

Journal

God's Word

And one day her heart opened up and she knew
everything she was searching for had
always been inside her.

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Foundation

Seated on a sunlit mountain side in Israel, surrounded by crowds of followers, Jesus Christ spoke of many things; love and anger, prayer and fasting, worry and faith. His sermon on the mount has been the topic of Christian teaching for over two thousand years.

That long ago day on the mountain Jesus told them, *“seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”*

My question when first reading these verses in the Gospel of Matthew was, “how do I go about seeking God's kingdom and righteousness and what things will be mine if I do it?”

In 1977, as a brand-spanking-new believer in and follower of Christ, there were questions about *everything*. Many people offered answers and opinions. Never being one to leave well-enough alone, I invited myself to

the home of a Christian woman who had earned my respect with her actions and words.

“What does it take to find God's kingdom and righteousness?” I asked.

Wisely, she did not share pat answers, telling me how to mimic her walk as I expected she would. Instead she sent me home with a recording (tape..it's what we used in the '70s) and a study Bible from her library. Today, it is impossible to recall who recorded the message. The only thing I know for certain is the theme and focus was,

“Put God's Word First Place in
everything”

In modern society the new and the now are what's trending, so how can two thousand year-old texts possibly be relevant right now?

How Can God's Word Ever Be Irrelevant?

Not long afterward another friend presented me with a new Bible and a small loose-leaf binder (a journal). This woman, who will forever hold a warm place in my heart, began teaching me how to Journal God's Word and

implement the scriptures in my life.

“Don’t fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don’t act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.” _James 1:22-24 (MSG)

As I lay the foundation for this study to share with others I can bear witness to the fact that being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only; putting God's Word FIRST in all of life, means grace and favor will cover every aspect of your days and life will indeed, as Jesus promised, be abundant.



The Word Became Flesh

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
_John 1:1-4 (RSV)*

Where your walk with Jesus is today does not matter in the least. Jesus came to be the light in your life today, tomorrow and forever, eternally. Because of Him you can move forward from this moment and your path will be illuminated by the magnificent light of Christ, the Son of God.

Calling yourself a Christian means you believe

in and rely on Christ, accepting Him as Lord and Savior. Calling yourself a Christian also means recognizing Christ as the Word of God incarnate.

In the beginning was the Word...He was in the beginning...



A prayer to begin:

Father, God look upon me, be merciful to me and show me favor, as is your way to those who love your name.

Establish my steps and direct them by means of your Word; let not iniquity have dominion over me. Deliver me from the oppressions of man, so I can keep your precepts, hearing, receiving, loving and obeying them.

Make your face to shine with pleasure upon me, your servant, and teach me your statutes.

Father, this you have promised by the mouth of your holy prophets from the most ancient times—that we should have deliverance and be saved from our enemies.

That covenant you sealed by oath to our Father Abraham, to grant that we, being delivered from our foes, might serve you, fearlessly, in holiness and right standing within your presence all the days of our life.

In Jesus name, Amen

Do

What You Love

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.”

_Deuteronomy 7:9

Your Journal is about YOU. Your Journal is your *soul print*, uniquely your own. No other will be exactly the same.

Your Bible is God's covenant of LOVE with YOU. Your Bible is your “Owners Manual” conveying God's plan for your life. No one else in all of creation will receive exactly the same inspiration, direction, comfort or counseling from God's Word.

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
_Hebrews 4:12

Your Journal can become your dearest friend, your closest confidant, your prayer partner and your biographer. There is nothing else that will bring you nearer to your Lord and Savior than keeping a Journal of God's Word.

Keeping a Journal of your journey with Jesus and God's Word is suggested by the prophet Habakkuk, and if you really think about it, much of our Bible was written either as a means of recording God's interaction with his people or in the form of prayers, praise, or correspondence. That's inspired journaling.

“Then the Lord answered me, “Write the vision. Make it clear on tablets so that anyone can read it quickly”. _Habakkuk 2:2

Getting Started

If you haven't started to Journal God's Word yet, there is only one place to begin.

At the beginning.

What you will need:

Your Bible

A loose-leaf binder (probably similar in size to your Bible, since it will be easier to carry them together)

A pen or pencil and highlighters if you love them.

A quiet place to be alone with God

At least a quarter of an hour free from interruptions.

What you will NOT need:

A cell phone, tablet, laptop or any other distractions

What you must do:

Open your Spirit to God's Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Rest in the Presence of The Lord and listen for his guidance.

