



FOR Means to an End

#npfor

Week 4

4 of 4

February 24, 2019

Bottom Line: If we love God, we will love others.

Icebreaker: Share with the group one meaningful memento you have in your home or office and why it is meaningful to you.

Key Verse: *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”* Mark 8:34-37

By the 3rd century, Christianity had become a force to be reckoned with despite all odds because of the irresistible person of Jesus. Yet 48% of Americans today are completely gone from any faith, qualifying as post-Christian, because they found the version of Christianity they grew up with unbelievable. We have tried to peddle truth and knowledge, and that has been soundly rejected. We must change our approach. People are still looking for love and significance, what Jesus unfailingly gave. What was true of Jesus should be true of His body, His church. He was irresistible. People who were nothing like Him liked Him. People should like us. We want to resist the things that make Christianity resistible. We want to be FOR what He was FOR.

We all are built for self-preservation. But Jesus calls us to give our lives away for a cause that is far bigger and more significant than we are. Being a means to an end is what makes anything meaningful. Being FOR people is a means to an end. It starts by asking, “Who am I here for?” It changes my focus from “who am I?” and “what’s in it for me?” to something far bigger. Being FOR people always has a price, and most people will never get there because the price is too high. There are no bargain prices. But there is more to life than YOU. When you ultimately live for yourself and your agenda, it is far too small to be meaningful. Being FOR people, as Jesus calls us to be, is the purpose and path to meaning. We find our purpose and significance in life and become like Jesus when we create the discipline of looking at everything we are doing through the lens of becoming a means to a God-planned end. You will love your life, and your witness for Jesus will be irresistible.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

“The vast majority of people who’ve ever been baptized by our people are our own offspring. We’ve never been very evangelistic in terms of people who weren’t those to whom we gave birth.” – Dr. Al Mohler
Why do you think this is so?

“A post-Christian culture is one in which the tenets of Christianity have either been rejected or forgotten. America is not a non-Christian nation, but a post-Christian culture.” What personal evidence do you have for that?

“When you care about someone, you are never content to simply make your point. Your goal is to make a difference. So you think long and hard about your approach.” Discuss.

What do you see that this post-Christian culture IS interested in that we can give?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

“Whether they believe in what we believe or not, people in the community should like us. We should be the most likeable people in the community.” How do you explain this to people who say if you are being faithful to Jesus you will “be persecuted for righteousness sake” as your major characteristic?

“To deny yourself is to say no to you so you can say yes to something bigger than you.” How is that happening right now in your life? What might need to change?

“If you do not live as a means to an end, you will come to the end of your life with nothing meaningful to show for yourself.” Reflect on that.

CVS CEO Larry Merlo said they don’t sell tobacco products simply because it is inconsistent with their purpose. Challenging! Is there anything in your life that is inconsistent with your purpose?

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

- 1) Become part of an impact team.
- 2) Do a community service project.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: If we love God, we will love others.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Romans 8:32

Tuesday: John 12:32

Wednesday: Mark 8:34-37

Thursday: Proverbs 4:23

Friday: John 4:14

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)