

# Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Journaling

## Write it Down!

As I grew up, my mom had the profession of a secretary, and she used shorthand, a method of using symbols and abbreviations to write things down quickly. All her notes and shopping lists, were written in this shorthand. Before I could even write, I would fill papers and notebooks of my own squiggles and shapes, and say that it was my writing (according to my mom I wrote a lot!) Even to this day, a blank journal and a pen in my hand makes me truly happy.

I have used journaling in my Christian walk since I was a young child. My journaling has grown and changed over the years, in different seasons of my life. It includes events of the day, week, month, as well as my commentary about the events. In my journal I share my frustrations with others and myself. I process the hard situations and write the things I don't want to say out loud. I am open and honest with God. I also record verses that speak to me in the moment,

insights from my personal study time with the Lord, sermon notes, quotes from books I am reading, powerful statements from podcasts I listen to, and written prayers to God. Anything that is stirring in my heart and mind, whatever God is doing in my life I write it down.

I usually go through 3-4 journals a year (depending on how much I write). At the end of December or the first week of January it has become my tradition to read through my journals from the year. I highlight or note things that seems to be a repetition or pattern in my life. It is always fun to read what the goals and dreams I had for the year came to fruition. What is really exciting is to see how God has worked in and through my life. It is also fun to recall to mind things that I had forgotten over the year, and would have completely forgotten if I had not written it down. I can guarantee you, that God does not disappoint.

In Joshua chapter 4, after Joshua leads the nation of Israel across the Jordan river into the promised land, God commanded Joshua to choose one man from each of the 12 tribes, to each gather a stone from the middle of the Jordan. They each piled their stones into a memorial, to serve as a reminder of the miracle God had done for the people—they had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. ***He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'"*** (Joshua 4:21-22; for the full story read Joshua 3-4).

Using a journal is like a memorial stone. I have a written record of what God has done in my life—how He is growing and shaping me and how He is using me for His kingdom. What is God doing in your life?



My journals from the past 6 years!



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## Territorial Women's Ministries Department

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## Conversation Starters/Journaling Prompts

This month's conversation starters could also be used as journal prompts for the beginning of the year. Spread them out over a whole month as you develop the spiritual discipline of journaling.

- ◆ What is one thing I did really well?
- ◆ What is something I know I need to work on?
- ◆ What goals did I set that I achieved? What goals didn't get completed and why?
- ◆ How would I best describe this past year?
- ◆ What were some notable blessings, gifts, or memories from the year?
- ◆ What books impacted my spiritual growth this year? What were the truths and lessons I want to remember?
- ◆ How can I better improve the quality of my devotional time?
- ◆ What prayer requests were answered this year? What prayer requests still need to be prayed through?
- ◆ How did I show God's love and grace to those around me?

*"Journaling can be helpful as a way of recording and remembering God's faithfulness in your life."* Caitlin Rodgers

### Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be rooted in the discipline of journaling <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Bible Journaling* a Bible study on Luke 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-2 by Captain Joy Groenleer

Devotional: *What's All This About Journaling*, by Major Millie Bearchell

Craft Idea: Make your own journal with this easy craft by Major Stacy Cross.

## Try Prayer Journaling

Writing down your prayers can be a powerful way to engage with God by sharing your praises and requests with Him. It can be a valuable tool to look back and read through and see how God has worked in your life, and responded to the prayers you have prayed. Here are some ideas of what to include in a prayer journal:

- **Record Praise and Thanksgiving.** Start your prayer time with adoring Him, not for what He does, but for who He is. Perhaps write out each day your "Adore" prayer (see November 2023 Flourish Newsletter for that prayer technique).
- **Record Request and Intercession.** Write specific things you are praying for yourself and for others. Leave space for answers and write them in as they unfold.
- **Write your prayers.** Yes, write out your prayers. Not sure what to say? Take Scripture verses and write them as prayers to the Lord.
- **Store Treasure or Keepsakes.** Use your prayer journal to include quotes that speak to your heart or the situation you are praying about. Treasures or keepsakes can include song lyrics, sermon notes, Bible verses that speak to you, encouragement notes from others. Anything that God uses to speak to your heart and work in your life.
- **Reflection.** Plan times to look back at your prayer journal—perhaps once a quarter or at the end of the month. Read through and see how God has been working in your life. During this time of reflection you will begin to see patterns of how God is working, how He is deepening your walk with Him. A.W. Tozer wrote, *"I rarely know where I'm going in my life's journey. But I look back and see that God has been leading my every step and I didn't even know it."*



*In David's writings in Psalms, we see him open and honest with God.*

## Flourishing in the Word

This month's Bible reading plan leads us through David's life, reading the narrative events found in 1 & 2 Samuel and then some of [his journal entries recorded](#) in the Psalms.

