

Journaling

“an unreflected life is not worth living” Socrates

Throughout the centuries many Christians have used notebooks, diaries and journals as a way of reflecting on their walk with God. Many would say that such reflective writing or ‘journaling’ actually helps them to grow in their relationship with God.

Unlike a diary, a journal doesn’t focus on events and incidents. It’s for reflection, mulling, questioning, pondering. It’s a flexible form – each journal will be totally unique to its writer. And you can write in it daily, weekly, monthly – whenever. It’s your call.

Why?

- to help YOU – to remember, look back and reflect
- to observe and analyse your spiritual growth and development
- a way to mark change over time
- to see what helps you, and hinders you.
- to note your response/s; to spot patterns.
- to see meaning rather than just recording facts, dates, events (it’s not a diary)

What?

- Meditation on the Scriptures – what is God saying to me and what am I going to do about it? Insights, connections, inspiration, challenge, vision, correction.
- What am I enjoying/struggling with? Why? What am I learning? What difference will this make?
- Reflection on your moods, attitudes, feelings, health, stress, dreams, – what I’ve thought and felt, the highs and lows of the day, ways I’ve experienced change in myself.
- A record of spiritual experiences – ways I’ve been aware of God’s presence and what this might mean.
- Working through relationships – relationships that cause joy, why I struggle particular relationships, coming to terms with a bereavement.
- Talking to God – hopes, longings, dreams, worries, fears.
- Pondering problems – decisions I’m concerned about, discerning God’s
- perspective on life and seeking his will for the future.

- Your **honest** response to God at any time
- Your thoughts and insights
- Your feelings – either good or bad; even frustration, anger, fear (e.g. like the Psalms)

How?

- A short description of what happened **plus** reflection on it and your response/s
- A poem (unscanned/conversational)

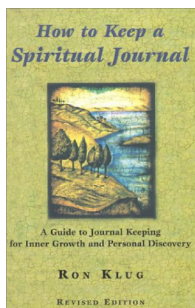
- A psalm (see below)
- A picture drawn or described that has spoken to you, and why/how
- A prayer or letter to God.
- Something else (be imaginative)

But...

- Don't allow it to take the place of prayer
- Don't be tempted to pray in order to have something to record
- Don't be tempted to write for anyone else's eyes.

To explore further...

Ronald Klug, *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal*, Augsburg



John Wesley's Journal

<https://ccel.org/w/wesley/journal/cache/journal.pdf>

