

# What's All This About Journaling

By Major Millie Bearchell

Growing up in a rather large family, 7 kids and two parents, we lived a life that was by today's standards, "lower middle class." We didn't have a lot of material items, my 3 sisters and I shared one bedroom, and we had just one station wagon to get us places. I look back and the memories I have are good ones. We may not have had many worldly possessions, but what we had was enough.

When my parents were promoted to glory and it was time to clean out their small apartment, one of the items I desired the most was one or two of my mother's journals. I enjoy from time to time, randomly picking up one of her journals and reading what she wrote on a specific day. Even to this day, my eyes tear up when I see her beautiful handwriting, making my heart ache for her. I love to read what she had to share, a special scripture on her heart, a hymn she was thinking about, commenting on one of her children or grandchildren. There was nothing philosophical or deep theological thoughts, just sweet musings of her blessed life and her gratitude for all she had.

I believe I have inherited her love of journaling. I journal almost every day and much of my journaling takes place in the early morning, with my cup of coffee, my favorite pen, my current journal, and my Bible. So much of what I journal has to do with Scripture verses that have spoken to me, what God is doing in my life, and just random thoughts. My journal is also where I keep my prayer lists. I love to put names, situations, that have been given to me to pray for, but also those things that come to mind. I love to refer to past prayer lists and see how God has been so faithful in his answering those requests according to His will and time.

Last year as Brian and I were planning for retirement, I was grieving over losing "my" flock. One morning in prayer and journaling, I asked God where my new flock in retirement would be? The answer I received so clearly was, "your grandchildren." I have 7 amazing grandchildren ranging from 16 years to 3 months, and each one of them precious to me. God told me to get them their own journal and to begin journaling to them in their book. January 2022, I began to write in 6 of those journals, adding the newest one in February of this year. I do not write every day, but I do write in their journal on their birthday, when they

have done well in school, or excelled on their sport team. I always write that I pray for them constantly, that I'm proud of them, and that I love them.

The legacy that was left to me by my mother has been the impetus behind this new endeavor for my new flock. My desire is that when my grandchildren read their personal journal, see my handwriting, they will treasure the words and sentiments I have given to them. I have not decided when or what age I will give it to them, or if it will go to them upon my promotion to glory. But for now, I will write to each of my flock, making sure they know how special they are to me and more importantly how special they are to Jesus.

Spiritual writer Henri Nouwen said, "writing can untangle thoughts, express our emotions, and give artistic expression to life." Writing is a spiritual habit: Writing can be a true spiritual discipline.

Journaling helps you declutter your mind, which leads to better thinking. Writing in a journal also sharpens your memory and improves your learning capability. There's a reason why when you take the time to pen your thoughts, plans, and experiences, you remember them better, while also feeling more focused.

*I love what Psalm 5:1-3 states, "Give ear to my words, O Lord, Consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, My king and my God, for to you I pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up."*

Journaling is a way of slowing life down for even a few moments. Covered in prayer, and saturated with God's Word, journaling can be a powerful way of hearing God's voice in the Scriptures and making known to Him our requests.

I came across this anonymous quote which adds value to the idea of journaling. "One of the more effective acts of self-care is also, happily, one of the cheapest."

*Psalm 19:14 "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."*