

2012 JOURNALING EXPERIENCE

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 small group or mentors. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insight and even encourage others.

Here is the suggested format for journaling:

S -for Scripture

Open your Bible to the reading found on the Scripture Guide for that day's date. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O -for Observation

What do you think God is saying to you 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.

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.

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.

Bible Reading Plan for 2012

As you look to the new year with thoughts or goals you have for yourself in your faith development or Christian formation, consider this verse: *"This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."* Jeremiah 6:16

While this was said by a prophet to the nation of Israel, it can apply to us as well. Do you have a way of faith or a path of discipline you follow in order to draw closer to God? One tool may be to use the weekly Scripture Guide bulletin insert to begin or continue a discipline of daily reading of the Bible. The new reading schedule for 2012 is tailored so that it can be accomplished in 5 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Give it a try.

5x5x5 Bible Reading Plan

5 minutes a day: This reading plan will take you through all 260 chapters of the New Testament, one chapter per day. The gospels are read throughout the year to keep the story of Jesus fresh all year.

5 days a week: Determine a time and location to spend 5 minutes a day for 5 days a week.

5 ways to dig deeper: We can pause in our reading to dig into the Bible. Below are 5 different ways to dig deeper each day. Try a single idea for a week to find what works best for you. Consider journaling. Journaling is a good way to both record and process what God's word has said to you.

1. Underline or highlight key words or phrases in the Bible passage as you make new discoveries from the text. Periodically review your markings to see what God is teaching you.
2. Put it into your own words. Read the passage or verse slowly, then rewrite each phrase or sentence using your own words.
3. Ask and answer some questions. Questions unlock new discoveries and meanings. Ask questions about the passage using these words: who, what, why, when, where, or how. Jot down some thoughts on how you would answer these questions.
4. Capture the big idea. God's Word communicates big ideas. Periodically ask: *What's the big idea in this sentence, paragraph, or chapter?*
5. Personalize the meaning. A helpful habit is personalizing the Bible through application. Ask: *How could my life be different today as I respond to what I'm reading?*

The scripture guide for this year will include the daily chapter to read as part of this 5x5x5 Bible Reading Plan. The days marked "Reflection" will not include scripture to be read, but should be used to reflect on what you have read during the previous 5 days. To assist you with this new plan, a guide for journaling is on the back of this page.