



Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline An Overview – with Prompts

Think of journaling as writing a letter to God. Remember that God is always present and journaling is a means of communicating with God in a very personal manner. Journaling is a form of prayer; another way of opening ourselves up to God and allowing the connection to bloom, a way of speaking our concerns and desires to God and listening for the promptings of God's Holy Spirit.

- Journaling may provide a spiritual awakening
- God in the garden of Eden looking for Adam and Eve after they ate the apple, asked: where are you? Your journal gives you a place to show up with God.
- Everything in our lives tends to be hectic – there is something “subversive” about journaling because it calls us to stop, linger, and to look deeper.
- Stress and anxiety – sometimes we know exactly what causes it, other times it is more amorphous and its origin is hard to pin point – journaling gives us a safe space to focus and try to make sense of our feelings. Frame it as a prayerful dialogue with God.
- Write about unpleasant emotions (fear, anger, shame) as well as our joys – what connects us to what is life giving?
- A way of processing our day – most days are full with many sensations and thoughts and feeling and things that happen – journaling gives us a means to make some order out of the input – what lessons for us are contained in this day – where did we particularly feel God present with us

1. The Mechanics of Journaling:

- a. ***Invite the Holy Spirit into the process***
- b. Handwrite or type – whatever feels right to you.
- c. Sometimes our writing is fast and pours out of us; other times the words come more slowly almost like a puzzle that we are slowly solving.
- d. Write our prayers—dialogue with God – affirmations
- e. How often, time of day – timed or until you think you are finished
- f. Set the stage – engage the 5 senses – enhances the experience: comfortable place, colored pens, pretty journals, candle for scent, music, etc.
- g. Do what works for you – it is your journal

- h. Try not to worry about grammar and spelling, but this is your journal – do it your way
- i. Silence your inner critic
- j. Experiment with different journaling subjects – each day can be different
- k. Point is to see if this is a habit that enhances your spiritual life – brings you closer to God
- l. End each journal entry with a blessing.
- m. ***Invite the Holy Spirit into the process***

2. Subjects for journaling: Write intentionally inviting God to read what you are writing – feel free – you can ask for forgiveness and it will be given.

- a. Journal about the events of the day – dialogue with God – as prayer and affirmation
- b. Journal about one blessing you experienced that day
- c. Journal about one sorrow you experienced that day
- d. Journal about the desires of your heart
- e. Keep a gratitude journal for a month
- f. Journal about your life – start with your earliest memory* (more on this next section)
- g. Journal about our reality, e.g. “long, loving look at the real” – journal about your life, your home – walk around your house and each day for a month describe an object you love and why you have it, what does it mean to you and what does it tell you about yourself
- h. Journal about Scripture

*Journaling about yourself – a means of self-discovery and seeing how God has been part of your life every step of the way:

- as you recall events and people, focus on the feelings they evoke in you.
 - did you feel loved, cherished and supported or disliked, ignored, and rejected,
 - empowered and affirmed or diminished and discarded.
 - Begin with Psalm 139: 1 – 18 – spend the first week journaling about this psalm – how it makes you feel about your relationship with God
- a. Journal about the earliest things you know about your life – your conception, gestation, delivery, due date, hospital stay, homecoming
 - b. Journal about your name: who named you, how was your name chosen, are you named after anyone,
 - c. Journal about your birth order in your family of origin and even your extended family
 - d. Your earliest memories of your parents
 - e. Your earliest memories of your siblings

- i. Journal your fondest, best memories of each of your siblings
 - ii. Journal how you hurt each other
 - iii. How you forgave each other
- f. Your earliest memories of your grandparents
- g. Your earliest memories of your aunts, uncles, cousins
- h. Journal about your childhood memories:
 - i. Your neighborhood
 - ii. Friends
 - iii. Elementary school
 - iv. Neighbors
 - v. Favorite things to do
 - vi. Favorite vacations
 - vii. Middle school memories
 - viii. Friends in adolescence
 - ix. High school memories – favorite things, losses
 - x. Teenage friends
 - xi. College memories – favorite things, losses
 - xii. College friends
- i. Journal About adult life & relationships
 - i. Falling in Love
 - ii. Marriages – spouse(s)
 - 1. Divorces
 - 2. deaths
 - iii. Children
 - iv. Work life
 - v. Bosses and co-workers
- j. Journal About adult life (by decade)
 - i. 20s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses
 - 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses
 - ii. 30s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses
 - 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses
 - iii. 40s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses
 - 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses
 - iv. 50s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses

- 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses
- v. 60s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses
 - 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses
- vi. 70s
 - 1. significant events – joys and losses
 - 2. relationships
 - 3. where you lived
 - 4. important memories – joys and losses