The most powerful words any believer can utter, "Here am I, Lord."

What you must NOT do:

Try too hard.

Journaling God's Word is about what God want's to teach you.

Journaling God's Word is not about what you need to do to garner God's favor and grace. Jesus paid it all so that you can receive, not earn, the Love of the Father.

About Your Binder

Pick a size you Love.

Pick a color you Love

Pick a theme you Love

It's possible to purchase suitable binders in every price range. I just purchased a cute little number for \$3.00 - accessories included! I've also priced binder sets in an upscale

market for over \$100.00.

Do what you love.

And what you can afford.



About the Accessories

Make, buy or borrow the items you'll love to accessorize your Journal. Above all, make it YOU.

Things you may find indispensable like subject dividers, calendar pages, to-do lists, etc. are readily available at craft stores, office supply places and online.

I found lots of ideas and free printables on Pinterest, you can also search e-Bay and Amazon for more amazing ideas.

If you are at all artistic, own a computer and a printer, there are a million ways to personalize your Journal, making the experience even more your very own. It's

going to become your “soul print” - as individual as your fingerprints. And, as time passes you will discover things you can't do without and things you thought you'd need that are simply unnecessary.

Post-it-Notes -They are colorful, movable, and inexpensive

- make perfect dividers.
- can be used as index tabs in both Journal and Bible (after years of use they can still be removed from the pages of my Bible with out visible damage or sticky residue)
- can be color coordinated with any theme you love

My Journal also contains dividers for:

- Prayers
- Notes & Grace Notes

Yours will probably evolve into something completely different, but it's a place to start, so don't wait. Get your Journal started right away.

Remember—Do What YOU Love.

Say

What You Feel

“When you pray, go to your room and close the door. Pray privately to your Father who is with you. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you.” _Matthew 6:6

Begin in Prayer

As you begin to Journal God's Word, seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to

you.” _Matthew 6:31-33

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” _ 2 Corinthians 5:21

For this reason, the most practical place to begin is in Prayer. If you are unsure about how to pray effectively, go to the Word and learn from Jesus.

If writing down your prayers is a new practice for you, consider the benefits:

- writing sharpens concentration and enhances memory
- interruptions won't stop your prayers, simply pause them
- recording praise and promises reinforces retention
- prayer requests made in writing can be reviewed and God's answers can be inserted on the page
- seeing how your prayers are answered will build your faith

Perfect Prayer

Worship:

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

Compliance:

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.

Petition:

Give us this day our daily bread;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.

This 'perfect' prayer appears in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter six, and is accompanied by more of the Lord's teaching on prayer. [*also see Mark 11:20-25; Luke 11:1-13*]

Write a Love Letter

While it is true, Jesus had much to teach us about prayer, your personal journal is not meant to be perfect, liturgical, or religious in any way.

Your personal journal and the prayers you write there are meant to be correspondence with God the Father, Jesus your Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit who resides in you to comfort, counsel and guide you through the Word.

“...when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.” _ Galatians 4:4-7

Abba, in the ancient language, is literally “Daddy!”

Little Hebrew children can be heard crying out “Abba! Abba!” on playgrounds and street

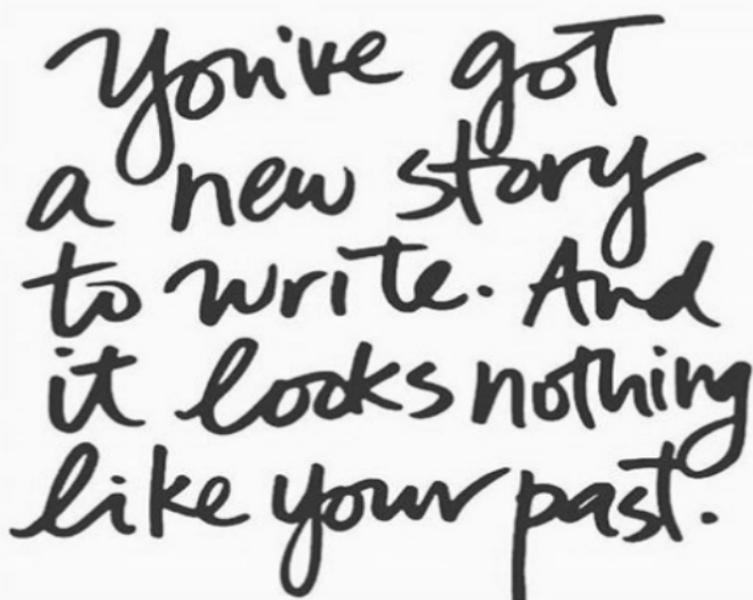
corners in Israel to this day.

