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# LEARN HOW TO JOURNAL

For the next 21 days you will be challenged to daily journal your spiritual life. You may ask, "Why do you feel that keeping a journal is so important?" I would answer and tell you from experience that learning to daily journal your walk with Christ will help you to grow.

When you see where you have been and all the challenges and victories that you have had, you will be encouraged. I attribute growth in my spiritual life to the daily recording of life's triumphs and defeats. As I have incorporated this discipline in my life, it has helped me to be accountable to myself and to God.

Keeping a daily journal has taught me to take the time to listen to what God is saying to me. Whether in my prayer time or the my time in God's Word, I have learned that God wants communicates with me. If I will take time to listen, the Holy Spirit will speak to me.

The 21 Day Challenge will help you make a habit of daily spending time with God. For the next twenty-one days you will be encouraged to daily look at four areas.

**INTROSPECTION** - Look back at yesterday

**INSIGHT** - Look into God's Word

**INTERCESSION** - Look out to needs of others

**IMPLEMENTATION** - Application to your life!

These are going to be exciting days of growth for you. God may ask you to make changes in your life. He may ask you to make changes in your lifestyle, relationships, entertainment, time, etc...Are you willing to be obedient? Remember that change is growth and growth means to change.

**Is there a need for change in  
your spiritual life?**

*Make the most of these next 21 days and just  
see what God will do in your life!*

## **INTROSPECTION**

*Look back at yesterday*

Every fall, millions of people watch as talented athletes display their skills on the football field. From bleachers in stadiums to sofas in their living room, these people watch as high school, college and professionals exhibit their talent on the gridiron.

Not many of these athletes will reach the place of a professional, but that is what dreams are made of. Those athletes that have seen their careers progress from sandlot to stadiums, are called professionals. The very cream of the crop.

For years they have played a game that they love. Playing football takes much conditioning and work,

*Notes*

both on and off the field. For them, football is more than a sport, it is their profession. Their career seems to ride on every snap of a pigskin. Fans and coaches intently watch every move, evaluating their performance or lack of it.

For the professional football player, Tuesday is the day that they start preparation for their opponent. For many it is a dreaded day. It is the time when you sit down to view the game film and relive the missed block, the ball that you should have caught, the fumble that you had in your hands and somehow it slithered away. You even get to see the blown coverage assignment that resulted in a touchdown for the other team.

As you watch, it causes you to look back. It is too late to change what has already happened, because there is no instant replay to reverse the failure of the moment. The looking back helps you to evaluate your performance and see the areas that you need to improve.

That is what introspection is all about. An evaluation of your life. Your thoughts, relationships, decisions, time, entertainment, etc. "How did I handle a particular situation and how will I handle it the next time I am faced with it"? Introspection is just simply taking inventory of life's failures and victories. Both the good calls and the bad calls!

I believe that as you learn to daily introspect your life, this process will become less and less painful. Let's learn to be honest with who we are, then we can work at becoming who God wants us to be. You will learn to reflect on your failures and rejoice in your victories.

In Philippians 3:14 Paul said it this way,

*"But this one thing I do; Forgetting what is behind and straining on to what is ahead, I press toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

The next two areas that we are going to look at are Insight and Intercession. These two areas deal with reading and studying God's Word and prayer. The essence of a growing and exciting Christian life is learning to feed yourself.

Many people that enter the doors of a house of worship do not know how to feed themselves. Oh, they know how to physically feed themselves but spiritually they are starving.

If you have ever had children, you know it is a chore to feed them. From the time that little one comes into the world, they will let you know when it is time to eat. If you don't have the milk ready, they just don't understand the word patience.

As they leave that stage of life they progress to the place where you are feeding them all of the healthy things...like spinach and carrots. (You know...that stuff that you won't even taste!) Before long, instead of you feeding them, they want to grab the spoon and start feeding themselves. When that happens, there is food everywhere, on their bib, sleeves, hands, the highchair tray. What a mess!

After you go through these different stages, it is a great day when you can sit down for the evening meal and they feed themselves without food going everywhere.

It takes time and patience for this process of learning to feed yourself. It takes practice to learn to use the spoon instead of the fingers. We work at it until we master it and then eating becomes a natural part of our day.

Each of us need to learn from the preaching of God's Word to apply the message we hear on Sunday. But you, as a growing Christian, need to learn to feed yourself from God's Word and learn to communicate with God on a daily basis.

**Spiritual growth will happen when  
you learn to feed yourself!**

### **Can you go all week without food?**

If you don't eat food, you will soon become physically weak. I believe that if you have very little spiritual food intake, you will become spiritually weak.

## **INSIGHT**

*Look into God's Word*

**What does it say?**

This is time to look at what God's Word is saying.

- Who are the characters involved?
- What is the setting?
- What are the principles that are being taught?
- Does this passage say something that I don't understand?
- Is it convicting or affirming me?
- Is it a warning?
- Is it giving advice?
- Is it a promise?
- Is this an "if" and "then" passage?

You may need to look up words that you don't understand to have a better comprehension of their meaning. It may be helpful for you to look at the comparisons and contrasts of the passage that you are reading. It will be very helpful for you to learn to ask yourself questions like: Who? What? When? Why? and Therefore. Ask God to help you understand what you are reading.

