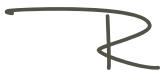


How to use this journal

As you use this journal, use the acronym “R.E.A.P.” to help you focus on what you’re learning.



Read

As you prepare to read, first take a moment and prepare your heart and focus your mind with a simple prayer. “Lord, here I am ...”



Examine

What is the context, who is talking, who are they talking to, what issue is being addressed, etc.? Ask the basic questions of who, what, where, when, why and how. Then finally, what did I learn?



Apply

How does this apply to my life? How do I need to live?



Pray

You should view your time in the Word as a conversation, not a monologue. God speaks to you through His Word, but as in any conversation, deeper understanding and levels of communication occur in the context of a back and forth dialogue.

You need to read with a pen in hand, writing comments, asking questions, making application and jotting down names in the margin of the Bible. Underline key words. Circle things that jump out at you. Draw arrows to show correlation. As you talk with God and converse with Him in your heart and with His Word, spiritual truth and the voice of God come alive.

What should I look for when I read?

As you read, keep your eyes open for lessons to be learned, people to imitate, promises to claim or truths to base your life upon. When you are ready to write in the journal, use these guidelines to organize your thoughts:

First, what did you learn? This would include what the writer was saying and what God told you during your time of reading. These comments don’t tend to be personal but will be more general in nature. This is just the raw truth laid out in the Word.

Next focus on your life — how should you live based on what you learned? This is where you turn your writing more toward what you need to do in your life to claim, confess, correct or complete what God said to you. Then you may write briefly about how you can lead others to better understand God or point them to Christ.

The final part of your writing is your prayer. Prayer is conversation with God, and in this journal, you will talk to God on paper. Make confessions to God, ask for help from God, thank Him. Whatever it is that you want to say to God based on what you have just read and the conversation you just completed, let it flow from your pen to the paper into the presence of God.



Daily Journal Sample Entry



DATE: March 18

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 42:1

R As the deer pants for the water brook, so my soul pants for you, O God.

S Psalm 42 is a Psalm of desire. David is thirsty for God, hungry for God. There was a day and time when David enjoyed God's presence. But that day is gone. Now David feels distant from God as much as he is physically removed from Jerusalem. In this Psalm, he pours out his heart to God, and finds hope in believing that he will again praise Him and be near to Him. Taking this hope lifted David's spirits and sustains his soul in the desert place.

A I can truly relate to what this Psalm says. There are some seasons of my life when God seems silent. His presence feels removed. I'm living life, going through the motions, but there doesn't seem to be any real presence of the Lord in my life. I've found that I can live like that temporarily, but then I miss God. I miss the voice, the presence, the sense of his nearness and favor. I begin to long for God; to thirst for Him; to desire Him as much as anything in life. I suppose some ebb and flow is to be expected in my faith walk. But like David, I want more flow than ebb.

P God I pray that your silence and absence from me will leave me quickly. Don't let me grow complacent or satisfied to live without your nearness. Father help me to tune out the voices that whisper despair — that tell me I'm forgotten, left, abandoned and forever alone. Take these voices from my head and fill me with the voices of your word. God be my desire — Lord would you increase my longing for you? Make me pant and thirst for you. Be the desire of my heart and soul. When I cry out to you, satisfy me, come to me, draw near, restore to me the joy of my salvation, don't take your presence from me, sustain me with a willing spirit.