“Daddy. Daddy!” A loving and trusting title bestowed on a beloved father by a faithful child.

As you write the first prayers in your personal journal follow this example—pray what you're feeling.

“And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.” _Mark 14:35-36

Confident or worried, happy or sad, with plenty or in need—take it all to your Abba, Father, in the name of the Son, expecting His answer to change the situation.



You've got
a new story
to write. And
it looks nothing
like your past.

Write it all down, just as if you were writing to the one who loves you more than anyone else on earth. There is nothing He does not know about you. "Even your hairs are numbered!" There is nothing you can tell Him that will surprise him. There is nothing too hard for Him.

There is nothing impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

Prayer – A Memorial

In the book of Joshua, as the people moved forward to enter the promised land, the priests, bearing the ark of God's covenant, went before them. When the feet of the priests touched the flooded Jordan river, God stopped it's flow! Nothing is impossible for God. [Joshua 3:7 - 5:1]

Each of the twelve leaders of the twelve tribes were instructed to choose a stone and carry it to the bank. At Gilgal they stacked the stones as a memorial to God's miraculous power and saving grace.

To this day those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan and set up in Gilgal are remembered, “so all the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may remain in awe of the Lord forever.”

The stones of memorial were to be set up not simply to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan, but as a testimony to the people of God concerning His miraculous and delivering power. The stones would recall what God had done in the past, so that in the future Israel could look to the God who had formerly

delivered them.

Your personal journal prayers will become the foundation of remembrance to your own experiences which will strengthen you when you face difficulties in your future. You will be able to look at your own answered prayers and say, “I know God will, because God has...”

Set Some Goals

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” _Philippians 3:12

Goals are a big part of success orientated living in the twenty-first century. Goal setting is encouraged in business, in physical achievement, in personal development, and so on and so forth.

Goal setting, however, is not a new idea.

In the New Living Translation of God's Word we see the Apostle Paul writing with a goal in mind. For the purpose of following the example of this historic man of God it is imperative to learn what goal Paul was working toward.

“Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of

knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

_Philippians 3:8-11 RSV

“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it (the goal). But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

_Philippians 3:13-14 RSV

Paul's goal—KNOWING CHRIST JESUS, being found IN Him; moving forward, not looking backward, straining to fulfill Christ's call in his

life.

Admirable!

An example worthy of following. Don't you agree?

Moving Forward

Setting some goals that will propel you forward; getting to know Jesus intimately, straining upward toward Christ's call in your own life, is an excellent place to begin.

Remember—it is possible to make excellent progress, but progress does no good if you are going in the wrong direction.

Ask yourself, “How does my Abba, Father, see my progress?”

There is a big difference between the way we see our goals and the way God sees them.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, says
the Lord.*

*For as the heavens are higher than the
earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways*

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

_Isaiah 55:8-10 (RSV)

Ask yourself,

“Do my goals move me forward—toward Christ's call in my life?”

“Do my goals glorify God?”

Discover God's Goal

“For as long, then, as that promise of resting in him pulls us on to God's goal for us, we need to be careful that we're not disqualified. We received the same promises as those people in the wilderness, but the promises didn't do them a bit of good because they didn't receive the promises with faith. If we believe, though, we'll experience that state of resting. But not if we don't

*have faith. Remember that God said,
Exasperated, I vowed, "They'll never
get where they're going, never be able
to sit down and rest." _Hebrews 4:1-3
(MSG)*

The wisdom of the world says, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Although you won't find it put exactly that way in God's Word, there are many stories of both effective and poor planning or goal setting. The Word teaches us that God is a God of both purpose and planning. His purpose is to draw all humanity to himself in order to forgive and redeem his creation. His plan—from Creation, to the Law, to the Prophets, to Jesus and the church—is found by reading and studying the Bible.

Goal setting is a part of everyone's day to day life whether we think of our planning that way or not. Most of us keep a "To Do" list of things we need to accomplish every day, week or month. These lists bring purpose to life and help us to stay focused and on target. The only questions then: does our planning result in resting in God's perfect and eternal plan—his purpose—for us?

The Short List

If you could reduce your entire life to a short list of only three or four things, what would they be?

