



The Discussion Board

A Primer for BeADisciple Learners

This document serves as a basic introduction for using Blackboard's **Discussion Board** in a BeADisciple course.

This is not a comprehensive guide, but rather a primer that will give you everything you need to get comfortable with this part of the course. Steps are written out in relative order and key terms are bolded, which will help you get familiar with the system. Don't worry if this seems daunting, as you will surely get the hang of it. Feel free to print this document to have as a quick reference as you work.

To find the discussion board after entering a course, you can always click on the appropriate **link** ("tab" or "button") on the left side of your screen. Along with a link to the discussion board, you will find other links to announcements, assignments, course information, and other helpful pages. This region of the page that houses all of these links is the "navigation pane" (*fig. 1*). Click the link that says **Discussion Board**.



Figure 1. The Navigation Pane with Discussion Board Link

Inside the discussion board you will find a number of **forums**. These usually correspond to a particular lesson or week. Sometimes, the **prompt** or a discussion's instructions will be found within that corresponding lesson (*fig. 2*), that is, *outside* discussion board; other times, you will find prompt details within the discussion board, written in the description section next to the forum title (*fig. 3*). *Be sure to have read the forum prompt before entering a discussion*. When ready, click on a **forum title** within the discussion board. This will take you into that discussion to enter your responses.

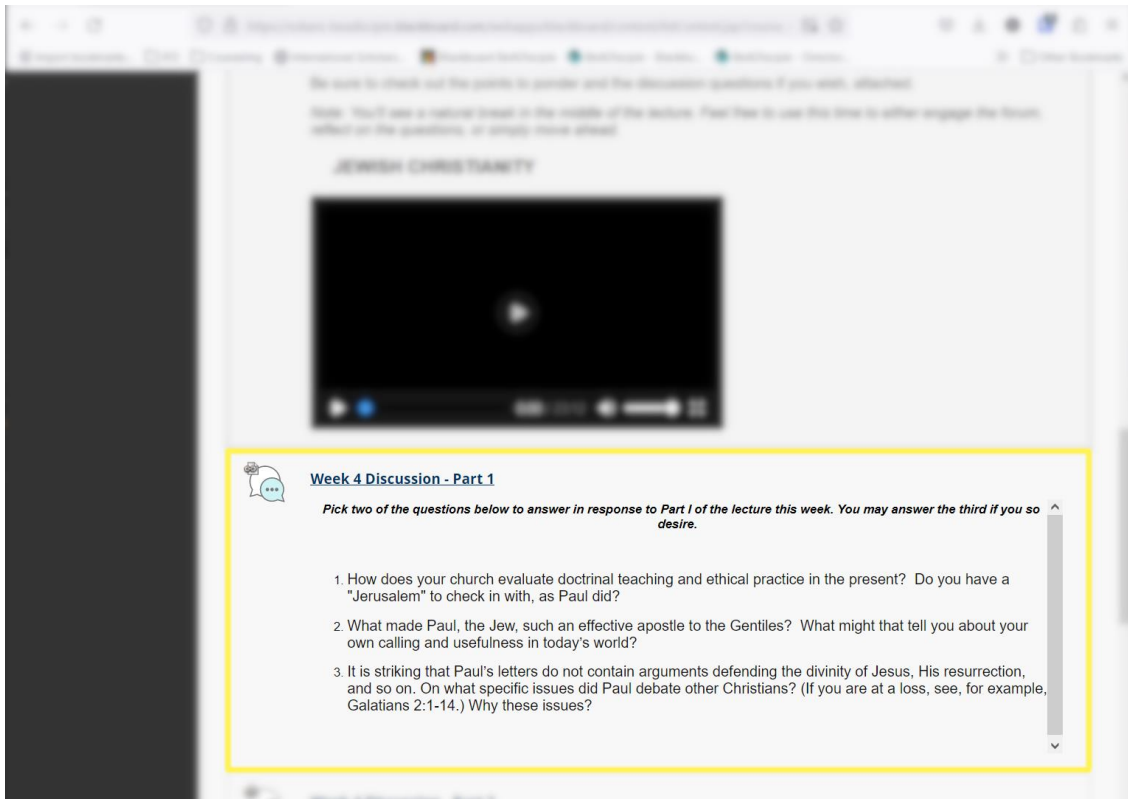


Figure 2. A discussion prompt within a lesson. Selecting the title in this case will take you to the discussion board.

