

Forum of Four

***“As Iron Sharpens Iron
So One Man
Sharpens Another”***

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The Navigators for the use of portions of the Verse
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Forums of Four

The purpose of a “forum” is to provide a small group setting where believers gather for encouragement, growth and perspective in the context of God’s Word. It is a place where they are listened to, taken seriously, understood, and the personal sharing remains confidential. In this setting they may also give testimony to what God is doing in their lives as a result of a vital personal relationship with Christ in His Word. It provides a base for true fellowship, prayer support, and the application of God’s Word to every aspect of life.

People today are largely isolated and disconnected from others by a frantic pace and shallow, image based relationships. They need a “safe” place where they can meet in an intimate setting and apply God’s Word to the issues of life, develop true friendships, and find encouragement and support. In other words an environment where believers can experience true fellowship.

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb 10:24,25)

The effectiveness of the Forum of Four depends upon the faithfulness of each believer’s personal walk with God, and the meeting environment. When both of these things are present, the time together is rich, rewarding and well spent.

The format illustrated in this booklet is a tool to disciple, mentor, encourage, and provide opportunity for biblical accountability between believers. There are enough forms provided to meet for twelve weeks. Additional verse analysis forms and meeting forms may be copied as needed.

How it works

The Forum of Four format accommodates up to four people in a one hour and fifteen minute time slot. The limitation of four people is based on the time allotted. It is unlikely that each person would have an opportunity to fully participate if the numbers exceed four. To facilitate the weekly discussion, each person memorizes one verse each week, completes a Verse Analysis Form, and brings it to the meeting. Scripture memory verses can be taken from the Navigators Topical Memory System.

Typically it will take about 45 minutes of meeting time to recite the memory verse and work through discussing the Verse Analysis Form. This form helps participants to understand the truth being taught from the memory verse, and avoids the pitfall of applying verses out of context. It also helps people to think

biblically, and use the word of God to address practical issues in life. This format will lead to much discussion, and the facilitator will need to carefully monitor the time in order to leave 30 minutes to work through the Meeting Form.

The purpose of the Meeting Form is to give each person the opportunity to give a testimony of how God has been working in their lives during the past week, and to express their prayer requests for the coming week. This booklet provides an on going record of past prayer requests that can be reviewed each week before the group meets. It is recommended that past prayer requests be reviewed before coming to the forum in order to ask each other how God has been answering prayer.

Framework

To create an environment that enables a small group (2, 3, or 4) to:

1. Provide encouragement to have consistent time in God's Word.
2. To maintain essential ingredients of:
 - A. Trust-Authenticity
 - B. Mutual commitment to:
 1. Listen to others in my group.
 2. Take others seriously.
 3. Seek to understand.
 4. Be accepting of others.
 5. Remember important facts about others.
 6. Keep all conversations confidential.

Meeting Format

1. Because we care is there anything we need to know?
2. What has God been speaking to you about from His Word?
3. How can we be praying for you this week?
4. Are there any thoughts that give perspective and encouragement on issues, or questions that have surfaced today?

Accountability

I will agree to do the following:

1. Commit to meet for 1 1/2 hours per week for 12 weeks
2. Agree to memorize 1 verse of scripture each week.
3. Complete a verse analysis on each memory verse.

Bible Verse Analysis Form (Explained)

Verse: _____

A. What is it about?

1. **Context;** (Read enough of the text before and after the verse so that you have a sense of the meaning: the who, what, when, where, and why of the verse. What is the main idea that the author is trying to communicate?)
2. **Define key words;**
(Pick out key words and provide definitions from your concordance or the dictionary.)

B. What does it mean?

1. **Observation/implication;** (In light of what you observe in this verse, what is the implication to you?)
2. **Paraphrase the text in your own words:** (Based on the context, key words and your understanding of the verse.)

C. How do I apply it? (SPECK)

1. **Sin exposed** (How is this verse encouraging you trust God with what's true about you?)
2. **Promise from God** (If I obey this truth is there a promise from God?)
3. **Example to follow** (If I was the example of this truth what would I be doing?)
4. **Command to obey** (What is my act of obedience?)
5. **Knowledge about God** (What is this verse teaching me about God?)

Issue: (Consider the truth that this verse is teaching, and write it as a question.)

Truth: (What this verse is teaching you.)

Action: (What am I going to do about this truth?)

Bible Verse Analysis Form (Sample)

Verse: John 15:5

A. What is it about?

1. **Context:** Jesus is telling the disciples that He is leaving this earth and that the disciples will not be able to go with Him now. However they are not to be stressed because He will send them the Comforter. Using the metaphor of a vine and branches, He describes the relationship between Himself, His Father and a believer.
2. **Define key words:**
 - Vine:** Gk. *ampelos* a grapevine or a support (wrap around).
 - Branches:** A shoot or limb (attached to a vine).
 - Abide:** To stay, continue or dwell.
 - Bear:** Bring forth.
 - Fruit:** The product or the result.
 - Nothing:** Gk *oudeis* meaning not even one.

B. What does it mean?

1. **Observation/Implication:** The abiding relationship is a characteristic that is true for every believer. The practice of abiding is essential to my growth and maturity. The fruit that I bear is the evidence.
2. **Paraphrase the verse in your own words:** Jesus is the Vine I am a branch. If I abide (make my home) in Him and He does so in me I will be very fruitful. The fact is without Jesus in me I can do nothing.

C. How do I apply it?

1. **Sin exposed:** If I am an abider, why don't I practice abiding?
2. **Promise from God:** My relationship with God will produce fruit and comfort.
3. **Example to follow:** Trusting God daily through the abiding relationship.
4. **Command to obey:** Abide in Christ.
5. **Knowledge about God:** I have the ability to have an intimate/trusting relationship with the Son of God through the Word of God and His indwelling Spirit.

Issue: Why is it important to practice abiding in Christ?

Truth: If I do not practice abiding, I bear no fruit and can basically do nothing and I will experience discontent.

Action: I am committed to having consistent time with God and learning to trust Him.