

“Women Called by God”

Prayer and Fasting Devotional Journaling Guide



Devotional Journaling

Regarding using the spiritual discipline of devotional journaling, know that it's a place to spiritually share with God and with you. You're pouring your thoughts out to God, but you're also part of the audience, because you go back to it to see how you've spiritually grown -- or perhaps even shrank. As with most spiritual disciplines, there are important guidelines that help to make devotional journaling effective. The most important is that you must be honest with yourself and God when writing. There will be days your journal entry (if you're honest with yourself) will read....”Lord, I failed today, I allowed my tempter to get the best of me....I should not have said this or that to someone....I allowed myself to think about things ungodly.....Lord I failed to read your word today...and even, God I just blew it today. God already knows what you've done but confession is good for the soul.

After you have made journal entries for about 3 or 4 months and you go back and read your story, it's like you're reading a novel about yourself....it will chronicle your spiritual growth like few other spiritual disciplines. Few of us have any idea of what it really means to be honest to God, and so we have to learn as we go along. Another good guideline is that the date and time should be marked with each entry. You can refer to that when you're looking back, or trying to remember. And, it is most helpful if the entries are tied into a rhythm of regular Bible reading (such as book of the month or your SMBS scripture passages you've read and studied) and private prayer. Again, this is a devotional journal not a *diary*. Its focus is on the relationship between *you and God*, not your significant other, friend or you and your pastor/ spiritual mentor. Those individuals can be a part of what you write about -- anything or anybody can -- but for the journal, they are to be seen through the lens of your relationship with God, and you living a life that is honestly *spiritual*. Get yourself a good, sturdy devotional book, perhaps a leather-bound journal with lots of pages (Mardell or Lifeway are great places to find one). You'll be taking it with you when you move, travel, go on a retreat, etc. Write down what God showed you in the 21 days of praying and fasting, right down the names of the people you witnessed to and invited to come to worship services – if they were lost, pray for their salvation. Write down answers to prayers so that you'll have spiritual markers to refer to when similar situations come about. Leave your devotional journal in plain view, so that it can beckon you to come and write. Think without analyzing. Leave yourself open so the Holy Spirit can get you to share honestly as you're writing. And don't tell yourself, "nah, that's too strange a thought". Don't censor it, just write it. A journal is like a muscle: when you use it regularly, it can carry more spiritual weight in your life.

Listed below are the notes I share with those who desire to embark upon devotional journaling as a spiritual discipline.

BEGINNINGS

A devotional journal is a helpful way of keeping up with our spiritual journey. A devotional journal is different from a regular journal or diary. It is a written record of

personal reactions to spiritual matters. Keep your devotional journal and Bible together as you record new insights, prayers from the Bible that have been helpful to you, and meaningful passages from spiritual books you may be reading. The importance of a devotional journal is that it gathers strength in helping us with our daily spiritual life, especially if you write in it often. A devotional journal of spiritual materials grows more powerful as it is used.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

Let me first suggest that you buy a journal that has a feel of importance about it. This is a spiritual investment; your journal should look like one – I suggest you go to a first class Christian bookstore and buy a journal that is made of genuine bonded leather. This type of journal has a feel of permanence and it will last...but any type will do. It is also helpful the devotional journal is one that has entries by date. This allows quick retrieval of materials that has previously been entered. A helpful way to begin a day's entry is to write a brief sentence to record and briefly describe events which are taking place in your life that day. Include your key prayer petitions for not only you but include the key prayer petitions of others you are praying for. Describe anything which comes to your mind. State the facts and recent experiences as briefly as possible and make them a matter of prayer concern. Search the Scriptures for how God answered and responded to similar types of requests in the Bible (this step is going to lead you to adventures that will blow your mind).

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL?

- Bible verses, sermon notes, or phrases that have a special meaning for you. Explore your feelings as you study the Bible. Experiences that have been meaningful to you should be added. New awareness of God's revealing himself to you should be included.
- Quotes from books that are meaningful to you.

- Note especially feelings you have. Write how you feel about events, persons, ideas, and relationships or even the lack thereof. Now this is the part that will help your character grow...include in your devotional journal on a weekly basis what tempted you the week of _____; be honest and pray to God for strength to overcome the temptations using 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 John 4:4b as a model.
- What books are you reading? Keep a list of books you read. Write phrases from these books in your journal.
- *****Very Critical Step***** Every month summarize the month. What were key events that happened? Some months may not be as eventful as others...but that's life.

HOW SHOULD I BEGIN?

Write fast, write everything, and include everything. Write from your feelings, accept whatever comes to mind, and note it in your devotional journal.

As you begin, ask this question: "What is the most important thing going on in my life right now?"

Begin with an image. "This period of my life has been like a narrow bridge."

Write all "the feelings" you have in one day.

Keep photographs, news clippings, and notes of world events. We are living in the end of times....God is warning us almost daily that His Son Jesus is on His way back for His church.....Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 are unraveling right before our eyes but most people don't see it because they're not studying the Word.....Isaiah 17:1 - Damascus ceasing to become a city might happen this year.

WHAT DEVICES SHOULD I USE?

Feelings, descriptions, reflections, images, thought, and "whatever comes to mind" are what should be included in your devotional journal. Keep lists of events, past happenings, or important events that have happened in your own life. Dialogue with yourself. Carry on an imaginary conversation with yourself. This can be helpful.

In summary, your devotional journal is a key to developing your spiritual life. Work hard with it and your life will be greatly enriched.

Women Called by God, if you engage in this spiritual discipline you are about to go on an incredible journey..."Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21. If you have any questions/comments feel free to email or call.

To God be the Glory,

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