

“Thy Word is pure, therefore Thy servant loves it.”

Psalm 119:140

Welcome to the first step in a journey that will forever change your life! The Bible is God's gift to us because in it He reveals His plans, His heart, His character, and His love through the person of Jesus Christ. As we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit reshapes the way we think, feel, and live. We begin to see things through Jesus' eyes and we respond to daily situations in a more Christ like manner. As we read God's word, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns the way we think and transforms the spirit of the mind. Then when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way.

Journaling is an excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken 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 friends in Christ or family. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insight and even encourage others.

Let's get started...You'll need three items: a Bible, a pen/pencil and a journal.

THE SOAP METHOD OF JOURNALING

S for Scripture

Open your Bible to the Life Journal Bible Reading for the day. You may also use a One Year Bible Reading Plan or any reading plan you prefer. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for ONE or TWO verses that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal. Why is this important? Writing the scripture passage helps us become familiar with the various books of the Bible. It also helps us to remember where key verses came from so we can pull them up from our memory when we need them.

O for Observation

What do you know about the scripture? What do you think God is saying to us in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words, in your journal. Why is this important? Knowing this information helps us to know the context of the passage. When we know what's going on, we can feel confident that we understand the Bible accurately and aren't drawing inaccurate or even false conclusions. Another approach is to pull the scripture apart phrase by phrase and examine each part.

A for Application

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today. Why is this important? Knowing information about the Bible is important, but the real power of doing daily devotions is when the truth of scripture changes our lives. Taking what we've read and applying it in our lives in practical ways helps us to grow in our Christian maturity and deepens our faith in God.

P for 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. Why is this important? Asking God for wisdom, guidance, support or strength helps us to rely on His power, not our power, to change. Praying is a great way to lean on God throughout the day and it can show us how faithful God is all the time.

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 and spend time with your Lord each day! Remember that He is always waiting for you! 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 quiet time after lunch with Jesus. For the night owls, it's the final act of the day, the time to quiet their hearts and hear God's voice. Choose YOUR BEST each day and give it to Him!