The top item on that list would probably come close to identifying the purpose of your life.

According to God's Word our purpose is to be inspired by a vision of how God can use us in accomplishing his purpose.

Caleb saw his own purpose and not the strength of his enemies. [Joshua 14:6-15]

While others saw a fearsome giant, David saw an opportunity for God's mighty work. [1 Samuel 17:20-37]

Paul's goal, as we've seen already, was to always honor Jesus and win others to Christ, no matter the personal cost. [Philippians 1:20-24, 3:8-14]

Write three goals you want to offer God?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

For the Long Haul

“Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” _Psalm 119:105

Hall-of-Fame NFL running-back Emmitt Smith recalls a coach and mentor telling him at a young age, “A dream is just a dream until you write it down, then it becomes a goal.” Emmitt's dream , from childhood, was to play for the Dallas Cowboys.

Did this famous athlete submit his goal to Almighty God?

In an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network he said: *“Proverbs 3 and 6, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct*

thy path. Anytime I found myself in a situation, I would lean on that verse.”

If you've never thought about setting goals for your life in Christ, or if you think you've blown your opportunity to be what God planned for you to be—I've got good news for you. You can safely rest in the assurance that you are not *that* powerful. God's plan and call are irrevocable.

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. _Jeremiah 29:11 (TLB)

“For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” _Hebrews 11:29

Write Your Dream

Here are some scriptures that may help you begin

#1 Renew your mind

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

#2 Put on a new attitude

Ephesians 4:22-24 Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

The old nature is the spirit and nature of the world, the spirit and nature of the enemy. Be renewed in the attitude of your mind by renouncing its vanity, its darkness and blindness by learning of Christ. The new you is the spirit and nature of God, in Christ The Greek for renewed is *ananeoō*, the whole course of life now flows in a different direction. The Greek for put on is *endyō*, to sink into (clothing), put on, clothe one's self

#3 Make the most of time

Ephesians 5:15-17, 20 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

As a new creation in Christ, make the most of

every opportunity to glorify the Lord. Don't act thoughtlessly, but try to understand what the Lord wants from you. Seek guidance and direction from the Holy Spirit for each decision, each relationship, each day and hour. Spend time with God every day seeking direction and counsel—writing down what you receive from the Word.

#4 Let His light shine

2 Corinthians 4:3-7 (TLB) *If the Good News we preach is hidden to anyone, it is hidden from the one who is on the road to eternal death. Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him or to understand the amazing message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is God. We don't go around preaching about ourselves but about Christ Jesus as Lord. All we say of ourselves is that we are your slaves because of what Jesus has done for us. For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made us understand that it is the brightness of*

his glory that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

But this precious treasure—this light and power that now shine within us—is held in a perishable container, that is, in our weak bodies. Everyone can see that the glorious power within must be from God and is not our own.

#5 Live a Godly life

God has done his part: see that you do yours

He has by his own action given us everything that is necessary for living the truly good life, in allowing us to know the one who has called us to him, through his own glorious goodness. It is through him that God's greatest and most precious promises have become available to us men, making it possible for you to escape the inevitable disintegration that lust produces in the world and to share in God's essential nature.

For this very reason you must do your utmost from your side, and see that

your faith carries with it real goodness of life. Your goodness must be accompanied by knowledge, your knowledge by self-control, your self-control by the ability to endure. Your endurance too must always be accompanied by devotion to God; that in turn must have in it the quality of brotherliness, and your brotherliness must lead on to Christian love.

If you have these qualities existing and growing in you then it means that knowing our Lord Jesus Christ has not made your lives either complacent or unproductive. The man whose life fails to exhibit these qualities is short-sighted—he can no longer see the reason why he was cleansed from his former sins.

Set your minds, then, on endorsing by your conduct the fact that God has called and chosen you. If you go along the lines I have indicated above, there is no reason why you should stumble, and if you have lived the sort of life I have recommended God will open wide to you the gates of the eternal kingdom

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. _2
Peter 1:3-11 J.B. Phillips New
Testament (PHILLIPS)

As these words from Peter's letter to the early church prove, God is interested in every aspect of your life. As you prayerfully consider the areas where you believe some improvement is needed and set some goals to get you to a better place always remember this one thing...