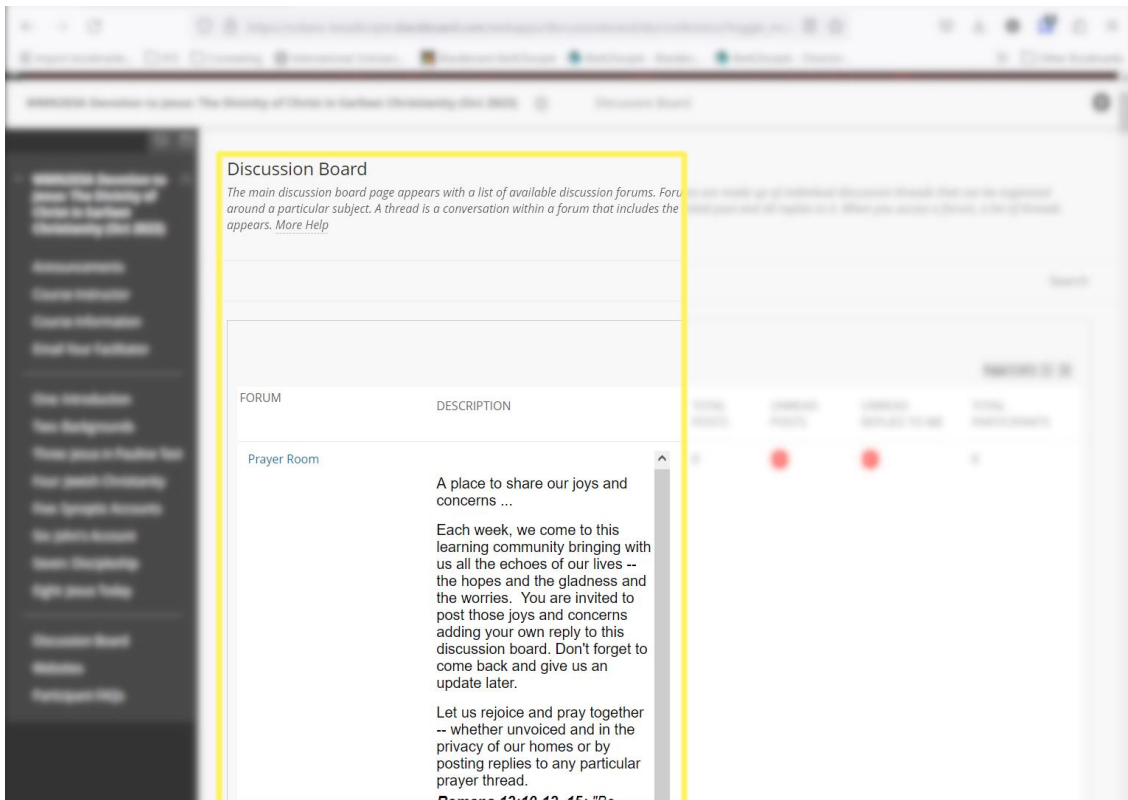


Figure 3. Prompts are also found within the discussion board as descriptions.

Now you're inside the forum, where you may enter a **response**, or your answers to a prompt, by creating a **thread**. Threads are where you can find your own, and your classmates', responses to a prompt. To do this, you need to look for a button that says "Create Thread" after having clicked into a particular forum, near the top of the discussion area toward the left (*fig. 4*). When ready to answer a discussion prompt, click on *Create Thread*.

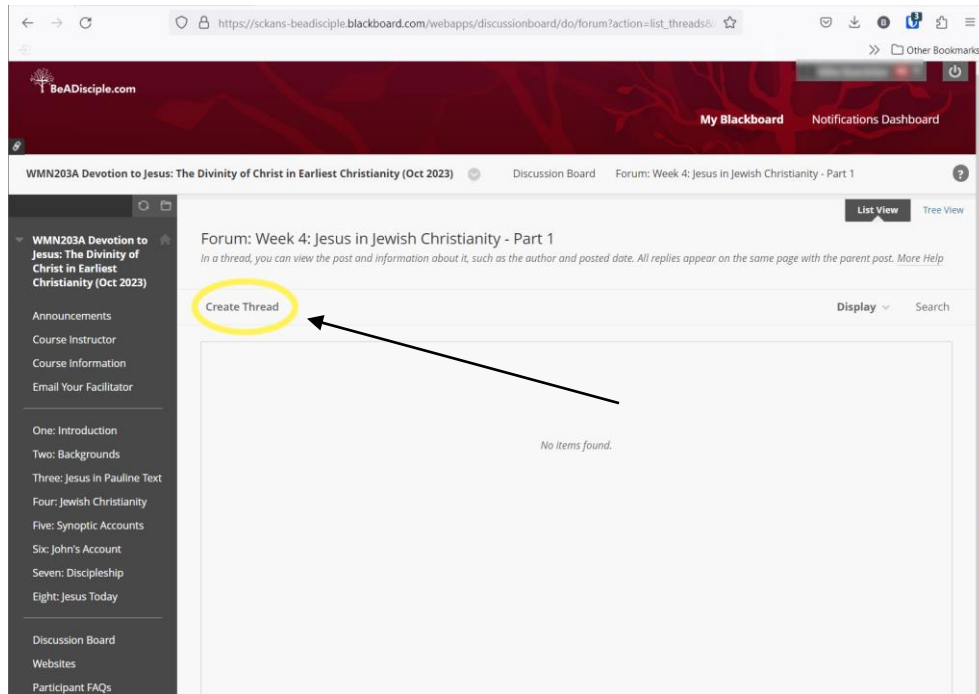
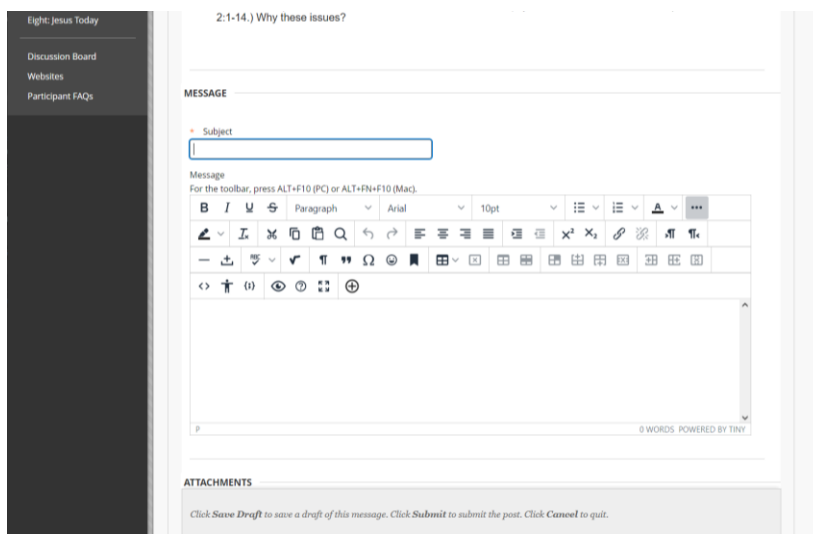


