

KEEPING A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

From the desk of Regina Williams

A GOOD DEFINITION OF A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

"A spiritual journal could be viewed through the metaphor of an intersection. Our lives are like a horizontal plane; God's work expressed in Scripture is the vertical. The point of intersection becomes journal material. This metaphor keeps our journaling between the two ditches of commentary on Scripture on the one side and personal ramblings on the other. The intersection keeps us paying careful, simultaneous attention to both planes. The personal life is not excluded; the impact of Scripture is brought in; and the journal becomes a vibrant record of God's work of spiritual formation in a person."

BENEFITS OF KEEPING A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

1. It is a way of paying attention to what's inside our heart. "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life." (Proverbs 4:23)
2. It allows for increased consciousness of God as we write a response to what He is saying.
3. Writing crystallizes thought, which brings focus and keeps our minds from wandering.
4. We can see how our story is part of God's larger story of creation and salvation.
5. It helps us see that our story is important because God is active in it.
6. It allows us to understand our experience in the context of God's overarching purposes of love.
7. Discouragement becomes encouragement as we review God's documented provisions and evidences of His work in our life.
8. It is a tool for capturing and conserving God's grace in our lives, so that nothing is wasted.
9. It provides a "Fifth Gospel", so to speak, for us to go back and read. The journal becomes the Good News according to you and leaves a legacy of your walk with the Lord for future generations.
10. The dullest pencil is better than the sharpest mind! (If you don't write it, you will forget it).

I've found that journaling my spiritual walk is crucial to lasting change in my life. For if I don't capture the truth as the Holy Spirit speaks it to me, I am like "a man who looks at his face in a mirror" and walks away forgetting what he's seen (James 1:23). Reviewing my journal has often been a profound experience of God's presence and grace. It builds my faith to trust God with my current struggles and future.

The most important element of journaling is to be honest with the Lord. Don't let the fear of someone reading your journal keep you from being real in your details. Let it be a tool of true dialogue with the Lord.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE

1. What does this passage say?
2. Why is it important?
3. What should I do about it?
4. How can I remember this?

ONE FORMAT FOR JOURNALING

Date _____

Scripture reference: _____

Summary of reading: _____

Application to my life: _____

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2