


no. **8**
in the series

Spiritual growth needs to be nurtured through regular spiritual practices. May this practice help you grow deeper in Christ and further in mission.



grow

deeper
in Christ

Keeping a Spiritual Journal...

JOURNALING is a spiritual practice through which we record and process what God has impressed upon us. It's a useful tool to reflect on and review what we learn through Scripture and life's experiences, offering opportunity to reflect on the movement of God in our lives.

While journaling is a personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily journaling with trusted companions on the spiritual journey. Such dialogue often enables us to look deeper into what God is saying, gaining new insight, and encouraging another.

As we read God's words, we begin to see God's character. Regularly reading the Bible re-patterns the way we think, transforming our will and our mind. We begin to respond to the world as Jesus would.

When should I journal?

It's a good idea to set aside a certain time in your schedule each day for journaling, finding a quiet place where you won't be distracted.

The importance of this appointment with Jesus is not the timing. The importance is making it a regular part of your schedule. For morning people, it's a great way to start the day. For others, it's 20-minute lunch-time appointments with Jesus. For the night owls, it's the final act of the day, the time to become quiet and hear God's voice.

Let's get started

You'll need three items: a Bible, a pen or pencil, and a journal.

The Evangelical Covenant Church

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Here's an approach to try:¹

S - Scripture reading—Open your Bible to a passage of Scripture. You might choose to focus on a portion of the passage your pastor will preach on next Sunday. Read slowly and allow God to speak to you. After taking time to listen, choose a verse that particularly speaks to you, and write it in your journal.

O - Observe—What do you think God is saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Write this Scripture, in your own words, in your journal.

A - Apply—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. Record how this Scripture applies to you today.

R - Respond in prayer—Your response might be as simple as asking God to help you remember and apply this Scripture. It may be a greater insight on what God is revealing to you. Remember that prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen for what God is saying particularly to you. Now, write it out.

You can also journal simply as a prayer practice

In this case, journaling is a tool for reflecting on God's presence, guidance and nurture in our daily lives. Some people journal consistently and daily. Others may journal just for

a season. Our journals might include writing, drawings, clippings, collage, articles, or poems. Journals offer a place for recording your prayers, reflections on your faith journey, or recording your life story.

Where might I learn more?

Here are some great books to dig deeper in journaling.

- *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God Through Attentive Writing*, by Helen Harmelink Cepero (InterVarsity Press, 2008)
- *Write For Your Soul: The Whys and Hows of Journaling*, by Jeff Caliguire and Mindy Caliguire (Soul Care Communications, 1999)

Some websites to check out:

- *New Hope Christian Fellowship*, www.enewhope.org/firststeps/journaling
- *Celebration Covenant Church*, www.celebrationcovenant.org
- *Wellspring Covenant Church*, www.wellspringhawaii.org

These churches have taught journaling as a primary tool for spiritual growth.

"I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me."—Psalm 16:7

Endnotes

¹ The S.O.A.R. journaling approach is an adaptation of material provided to us by Reverend Doug Ferguson, Celebration Covenant Church in Omaha, and New Hope Christian Fellowship in Honolulu. Used by permission.