Study
  - c. Action
2. Christian Study is the second leg of this three-legged stool.
3. We will learn more about the third leg, “action”, later.

### III. The Importance of Christian Study

#### A. We study in order to:

1. **Grow our relationship with God and our discipleship with Christ.**
2. **Know the truth.**
3. **Be able to share the truth.**

*[Note to Speaker: Our relationship with God is the decisive factor in our lives. We are all called to serve and follow Jesus. Such discipleship is impossible without knowing God. Spending time with God and listening is a necessary condition for knowing God. Christian study is essential. It flows naturally from our relationship with Christ. Christian study means progressive search for the meaning of life itself – in Christian study we are asking the most basic questions of humanity: Who am I? What am I doing? Where am I going? What is truth? Some Scripture references: John 8:31-32 "If you hold to my teaching...then you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. Knowing the truth frees us to become the beings God created us to be." John 17:8, 26 "Truth is never revealed to us unless we are open to it." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting and training in righteousness, so that God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

#### B. Christian study is a means to living the life of grace (not the goal itself). **Christian study is essential because it:**

1. **Forms our minds.**
2. **Transforms our hearts.**
3. **Conforms our lives to live the Christian ideal.**

### IV. The process of Christian study (practical ideas, resource materials)

#### A. **We commit our time.** Growing our relationship with God is a priority. We want our study to be:

1. **Intentional** (done deliberately or on purpose)
2. **Regular** (aim for a daily commitment)

#### B. **We make a plan** Our study needs to be:

1. **Systematic** (Have a plan. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.")
2. **Progressive** (We want to continue to grow and learn.)
3. **Challenging** (Stretching us spiritually and intellectually.)

C. **We invite the Holy Spirit to inform our study.**

1. The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see the world through God's eyes.
2. The Holy Spirit enables us to recognize when God is speaking to us and what the Lord is telling us.
3. The Holy Spirit helps us to change ourselves as we come to know ourselves better through the study of God's Word.
4. The Holy Spirit instructs us to become more like Christ.
5. As the Holy Spirit works to reshape us, we want to respond by saying "yes" to God's love and loving others.

D. **Christian study is a personal process.**

*[Note to Speaker: Personal witness – how do you (the speaker) spend time with God? What are you doing? What have you done to grow your relationship with God? How or through what means has God met you? Where are you being challenged or stretched?]*

V. Obstacles to Study

A. Attitude (3 types of people from Proverbs)

1. People who live their lives without thinking.
2. People who make a conscious decision to live independent of God (life in grace must be conscious and enlightened).
3. People who think they can control their lives. *[Note to Speaker: The wisest of us can manifest all three attitudes (Romans 7:15 "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do." ]*

B. Attachments or addictions

1. To our "passions" i.e. TV, golf, computer etc.
2. To "doing" (filling up the space in our lives) -- our work, crowded calendars, good works, church committees, etc. Don't confuse activity with accomplishments. Some consequences of being too busy:
  - a. Lack of follow through.
  - b. Inertia – It takes a lot of energy to change our lives.
  - c. Paradoxically, to the disciplines of study – study becomes an end in itself (one more thing on the "to do" list.)

*[Note to Speaker: If you have any examples from your life, this is a good place to share things that have interfered with your commitment to study and what you have done or are doing to make time for study.]*

## VI. Remedies to the Obstacles of Attitude and Attachment

- A. **Pray for God's wisdom.** *[Note to Speaker: James 1:15.]*
- B. **Follow God's leading.** Have an attitude of humility. *[Matt 18-Jesus says become like little children. 1 Peter 5-Clothe yourselves in humility. God gives grace to the humble.]*
- C. **Be with God** (in place of "doing" all the time).
  1. Daily.
  2. Regular retreats – ½ day, overnight, weekend or longer, annually, semi-annually, monthly.
- D. **Rely on God's grace** to overcome attachments (can't do it on our own).
- E. **Start.** Begin the process wherever you are (Just Do It).

## VII. Resources for Christian Study

- A. Scripture (Luke 1:1-4). First and foremost use The Holy Bible. There is no better resource.
  1. Translations such as the New RSV, NIV, The Message.
  2. Study guides and commentaries.
- B. Other Resources
  1. Books and tapes. *[Note to Speaker: Before the Pilgrims leave the camp, they will receive a list including a wide variety of classical and modern books.]*
  2. Daily devotional guides/materials.
  3. Indepth Bible teachings:
    - a. Disciples
    - b. Kerygma
    - c. Bethel Bible Study
    - d. Bible Study Fellowship
  4. Conferences, schools and educational offerings:
    - a. Montreat conferences
    - b. Servant Leadership School of Greensboro
    - c. Duke Divinity School offerings
  5. Music.
  6. Meditation on the Word (prayerful listening). *[Note to Speaker: Good place to share what has been helpful or meaningful to you in growing your relationship with God.]*
- C. Creation *[Note to Speaker: For example see Psalms 19, 33, 65, 95, 104 and 136.]*

VIII. Conclusion/Summary *[Note to Speaker: Conclude in a way that inspires people to "put these truths into practice" – our opening prayer!]*

- A. The aim of Christian study is to find the truth.
- B. When we direct our whole life to Christ we will grow in wisdom.
- C. Out of gratitude for what God has done for us, we want to know God better.
- D. As we study faithfully, we learn to love God and then we want to serve God(action completes the three-legged stool concept of a vital life).
- E. Having turned our whole life to God, we practice the discipline of Christian study as a means of discovering and discerning God's path for us. We pray for the Holy Spirit, through Christian study to:
  - 1. Form our minds.
  - 2. Transform our hearts.
  - 3. Conform our lives to our ideal.

*[Note to Speaker: Please end with "God loves you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, and so do I."]*