

Begin a New Life

Group Meeting #1 Step 1: Examine Yourself

Meeting Outline

Note: For a full description of how this meeting runs, go to the *Begin a New Life* website (www.BeginaNewLife.info), the page titled, *Six-Week Program for Small Groups*, and view the pdf titled, *General Description of Meetings*.

Quiet music can be played while people arrive and during the first two opening activities—Opening Prayer and Reading.

7:00 p.m. Opening activities

1. Opening prayer
2. Reading:
Lord, You have searched me and known me.
You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.
You have protected me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot attain it.
Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me....
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:1-11, 23-24)
3. Check-in
 - a. One highlight from each person's day or week, or one opening thought.
 - b. No cross talk or conversation.

- c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with brief words of "Thank you" before moving on to the next person.
 - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
4. Group business
- a. Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made.
5. Reading of the task for this meeting
- a. Read (out loud) the task that was assigned for this meeting. Here it is:
Step 1—Examine Yourself
 - 1) Choose one or another issue in your life that you would like to change. It could be the same issue that you worked on during the seminar-workshop.
 - 2) Do *one* of the following:
 - a) Use a new set of worksheets and go through all four steps of the *BNL* process relative to that one issue. (Note: If the issue you've chosen is the same one that you worked on during the seminar-workshop, going through another full set of worksheets for that issue may be valuable.)
 - b) Use a new set of Step 1 worksheets and go through Step 1 only.
 - c) Review the Step 1 worksheet(s) that you filled out during the seminar-workshop, and fill them in more fully.
 - 3) Read the article titled, *Three Ways to Become Aware of Your Thoughts* (see the *Begin a New Life* website under *Program Materials*, the *Sourcebook* page, bottom of the page).
 - 4) After completing Step 1 of the process, proceed to the next worksheet titled, "A Prayer from the Heart" and fill in that worksheet.
 - 5) Come to the meeting ready to share your experience of practicing Step 1 of this process; also your experience of writing *A Prayer from the Heart*.

7:20 Group sharing

- 1. People talk about their experience of doing the task. Sharing is initiated by the question, "What was your experience of doing the task for this week?"
- 2. Note: In the event that sharing lags, there is a set of questions that can elicit further sharing (see below following the meeting outline). Your job as group leader is to listen to the sharing that is going on, and decide which of the questions is an appropriate "next step" in *Group Sharing*. Then you pose that question at an appropriate time. (Note: Some of the questions may have already been answered in the initial sharing.) This continues as needed until the end of *Group Sharing*.

8:05 Closure

- 1. Task for the next meeting
 - a. Read the assignment for the next meeting out loud, and answer any questions about it. Here is that assignment:
Step 2: Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sin
 - 1) Do *one* of the following:

- a) Using a new set of worksheets, go through all four steps of the *BNL* process relative to the issue that you've chosen to work on.
 - b) Using a new set of Step 1 and Step 2 worksheets, go through Steps 1 and 2 relative to the issue you've chosen to work on.
 - c) Review the Step 1 worksheets that you filled out during the seminar-workshop, then go through a set of Step 2 worksheets relative to the issue you've chosen to work on.
- 2) Read *Section E* of the *Sourcebook*, titled, *When You're at Fault for a Wrongdoing...and When You're Not* (see the *Begin a New Life* website under *Program Materials*, the *Sourcebook* page, *Section E* of the sourcebook).
 - 3) Come to the group meeting ready to share your experience of practicing Step 2 of this process—*Recognize and Acknowledge Your Sin*.
2. Closing thoughts
 - a. One closing thought per person.
 - b. No cross talk or conversation.
 - c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with brief words of "Thank you" before moving on to the next person.
 - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
 3. The Lord's Prayer
 - a. The group stands, holds hands, and says the Lord's Prayer together. Those who prefer to listen may do so.

8:15 End time

Additional Questions for Sharing

1. What was your experience of filling in column 1 of the Step 1 worksheets—*Actions & Words*? Please explain.
2. Same questions for columns 2, 3, & 4—*Thoughts, Intentions, Desires & Will*?
3. Did you try any of the three methods for becoming aware of thoughts, intentions, or desires & will, as discussed in the article titled, *Three Ways to Become Aware of Your Thoughts*? How did these methods work for you? Please explain.
4. What feelings (if any) did you have around getting started on self-examination? Please describe.
5. Did you procrastinate when getting started on Step 1? If not, were you *tempted* to do so? If the answer is *yes* to either of these questions, what did you do to overcome the procrastination or the temptation to procrastinate? Also, what happened to these things as you went through self-examination?
6. Did you experience grief of mind, heart, or conscience as you went through self-examination? Please describe. What effect(s) did this grief have on you?
7. As you went through Step 1, were there any “positives” that showed up (elements of truth or goodness, as described in the assigned reading)? If so, what effect(s) did these “positives” have on you?
8. Did you experience any sense of connection with God during Step 1? Please explain.
9. You had an opportunity to offer “a prayer from the heart” following Step 1. Did you take that opportunity? If so, what was your experience of offering that prayer? What effect(s) did it have?