"...even though we were dead in our sins God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, gave us life together with Christ—it is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved—and has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with him in Christ in the Heavens. Thus he shows for all time the tremendous generosity of the grace and kindness he has expressed towards us in Christ Jesus. It was nothing you could or did achieve—it was God's gift to you. No one can pride himself upon earning the love of God. The fact is that what we are we owe to the hand of God upon us. We are born afresh in Christ,

*and born to do those good deeds which
God planned for us to do.” _Ephesians
2:8-10 J.B. Phillips New Testament
(PHILLIPS)*



Take Some Notes

“Bring the winter coat I left in Troas with Carpus; also the books and parchment note books.” _2 Timothy 4:13

These words, penned nearly two-thousand years ago, tell us that the Apostle Paul, whose written words make up two-thirds of our New Testament, was a note-taker; a journal keeper, a man of letters.

Think of it! Paul wrote God's Word. Paul kept a journal of God's Word!

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, every word in the records we know today as the Holy Bible were written by believers who kept God's Word in their hearts and wrote God's Word in their notes and their letters.

Become a Note Taker

Keeping a personal journal is, of course, first and foremost personal.

Your journal prayers are personal communication between you and your Father and his Son, and they are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Keep in mind as you are writing your prayers, every answer, to every prayer, can be found in God's Word.

So if your prayer concerns your health, or the health of your loved ones writing some notes to strengthen your faith in that area seems like a smart idea.

If your concern is provision, or protection, guidance or direction, remember—God has covered it all in the Word.

Searching for scripture promises pointing to God's answers and making a list of them—writing some notes for future reference—not only strengthens your faith it gives you a record of God's promises that you can find quickly for yourself or to share with others.

Notes To Meet Needs

“And my God will liberally supply (fill until full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

_Philippians 4:19 AMP

“The Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger [God will meet all his needs]... _Proverbs 10:3a AMP

What Are The Five Greatest Needs In Your Life Today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

God, through His Word, has made provision for every situation in the lives of his children.

If you need peace,

“the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].” _ Philippians 4:7 AMP

You can take this promise from God's Word, write yourself a note to help you recall what is yours, and begin to build a list of other verses to prayerfully consider when your peace is not so peaceful.

If you need protection,

*“No weapon that is formed against you will succeed; And every tongue that rises against you in judgment you will condemn. This [peace, righteousness, security, and triumph over opposition] is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And this is their vindication from Me,” says the Lord.”
_Isaiah 54:17 AMP*

No matter what your need, God's has already prepared your answer.

Your personal journal is the perfect place to put this promise of Jesus into action.

“Therefore I tell you, do not be

anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

—“Matthew 6:25-33 (RSV)

Seek first his kingdom - Pray about it.

And his righteousness - Find out what the Word says about it.

And ALL these things (spiritual, physical and emotional - all is ALL you know) shall be yours.

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow evil men's advice, who do not hang around with sinners, scoffing at the things of God. But they delight in doing everything God wants them to, and day and night are always meditating on his laws and thinking about ways to follow him more closely.

They are like trees along a riverbank bearing luscious fruit each season without fail. Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper.

—Psalm 1:1-3 Living Bible (TLB)

God's Answers

Most good Study Bibles will include a Concordance and some cross-references. Being

your search there.

If, for example, you are seeking answers regarding healing look up healing in the Concordance.

Put a bookmark in your place

In your Bible, turn to the first verse listed there

Make a note of the verse and any footnotes that speak to your research—writing it down will imprint the words in your memory

Follow the cross-references for that verse to other verses on the same subject

When you have exhausted the references for the first verse return to the bookmark in your Concordance and follow the second verse to its conclusion.

This process can be applied to any subject, person, place or situation you are interested in learning about. The notes you take will strengthen your understanding and your faith. The notes you take will build a hunger for more and more of God's truth, renewing your thinking and changing your mind; turning you away from the old way of looking at everything.

Listen

To The Lord

*“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.
_Romans 10:17*

Throughout the scriptures God speaks to his people, and yet many Christians today doubt God's desire to speak to them individually. The Word tells us, *“he is the same, yesterday, today and forever.”* That says God has never stopped speaking to his beloved.

So how does one learn to hear God's voice?

As you journal God's Word, get into the scriptures, and develop a desire to hear from the Lord it becomes clear—God speaks through the Word.

God Still Speaks.

God is the same, yesterday, today and forever. Yes, God still speaks to his people.

His people must learn to listen.

In every step of every day, in every issue that we face, we are to rely on the Lord.