Figure 4. After clicking on a discussion, you have the option to create a new thread.

This opens a **message** window (*fig. 5*), where you can type your response, or **post**, to the prompt. In the subject section, you might type your name or some other brief indication of your reply (this varies between courses and instructor preference). In the message window, just below the subject, you may type your response to the prompt.



When finished, simply click the blue *submit* button to post. (If you choose to save a draft, you should be able to locate your draft by entering the forum and finding your thread with the word "draft" in its title; if you are missing your draft, you may try changing the thread view option from list to "tree" view, or vice versa. See *fig. 6*)

Figure 5. The Message Editor

Once there are several posts or threads, you'll want to be sure to notice the difference between **read** and **unread**. In both views (list and tree), you will see that unread posts are **bold**, while read posts are not. In list view, there is also a column towards the right-hand side of the screen with the title "Unread posts" – in this column you will find the number of posts you have not read.

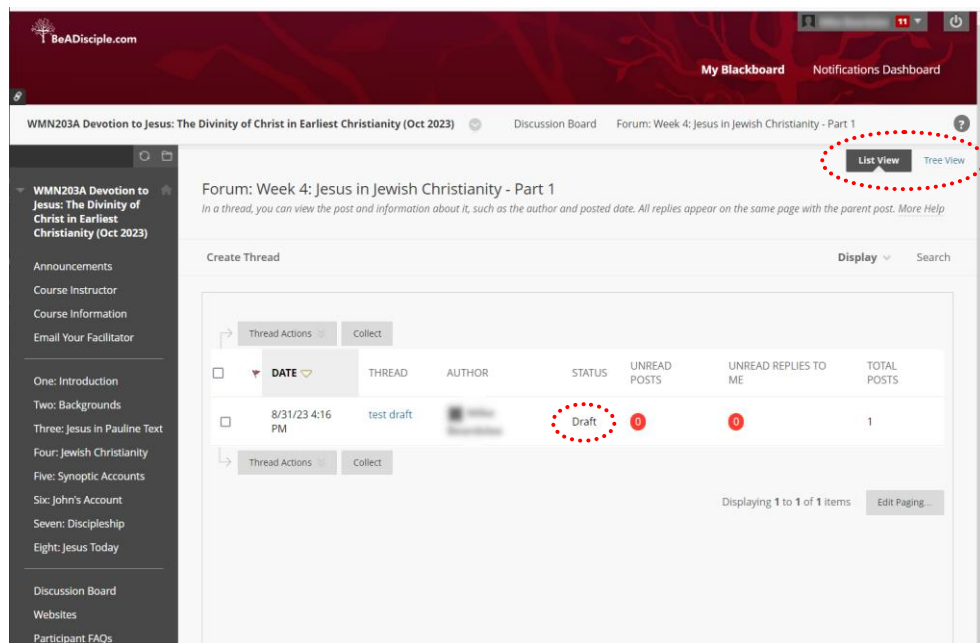


Figure 6. A forum with a thread. Note the "draft" status, and the different view options.

To read and respond to others' threads, within the forum simply click on the subject title associated with their name. (You may need to scroll down to find the message once it loads.) **Replying** to a learners post brings up the same message window where we discussed creating your own thread, and follows the same rules. When your response is typed and ready, again click "submit." Your reply will show up under their post in the thread.

*****In tree view, sometimes the replies are hidden by a "+" next to the title. Click on the "+" in order to see the replies listed under the thread.*****

At the bottom of nearly stop in the discussion board process, you will find an "OK" button. Clicking this is like verifying your work and returning you to the previous page. Similarly, back arrows will move you back one step.

Last, your instructor has full control over the discussion board. If you accidentally submit a post that you want to retract, or some other issue, you can submit a follow-

up or ask your instructor to help. It is difficult to “break” anything in Blackboard as a student, and you are free to explore the environment.