The IDEALS talk is the first talk of a Chrysalis Three Days. It sets the tempo for the experience. The purpose of the IDEALS talk is to stimulate in the listeners a desire to identify their ideals, to evaluate their ideals, and to explore more mature Christian ideals for themselves. Ideals reflect the things and values that are most important to people. Ideals, a distinctively human characteristic, can move us beyond living by mere instinct as we reach ahead to realize our greatest potential as persons. By the end of the talk, participants hopefully will be asking themselves, "What is most important to me? What do I want out of life? What kind of person do I want to become?"

While the speaker may bear witness to Jesus Christ as his or her ideal, approach this witness in a personal way without being preachy or overly pious. The talk should encourage participants to look honestly at their present ideals and to be accepting of others' ideals as they begin to share together. Remember that the aim is to bring the participants to the point of asking, "What is my ideal?" and of wanting to learn more about the Christian ideal. The remainder of the three days will help the participants explore Jesus Christ as their ideal.

The speaker should present the IDEALS talk slowly so participants can get used to taking notes. The talk should be given in a natural and conversational way, combining the information with a personal story that illustrates ideals. The speaker should not be judgmental about particular kinds of ideals. Participants need to feel accepted, whatever their ideals may be, and invited to discover what their life really could be.

The outline elaborates on the points, not to provide a script, but in order to stimulate the speaker in developing the talk in his or her own words. Personal examples are to be used as the speaker feels comfortable and as they fit the text. This talk should be no longer than 15–20 minutes. Visual aids help convey the main points of the talk. The reflection guide will pose the following questions:

1. What do I think about most of the time?
2. How do I spend most of my time and money?
3. What do I want more than anything in the world?
4. Whom do I look up to and admire? Whom do I really wish I could be like?
LD—“With a clean sheet of paper, pen in hand...”; followed by the before-talk chorus, at which
time the speaker will enter the conference room (participants should be standing for the chorus).
The speaker will ask the participants to join in “The Prayer to the Holy Spirit” found on the last
page of the Chrysalis Worshipbook. The speaker will then ask the participants to be seated.

Introduction
Choose a brief, simple way to introduce the talk to give the listeners an idea of your topic. For example,
- Tell a brief story about a person who tried to be like someone else.
- Share a brief story that illustrates the power of a positive ideal or goal in a person’s
  life.
- Give a humorous example of how you tried to be like someone else (such as a movie
  star, a sports hero, or someone you admire at school).

“My name is ____________________________, and the title of this talk is IDEALS.”

I. What is an ideal?
   A. An ideal is an image of who you would like to become.
   B. An ideal is a goal toward which you want to move, something for which you live, an
      aim toward which you work.
   C. An ideal is a priority, something of leading importance in your life.

II. You can shape the future of your life by clarifying your ideals.
   A. Ideals are unique to humans. Only human beings have ideals. Our ability to determine
      ideals for which we will live is one of the things that sets human beings apart from ani-
      mals and the rest of God’s creation.
      1. Rocks and plants do not have heroes. Insects and animals do not consciously plan
         for the future. They operate by instinct.
      2. As human beings, we can participate in determining our future. We can shape our
         lives according to values we choose. We have the freedom to set goals and
         priorities for ourselves. We can set our sights on long-term goals, not just
         immediate needs.
   B. An ideal may be someone or something you idolize; that is, really admire and want
      to be like.
      1. “As a child...” Share some thoughts about a person you idolized in your life as a child.
         Relate the kinds of things you did in order to be like your idol (such as how you
         dressed, what you bought, what you did, how you daydreamed about your idol, and so
         forth). If you shared your illustration during the introduction, simply refer to your story.

Copyright © 2000 by Upper Room Books.™ All rights reserved.
No part of this material may be reproduced without the express permission of Upper Room® Ministries.
2. “Later on (or now) who I idolized changed.” Describe a person you idolized later on (or presently) and the efforts you made to achieve your ideal (such as what you did to be like him or her, how you acted, what you bought, how you daydreamed, what you gave up in order to reach your ideal, and so forth).

C. An ideal is
   1. What I aim for. It motivates me; it gives my life purpose, direction and meaning.
   2. Something to which I give myself, my time, my energy, my money, and my action.
   3. Something I sacrifice for in order to achieve.

III. We need to reflect on our ideals to make sure we are aiming our lives at the best goals.
   A. Some ideals we may have are negative. Negative ideals will take us backward. They may give us a thrill in the short run, but in the long run they will hurt us and damage our future possibilities. Give your own personal example, if possible, such as:
      1. To be number one, even at others’ expense.
      2. To be liked or most popular at any cost to your true self or integrity.
      3. To have lots of “feel good” experiences without thought of consequences for self or others (such as through sex, drugs, alcohol, reckless living, doing the “in thing,” and so forth).
   B. Some ideals we may have are positive but short-term. These ideals move us forward in special areas or during a certain time in our lives. They give us targets; they motivate us. Give your own personal example, if possible, such as:
      1. To be the best in a certain area of study, to attain good grades or certain job qualifications.
      2. To be a trusted and dependable employee, a person recognized for excellent work, or who is promoted and successful.
      3. To be the best team member possible, to win the championship, or simply to succeed in learning how to play the game.
   C. We also need a positive ideal that is long-term and big enough for our whole life.
      1. Can you think of one?
      2. There is an ideal big enough for each of us; that is to become Christlike.

IV. In closing: What is your ideal? What is your vision for your life? What is the target toward which you want to aim your life?
   A. Unless you know your ideal, then someone else is determining it for you (such as television ads and image-makers, an in-group of older friends who are “cool,” peer pressure, parents).
   B. Without a positive ideal toward which to aim, our lives are aimless. As the bumper sticker reads, “If you aim at nothing, you are sure to hit it!”

Copyright © 2000 by Upper Room Books. All rights reserved.
No part of this material may be reproduced without the express permission of Upper Room Ministries.
C. The responsibility for choosing whom we want to be like and what we want to become is ours.
D. As you determine your ideal, you are determining the direction of your life.
E. A guiding statement of the theme of IDEALS is, "The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart—this you will build your life by, this you will become" (As a Man Thinketh, 59).

At the close of the talk, the table groups may begin discussion using the two-page reflection guide that follows. Permission is granted to make one copy per participant.
TALK #1: IDEALS

Who and what you idolize represents the ideal or goal toward which you are moving.

1. What do I think about most of the time?

2. How do I spend most of my time and money?

3. What do I want more than anything in the world?

4. Whom do I look up to and admire? Whom do I really wish I could be like?