



THE DIOCESE ENGAGES ALCOHOLISM

by

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Study Guide Discussion Questions

Bishop Hibbs makes the statement in the introduction to his talk that he “rarely finds a family not affected by alcoholism.” At later point in the video the statistic of 1 out of 10 is quoted as the occurrence rate of alcoholism/addiction in the general population. Given this statement and statistic, what have you noticed about the incidence of this disease in your various communities, parishes and the diocese? Do you notice more, less or the same level of occurrence?

Chapter 1. 1:15

It has become a matter of scientific fact that alcoholism/addiction is a disease and its symptoms are primary. Bishop Hibbs makes clear that it is not as previously thought, simply a matter of moral character. Stereotypes are hard to overcome and dismiss: How do you, personally, feel about the disease model of alcoholism? How well is this known and accepted in your community?

Chapter 2. 16:46

Discuss the various manifestations of this disease that are highlighted in the video.

Alcoholism and alcohol abuse are hard to differentiate – should that make any difference in a decision about whether to intervene or not? What is Bishop Hibbs’ suggestion?

Chapter 3. 9:24

Denial, as a defense mechanism, is a unique characteristic of this disease. It goes well beyond just stating “I am not an alcoholic.” It pushes that which is obvious to others out of conscious thought. How have you noticed this symptom at work amongst those you have known who are afflicted with this disease?

Chapter 4. 6:39

Alcoholism is not just a disease of an individual but it becomes a systemic disease of a family, a network of friends and/or a workplace. Just as insidious to progression of the disease as denial is enablement which becomes a characteristic behavior of those involved with the alcoholic/addict. A condition of co-dependency develops between the alcoholic/addict and his/her environment. How do we participate in this disease? What are the behavioral manifestations of enablement and co-dependency? Caution: Remember in your discussions that enablement can easily be mistakenly viewed through the same moralistic lens as alcoholism: “if they would just stop enabling her...”

Chapter 5. 16:38

How do your parish/diocesan structures help or hinder the identification of an alcoholic/addict? Think of this in terms of the mechanisms of denial and enablement.

Chapter 6. 10:13

Bishop Hibbs makes a strong case for the use of intervention as a tool to “bring the bottom up” for the alcoholic/addict. What must be done to make possible the implementation of such a strategy in your diocese? What resources do you currently have in place? What obstacles must be addressed to enhance the success of such a strategy? What can you do personally to make your environment less co-dependent?

Chapter 7. 12:00

Alcoholism/addiction is a complex disease with genetic, biological, psychological and spiritual components. The relationship with the object of addiction becomes primary over relationships with others, the self and God. The disease quickly develops into what can be truly called “a disease of the spirit”. The employment of denial leads to great discomfort with self reflection and thus damages one’s ability to pray and enter into an open relationship with God. In thinking about our prayer practices and liturgical forms, what are some key spiritual and liturgical resources that can be drawn upon to help the recovering alcoholic/addict re-connect with their spiritual life?

Chapter 8. 43:00