

The Spiritual Practice of Journaling

By Mindy Caliguire



The Spiritual Practice of Journaling is not a “super spiritual” practice just for people “who love God a lot.” But it isn’t for everyone. In different seasons of life it may serve you well and in others it may not.

What is journaling? It’s being honest with God and about what’s current in your life in writing.

A journal can be kept in a book or on-line. Why is it important? First, when we write our thoughts, prayers, reflections down it makes them more concrete. We may have some vague anxiety or some discomfort over a particular decision we need to make and it stay in a kind of cloud of unknowing and when we write it down we say, “Oh yeah, that’s why I was confused.” The process of writing it down makes it more concrete and what God may be saying to us in that situation.

Secondly, it helps us to focus on the topic and helps us speaking to God directly. Many like to pray with a journal and without it our thoughts may meander, we may fall asleep, etc. Writing it down keeps us focused to the task at hand and staying present to what we want to explore and ask God about.

Third, it serves as a spiritual record of your life and how God has been moving and to recall God’s goodness and mercy in our lives. If we want to move into the future wisely and well it helps to have a record of what God has done so we can go back.

Where do we start?

Choose a journal! Choose a format that works for you.

Be honest. Take time to reflect and think what is really going on in your life. Psalm 145:18, “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” That’s all we have to offer...is our truest selves.

Topics you may write about:

Record your life

Express your true self.

Solve problems.

Grow spiritually.

Record your life.

What has been going on of significance in the last 24-48 hours? A crisis, an answer to prayer, a conversation, specific circumstances, etc. Become curious about your life and your own experience. Start writing about it.

Why was that significant?

Is there a Scripture connected to this?

Express your true self.

For many it is difficult to express the deeper things of our lives and how we are actually doing.

What is the dominate emotion I am feeling right now or is characteristic of the last few days? Fear? Anger? Joy? Gratitude? Don't be afraid of the dark things that may lurk in your soul as difficult as it may be. Psalm 88 is an honest expression recorded in Scripture and God invites us to be honest before him. When we can live authentically before God, healing can come. Find the invitation in the open pages of your journal to bring your true self to God in writing.

Solve problems.

One of the clearest invitations made to us is in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, she should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

You can use the pages of a journal to help you in the process of asking God, "I need help with something."

Isolate the dominate emotion that help me realize something is amiss.

Identify the factors (there could be many) that are contributing to that emotion?

We have to choices:

Do nothing. What could happen if you do nothing?

Trust in future grace. Trusting that God has these things in his control and I can choose to trust. What might happen if I do?

Grow Spiritually.

Use this time in your journal in a soul-searching prayer exercise. Where was God in your day and sense a strong connection with God? Where did you feel disconnected from God? These help us grow in these two ways: We begin to notice patterns. It helps increase you awareness of God in the moment.