### **What does it mean?**

*Ask yourself questions like...*

- *God, what is it that You want me to learn?*
- *How does what I read affect my attitude and actions?*
- *God, are You dealing with my thought life?*
- *Does this address my relationship with You? with my spouse? with others?*
- *What does this say about how I manage my time?*
- *God, are You speaking to me about...?*
- *Is there a habit in my life that I need to break or make?*
- *God, are You dealing with my faithlessness?*

Ask yourself questions that will make you really think about what you have read. God will give you insight into His Word and how you can apply it to your daily life.

## **INTERCESSION**

*Look out for the needs of others*

### **What is intercession?**

Webster's Dictionary defines it like this:

*"Prayer, petition, or entreaty in favor of another".*

Intercession simply means to pray and petition God for others. Pray for their needs, hurts and concerns. Pray for their salvation. Pray for God's blessing on their life and home. Cry out to God...not for you but for others.

**In Matthew 6:9-13** Jesus teaching in the "Sermon on the Mount" says:

*"This is how you should pray...Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

Then we finish the prayer that Jesus taught like this:

*"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, amen!"*

**James 5:16** says,

*"The prayer of a righteous man is effective and powerful."* (NIV) **Prayer works!**

**In Matthew 6:9**, Jesus teaches what is known as "The Lord's Prayer." Dr. Larry Lea, has written a book called "Could You Not Tarry One Hour" and breaks this prayer into six areas.

**"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name"**

When you begin to pray, recognize and enter God's presence with adoration for who God is, rather than just thank Him for all He has done.

He is our **Righteousness**.

He is our **Sanctifier**.

He is an **Ever Present God**.

He is our **Peace**.

He is our **Provider**.

He is our **Banner**.

He is our **Shepherd**.

**"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done"**

Ask God to establish His Kingdom in your life. Pray that your plans, priorities and purposes are His Will for your life. Pray that His Will be accomplished in your life and that His Kingdom is established in your life.

**"Give us this day our daily bread"**

Pray for God's provision to meet your every need, whether it is emotional, physical, financial or spiritual. Whatever needs you have, God is able to provide for you.

**"And forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors."**

Ask God to forgive you of those grudges that you hold against people in your life that are hard to forgive. Pray that God will give you a right attitude toward people, all the time.

**"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"**

Pray that God will place a hedge of protection around you and your family, and that you will be prepared for the attacks of the enemy.

**"For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory."**

Just spend time worship and thanksgiving to God for who He is and all that He has done and will do, in and through your life today.



Learn to spend time talking to God everyday. Bring your petitions and praise to Him. Intercede for those particular people on your Weekly Prayer Strategy. (Page 58) Learn to not only talk to God, but to listen to what He is saying to you.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### *Application to my life*

How can I implement what God has revealed to me in my time of introspection, insight and intercession? What can I do today to apply the truths of God's Word to my daily life? What have I learned that will help me face what life will deal me today? When can I tell someone what God is doing in my life?

Let God implant the truths of His Word into your heart and life. Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in your daily living. Let the things God has shown you in your time with Him work in your life today.

## IDENTIFICATION

### *Scripture Memorization*

Identification is a very important part of **The 21 Day Challenge**. The Psalmist said it this way: "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." If there is a key to not sinning it is hiding God's Word in your heart.

**What was the last scripture that your memorized?**

Do your remember how much easier it was for you to memorize when you were younger? That is no excuse! It is very important that we continue to hide God's Word away in our hearts. That way, when we need a scripture, God can bring it to our remembrance.

If you never put anything into a computer, you cannot ever expect to get anything out of that computer. If you never discipline yourself to memorize God's Word, when you need a scripture to fight the enemy, it will not be there in your memory.

**The 21 Day Challenge** will challenge you to hide the Word of God in your heart. If you were to memorize one scripture a day, for 21 days you would have put to memory 21 verses. You will be given a scripture every day, to challenge you for these 21 days to memorize God's Word. Some of these scriptures you will need to just refresh your memory, while others may be new to you. Work at hiding the Word in your heart.

## INSPIRATION

*Be a note-taker*

For the past 15 years I have been a note-taker. For almost everyone that I have heard speak, there are notes in my files. The question that you may ask is why? It is because I cannot remember all the things that the preacher has said. When I take notes, I am not only hearing it, but also writing it down on paper. That helps me to understand what I am hearing.

The real benefit is when I go home I can study what God has said to me through His messenger. The message becomes alive, because I am actively looking for what God wants to communicate to me as I listen to His servant.

**Don't just be a hearer of the  
Word...Be an applier!**

**They tell us that after 72 hours we remember:**

- 10% of what we *HEAR*
- 30% of what we *READ*
- 50% of what we *HEAR AND READ*
- 90% of what we *HEAR, READ and DO*

When you take notes listen for the outline. Then take the key thoughts, quotes, verses and ideas and insert them in the outline. At the conclusion of the message, ask God to help you to apply what you have heard to your life.

If you have never been a note-taker, it will revolutionize your life. If it is true that you only retain 10 percent of what you hear, just think of all the good things that you are forgetting.

Just think of all you can learn if you hear it, write it, read it and do it! Take your notes at the end of the

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