Jan 1	1 Samuel 19:1-24	Jan 17	2 Samuel 8:1-14
Jan 2	Psalms 59	Jan 18	Psalms 60
Jan 3	1 Samuel 21:1-15	Jan 19	2 Samuel 11:1-27
Jan 4	Psalms 34	Jan 20	2 Samuel 12:1-31
Jan 5	Psalms 56	Jan 21	Psalms 51
Jan 6	1 Samuel 22:1-23	Jan 22	Psalms 32
Jan 7	Psalms 52	Jan 23	2 Samuel 15:1-37
Jan 8	1 Samuel 23:1-18	Jan 24	Psalms 3
Jan 9	Psalms 63	Jan 25	2 Samuel 16:1-23
Jan 10	1 Samuel 23:19-29	Jan 26	2 Samuel 17:1-14
Jan 11	Psalms 54	Jan 27	Psalms 7
Jan 12	1 Samuel 24:1-22	Jan 28	2 Samuel 22:1-25
Jan 13	Psalms 57	Jan 29	2 Samuel 22:16-51
Jan 14	Psalms 142	Jan 30	Psalms 18:1-24
Jan 15	2 Samuel 6:1-23	Jan 31	Psalms 18:25-50
Jan 16	Psalms 30		

### Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

**Anchorage Korean, AK** started a Bible reading class. They meet once a week for 30-40 minutes to just read the Bible. They are already halfway through the Old Testament.

**Arno, Marshall Islands** ladies created a weight loss challenge with a prize going to the woman who loses the most.

**Estrella Mountain, AZ** got to build each day of the creation story with Legos.

**Hoonah, AK** spent the day picking spruce tips and then made spruce—tip jelly. They also spent other days making two others kinds of jelly: dandelion and fireweed!

**Mat-Su Valley, AK** are doing a study on, *"The Power of a Woman's Words"* by Sharon Jaynes.

**Medford, OR** had a "It's a crepe day to praise the Lord!" program where they made crepes.

**Reno, NV** did a study on the names of Jesus.

**Sacramento, CA** started the 4th book in the *Jesus Calling* Bible Study Series: *Living a Life of Worship*.

**San Diego Citadel, CA** had a Bible study on transformation using butterflies, and the ladies were able to make their own butterflies.

## A Blessing Jar

*"Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
count your many blessings and see what God has done."*

*Johnson Oatman Jr.*

Perhaps the idea of writing in a journal is scary or daunting to you, but you want a way to remember how God has worked in your life in this new year. Instead of being limited to a book or journal, here is a less intimidating way to record blessings, God's working in your life, answers to prayers, etc. Make a blessing jar!

Decorate a jar, a box, or any kind of container with a lid. Be sure to have small pieces of paper and a pen nearby. Throughout the year, whenever you recognize a "blessing" in your life throughout the year, just write it on a piece of paper, fold it and stick it in the Blessing Jar.

On New Year's Eve, dump out all the blessings from the entire year and go through it. It will be a great reminder of God's faithfulness, and a great way of developing the habit of counting your blessings.

*"I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds."*

Psalm 77:10-11



***"Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles,  
and the judgments he pronounced."*** Psalm 105:5



## Creative Ways to Journal

A journal can be more than just words on a page. If the idea of writing is causing anxiety, perhaps try some of these other ways to keep a journal of your Christian walk this year.

1. **Photo Journal.** As you see things that move you or God uses to speak to your heart, take a picture of it. Add your picture to the journal and write a few words to help you remember the moment, the feeling of what God was saying to you.
2. **Playlist.** Often music speaks and touches our heart differently than anything else. Make a playlist of the songs that God is using to speak to you in this season. Print or write out the lyrics in a journal. Underline the words or phrases that speak to you.
3. **Artistic Expression.** Don't use words. Simply draw, paint, use colors, images, to show how God is working in your life.