

Journaling For the Purpose of Godliness

(Taken from Ch. 11 of Don Whitney's book – *Spiritual Disciplines for Christian Life*, 2014)

I. What is Journaling?

As a Christian, our journal is a place to record the **works and ways** of God in our lives. Our journals can also include a diary of personal relationships, a notebook of insights into Scripture, and a list of prayer requests.

II. Why Journal?

A. To help us in self-understanding and evaluation

Jeremiah 17:9 – The heart is deceitful.

Romans 12:3 – Think of yourself with sober judgment.

John Calvin: *“Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God. Through the knowledge of ourselves and our condition, we are aroused to seek God.”*

B. To help us meditate on Scripture

Psalm 1:1-2 – In his law he meditates day and night.

Putting our thoughts down on paper as we read the Bible is a good way of meditating upon God's Word. Writing focuses our minds and helps prevent us from being distracted while we meditate on the Word.

C. To help us express our thoughts and feelings to the Lord

Psalm 62:8 – Pour out your hearts to him.

A journal is a place where we can unreservedly pour out the feelings of our hearts.

D. To help us remember the Lord's Works

Psalm 77:11-12 – I will remember the deeds of the LORD.

Joshua 4:4-7 – These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.

1 Samuel 7:12 – He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

E. To help us create and preserve a spiritual heritage

Journaling is an effective way to teach the things of God to our children and leave a legacy of our faith for the future. A journal can communicate the gospel to the generations that will come after us. - Deuteronomy 6:6-9

F. To help us clarify and articulate our insights and impressions

Journaling can help lend coherence to our thoughts and meditations. Writing down our meditations on the Word during our quiet times will also help those impressions to stay with us longer.

G. To help us monitor our goals and priorities

If we really care about our growth in some area of our Christian life, we should inspect our progress over a period of time. We can do this by periodically recording in our journal how we're doing. Some questions we can ask ourselves:

- Have we been fervent in prayer and reading God's Word?
- Have we confessed our sins to God?
- Have we sought to do good to others?
- Have we been zealous in serving the Lord?

H. To help us maintain the other spiritual disciplines

Journaling is a good way to chart our progress in the other spiritual disciplines and for holding ourselves accountable to personal goals.

III. How to Journal?

There are many different ways of journaling:

- Bound books, in hard or soft cover
- Spiral-bound notebooks
- Loose-leaf paper
- A computer

The bottom line is to use the method that works best for you. "Your way of keeping a journal is the right way!"