Psalm 23 teaches us

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

*he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths
for his name’s sake.”* _Psalm 23:1-3

When God's speaks, faith comes. By faith we trust him to provide all of our needs, lead us, refresh and guide us.

Trying your hardest does not ensure God's grace will work in and through you. Attempting to be passive does not invoke a display of his grace for you. Humbly trusting in the Lord, no matter whether you take action or patiently wait, will always result in God's

grace, and through his grace God speaks.

Listen!

God Is Able

Keeping a journal of daily prayers, study notes, personal goals and “words of grace” develops and strengthens your faith.

God speaks to his people, in the Spirit, about Himself and His ways. He tells us his plans and purposes. He provides insights into reality. He drives away illusions and misconceptions. He offers promises and assurances. As you journal these revelations you'll learn to trust that he will work them in your life. As a result, when you face any situation you can trust that God will be faithful to what he has told you

As your faith and trust mature, as your journaling progresses, you'll look to the Lord in your daily personal issues and God proves Himself ever faithful. Though it all, your reliance continues to grow in response to what the Lord reveals to you and what he has done for you. This is God's grace at work, because his word is... *“The word of his grace.”* _Acts 20:32

Mature Faith

Faith is not something you can produce. Faith results from getting to know the Lord more and more. Paul wrote *“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him.”* Years passed and Paul became more acquainted with the Lord in whom he had first believed. As the relationship grew he learned to rely more and more on Christ. Paul was increasingly convinced of his Master's ability to handle any situation he might encounter. God taught him to lean entirely upon the resources of God's grace.

“Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.” _2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (RSV)

As you mature in journaling God's Word the Lord will work in your heart, giving you a growing appetite for the scriptures. Your faith will develop as you hear and record what you are hearing from him.

so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it. _Isaiah 55:11 (RSV)

You will be transported from thinking as the world thinks.

“...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” _Colossians 1:12-14 (RSV)

Your instinct to always take matters into your own hands will change as you understand, as Paul understood, God's grace is sufficient, and every situation can safely be entrusted to Him.

Don't be a do-it-yourself Christian!

Test

Every Spirit

“Dearly loved friends, don’t always believe everything you hear just because someone says it is a message from God: test it first to see if it really is. For there are many false teachers around,” _1 John 4:1 (TLB)

There is one reservation associated with journaling God’s Word—hearing from the Lord and writing down the message.

John the beloved, exiled on the isle of Patmos, in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, heard the voice telling him, *“Write what you see...”* In other words, write the vision. As a result of his obedience, we have the book of

Revelation.

It is imperative that when writing a personal journal we follow John's instructions to his dearly loved friends—test every spirit—because not everything we hear is a message from God.

Scripture warns of that ancient enemy, the devil, who prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to deceive. We are told he is a liar and was from the beginning.

Eve was deceived, with dire consequences. God, who walked with her in the garden, gave her only one restriction, “do not eat from *that* tree.” And, as we all know, along came the enemy, telling her, “that's not *really* what he meant. God didn't tell you the whole truth. You can *make up your own mind* as to what you will eat.”

Dire consequences!

Listen for the Lord

In 1 Samuel, Chapter 3, God's Word records the most important instructions for journaling the Word.

“And the Lord called Samuel again the

third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears [listens].'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place." _1 Samuel 3:8-9 (RSV)

Notice it does not say, "Listen, Lord, for your servant speaks!"

In this passage, God called Samuel three times before the boy who was to be prophet understood who had called him. In the end the Lord revealed himself to Samuel, "*by the word of the Lord.*"

Listen. But, test every voice.

Jesus, Our Example

In the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 4, we see Jesus the Son of God, led by the Spirit into the wilderness and tempted by the devil.

Be assured, if God incarnate was not immune to the lies of the enemy, neither are you. It falls upon us to recognize that we will also be

tempted.

“If you are a child of God...”

“Use your ability to meet your own needs.”

“Trust your intellect to direct your own steps.”

“Look at all the world has to offer you. Ask for it. Seek after it. Knock on every door.”

Nothing has changed. The world, the flesh and the devil will still whisper to you...”trust in what *you* know.”

Jesus answer?

“It is written!”

It is the duty of the believer to know what God has written.

Find out what God really says about it.

Let the Bible interpret the Bible. Don't rely on what you think you know or what you've heard someone else say. God's Word will not contradict God's Word. The Old Covenant is Jesus Christ concealed. The New Covenant is Christ Jesus revealed.

