

BIB105 Basic Bible Doctrine

The Benefits of Journaling

Presented by the



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The Spiritual Benefit of Journaling¹

Every sport has its gear, every job its tool. But many tools can be used for multiple purposes, and some sports gear, such as cross-trainer shoes can be used in multiple sports. Journaling, the process of reflection and writing down our experiences with God, can serve a similar spiritual purpose. It becomes a powerful tool the Holy Spirit can use to develop Christ-likeness when we exercise spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading and fasting.

The story goes that Henry Ford once hired an efficiency expert to evaluate his company. After a few weeks, the expert made his report, which was highly favorable except for one thing.

"It's that man down the hall," said the expert. "Every time I go by his office he's just sitting there with his feet on his desk. He's wasting your money."

"That man," replied Mr. Ford, "once had an idea that saved us millions of dollars. At the time, I believe his feet were planted right where they are now."²

Journaling is like that. The benefits are often unseen and rarely achieved quickly. And although the Bible doesn't command us to journal, several of its writers modeled this practice. Many of the Psalms represent David's journaling as he wrestled with deep spiritual issues. Job struggles with the question of evil in his journal, the book that bears his name. Jeremiah's journal, Lamentations, records his agony over Jerusalem's fall. And Solomon pens his search for happiness in his journal Ecclesiastes.

However, while the Bible doesn't command us to journal, there are several clear mandates to meditate. Joshua 1:8 says, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

Journaling is an excellent tandem in company with meditation. While many Christians don't journal, the simplicity and profound potential to create spiritual change make it a practice that should be adopted. But if journaling is new to you or if you've tried it and become discouraged, consider these practical benefits.

1. Journaling softens our hearts.

Every farmer knows he must till the soil to soften it before he plants the seed. In the same manner we often need our hearts softened. Hosea said, "Plow up the hard ground of your hearts . . ." (Hosea 10:12, NLT). When softened, our hearts respond more readily to the Spirit's promptings.

2. Journaling sifts truth from error.

Perhaps you remember as a child I remember helping your mom bake. A key step is to sift the flour to removed the lumps. Just as lumps were interspersed in the flour, sometimes we unintentionally mix "lumps" of lies in our self-talk such as, "I'm a rotten person," "God is mad at me," or "I'm worthless."

¹ Adapted from 5 Spiritual Benefits from Journaling (God's Spiritual Cross-trainer) By Charles Stone. <https://charlesstone.com/5-spiritual-benefits-journaling-gods-spiritual-cross-trainer/>

² Reader's Digest, August, 1981. Posted on Sermon Illustrations. [<http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/m/meditation.htm>]

When we journal and put these thoughts on paper, it's easier to sort out truth from error. Then we can counter them with God's Truth and experience a more biblical outlook on life.

3. Journaling slows our pace.

In our hearts we know life is too fast. Perhaps we need a governor, a device that keeps an engine from running at full capacity and burning out. Many Christians run their lives at full capacity with life's "gas pedal" pushed to the max. Journaling acts like a governor to slow our frenzied pace and force us to listen to the Spirit's voice.

4. Journaling builds faith.

Few of us will remember what God taught us last week, much less last year unless we write it down. Journaling builds our faith when we record God's faithful acts. Then we can refer back to that record to remind us of his continued faithfulness. Psalms 77:11 says, "I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago." (NIV)

5. Journaling releases pain.

Emotional pressure can build up inside us to the point that we want to explode at others. Journaling provides a spiritual pressure release valve for our pain that can prevent that explosion. David encouraged this when he wrote ". . . pour out your hearts to him . . ." (Psalm 62:8, NIV).

Journaling, God's spiritual cross-trainer, offers many spiritual benefits.