

How to Journal



WHEN

It is a good idea to set aside a certain time in your schedule each day and find a quiet place where you won't be distracted. It's not important when you do your devotions, but that you make it a very important part of your day. For morning people, it's a great way to start your day. For others, it's 20-minute lunchtime appointments with Jesus. For the night owls, it's the final act of the day, the time to quiet their hearts and hear God's.

WHY

Christian books are great to supplement your diet, but nothing can replace the Word. Like the old children's song goes, *"That's the B-I-B-L-E and that's the book for me...."* It is the pathway to spiritual growth & joy (Jeremiah 15:16), spiritual power (Ephesians 6:17), able to teach (Colossians 3:16); purity (Psalm 119:9-11), guidance (Psalm 119:105), insight into your life and inner being (Hebrews 4:12 & James 1:22-24), blessing (James 1:25), and you develop your own record and book of gleanings from what God has taught you and you are experiencing (Jeremiah 30:2).

STARTING: Bible, pen/pencil, journal, open heart.

As we read God's Words, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns & re-tracks the way we think, transforming the mind. Then when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way as we've trained ourselves in the Word (1 Timothy 4:7).

Journaling is an excellent way to both record and process what God speaks to us. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time, to reflect on and review some of the 'gems' that you have received. Without writing them down, you may forget those blessings and some very important lessons! And while journaling is a very personal time with the Lord, *you may want to share some of your daily journaling with your small group or mentors.* Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insight and encourage others & receive encouragement from others.

The Journaling Process

Start with a short prayer to give thanks for God's Word to you and that it would speak to you and give you wisdom and spiritual health.

Read the daily reading or a portion of it and when something "sticks out" think about what is being spoken to you using the following.

Scripture

Open your Bible to the reading found under today's date of your Bible bookmark. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

Observation

What do you think God is saying in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you a lesson or to reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words or think of a principle you see in the scripture or passage and note it your journal.

Application

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, a new promise, or correction for a particular area of your life. Write how you will be different because of this scripture and how you apply it today.

Prayer

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out. If this seems a little overwhelming, take it slow and keep it simple. No matter how you decide to do your devotions, the important thing is to show up for your daily appointment, because God is always waiting for you!