When you know, the subtleties of the enemy's lies, the old-wives-tales of the world and your own erroneous thinking will not succeed in deceiving you into making Eve's mistake.

Pray for Clarity

With every prayer, every note, every study, ask the Lord for protection, guidance and understanding.

In Psalm 119, the perfect prayer for the journalist can be found.

*Open my eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of your Word - v 18*

*Give me understanding, that I may
keep your Word and observe it with my
whole heart - v 34*

*Teach me good judgment and
knowledge, for I believe in your Word -
v 66*

*Let your steadfast love be ready to
comfort me according to your promise
to your servant - 76*

*Your Word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path - v 105*

Great peace have those who love your Word nothing can make them stumble - v 165

Let my prayer come before you, deliver me according to your Word - v 170

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. - Psalm 19:14

Trust

His Grace

“For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” _1 Corinthians 15:9-11 (RSV)

The Apostle Paul understood that grace is God's undeserved favor. He knew it was mercy when he did not deserve it. He wrote about the grace God extended to him on the road to Damascus—eternal life, in Christ—and that not

of himself but by grace.

As you grow in journaling God's Word, and learn the joys of practicing his presence it will become clear, as it became clear to Paul, **you** don't have to **do** anything to earn God's grace. In fact, grace can not be earned or purchased. Grace must simply be accepted. You begin by believing in Jesus Christ, who purchased life for you at the cross.

God's Son died for your sins so you wouldn't have to. God's ultimate act of grace is an example of how to extend grace to others. On the cross Jesus was quick to forgive, extending life to the thief beside him. Jesus showed kindness and gracious love, even when others deserved exactly the opposite.

Receive His Grace

Grace begins with Christ and is given freely by God. His graciousness to believers is our example for extending grace and mercy to others. It was by God's grace that you were saved.

Grace cannot be earned. It is freely given. You simply receive it with faith and thanksgiving.

[*Psalm 84:11, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:16-17, Hebrews 4:16*]

Grow in Grace

God will never stop working in you to bring you to maturity.

“And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

_ *Philippians 1:6*

“...you should grow in grace and in your knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—to him be glory now and until the dawning of the day of eternity!” _ *2 Peter 3:10-18 (PHILLIPS)*

Because God is not visibly present to the eye, it is sometimes difficult to feel your communication with him is real.

Your personal Journal will, over time, become a very real representation of the exchange with your Heavenly Father, God; your personal Savior, Jesus; and your Comforter, Counselor and Friend, The Holy Spirit.

The record of your prayers and promises will

have the same binding power of a spoken promise to an earthly friend. God's Word will prove to be a certain and sure testimony to his presence with you at all times.

As you grow in the knowledge of God's grace every thought of your soul can be laid before him in prayer as if your eyes could see him across the table from you. As you continue to journal and meditate on his Word you will cease to have vague conceptions of a relationship with God Almighty and feel the force of every word you write in his presence. God IS real!

Grow in Knowledge

“As we know Jesus better, his divine power give us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature.” _2
Peter 1:5-9 (NLT)

Godliness (growing in knowledge of God) is not developed when you work to become more like God but when God works in you. You develop godliness when you allow God to have his way in your life instead of insisting on your own way, even though your way may seem pious and good. As you give yourself to God in a trusting relationship, you come to know God and God is able to fashion you to be more like Christ.

Journaling about the steps of your personal journey along the way builds a timeline of your growth and God's mercy and grace in your life.

Grow IN Christ

Believers can't experience fellowship with Christ when he is on the outside. And that's where he is, before salvation, outside the door of our heart, knocking, wanting to come in and have a relationship with us.

Have you opened that door?

If not, open it now. Everything you will ever need is waiting on the other side.

In Christ there is companionship, devotion,

faithfulness, provision, protection and guidance. God wants to be your very best friend. [Exodus 33:11-23, Psalm 25:14, Proverbs 17:17]

Growing IN Christ means sharing your deepest secrets with the Lord. When God shares his promises with you, you know that he considers you his child.

“Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” _2 Corinthians 5:17 (RSV)

“ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” _Galatians 3:25-29 (RSV)

“... it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...”_Romans 8:16-18 (RSV)

As a child of God, a new creation, and a fellow heir with Christ according to God's promise, you may safely and boldly enjoy companionship, devotion, and communication with God on a very personal level, right here and right now. Every day is a blank page.

Grace and peace to you many times over as you deepen in your experience with God and Jesus Christ, the Savior.

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