

Journaling: A Spiritual Discipline

by Rev. Mark Muckler

A Biblical Foundation

One of the most important reasons we journal is to **remember the goodness of God**. In Scripture, we see the use of memorial stones as a way to recall what God has done ([Joshua 4:7](#)). The Bible itself is a collection of testimonies—written by faithful witnesses—intended to be shared so that others might know, believe, and be encouraged. From the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament apostles, God inspired people to write down His work in the world so it could be remembered and passed on from generation to generation, all in an effort to continue to tell others that the same God that was at work then, is the same God who is at work in our lives today, and the same God who will continue to be at work in our lives in the days yet to come. And such intentionality to be reflective gives us hope in the present time and in our future. Again, the most important purpose and reason to journal is to **remember the goodness of God**.

[Personal Reflection]

My own journey in writing began as a way to leave a testimony for my kids. I want them to see—not just hear—that God is real, active, and faithful. What started as newsletters to ministry partners evolved into blogs, social media posts, and eventually, audio and voice-to-text journaling. But at its core, my goal has always been the same: to tell the story of how God is at work in our family so that my children—and others—might know of His goodness and trust Him even more

Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline

Journaling isn't about crafting perfect sentences or being a skilled writer—it's about honestly expressing your heart before God. It can hold your thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, prayers, and reflections on His work in your life. Just as Scripture calls us to "[pray without ceasing](#)" - [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#), journaling invites us to continually notice and respond to God's presence and activity. It becomes a tool for listening, remembering, and deepening our walk with Him. Like all spiritual disciplines, journaling may flourish in some seasons and take a quieter role in others. Nonetheless, in whichever way you feel led to remember the goodness of God, remember often.



Getting Started

If you've never tried journaling before, start simply—just get your thoughts on paper. That might look like bullet points, lessons learned, favorite quotes, Bible verses, notes from a sermon, or even a folded sheet tucked in your Bible for the occasional doodle. When you feel ready to go deeper, here are some practical tips to help you begin:

What you might need:

- A pen you enjoy writing with (plus a backup) or a mechanical pencil.
- A Bible translation you can easily understand.
- A Journal—notebook, pad, or bound book—something with pages

Choose a journal that's both sturdy and portable, one you'll be glad to carry with you. Above all, don't see journaling as a chore. Instead, embrace it as a meaningful way to grow in your walk with Christ and as a treasured record of God's faithfulness in your life.

Practical Applications for Journaling

Listed below are a view ideas of some of the types of journaling you might consider. Feel free to use one journal or create different ones for different purposes. Again, the overarching purpose is to reflect upon the goodness of God.

PRAYER JOURNAL: Write out your prayer requests and conversations with God. Consider putting a date next to your entries as a way to remember how and when God responds over time—how God has not only heard your prayers, but if and when and even how they've been answered. It's always encouraging to look back and see God's faithfulness. And as you flip back through your prayer journal from time to time, place a "star" or a special marking next to all your "answered prayers." I trust that you'll be blessed in knowing that not only have your prayers been heard, but God has been and continues to be at work in your life. You'll be reminded again and again that God has heard you, that He is at work, and that His goodness is woven throughout your life—a powerful and visual testimony to His faithfulness!



Practical Applications for Journaling (con't)

PRAYER JOURNAL (continued) For Example: During the COVID pandemic, I hung a dry erase board in our kitchen where our family could jot down prayer requests. That season turned out to be a time of great change for us, including a move from one community to another. Many prayers filled that board during those months. A month or two after our move, I unpacked the box containing that same dry erase board—and to my joy and amazement, nearly every single request had been answered. Praise the Lord!

Consider keeping a “**PRAISE JOURNAL**” dedicated to celebrating God’s provision, blessings, and miracles—both big and small. Inspired by Joshua 4, I like to record “memorial moments” that help me remember what God has done in my life and in the lives of others. You might choose to blend your praise and prayer journal into one, marking answered prayers as mentioned earlier, or you could keep a separate Praise Journal altogether. The format is up to you—just find what helps you best remember and rejoice in God’s faithfulness.

You might also try keeping a “**THANKFUL JOURNAL**” (for lack of a better name). If you sense the need to grow in gratitude for God’s blessings—or if you’ve been battling bitterness or a negative outlook—this simple practice can be a gift to your soul. Each night before bed, write down three things you’re thankful for. “God I thank you for ...” They can go in your journal, on a notepad, or even on a sticky note. Then, take a moment to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for each one. Do this for a week and notice how your heart shifts toward praise. Challenge yourself to list three **different** things each day, and extend the practice to a month, six months, or longer. Over time, not only will your own spirit be transformed, but others will begin to see and hear God’s praises overflowing from your life. This kind of journaling becomes a beautiful testimony to the goodness of God.



Practical Applications for Journaling (con't)

A BLESSING RING: Years ago, my wife and I were given something called a “Blessing Ring.” It’s not a journal in the traditional sense—no bound pages or lined paper—but rather a collection of tangible reminders of God’s goodness. The Blessing Ring is a large hoop, about twelve inches across, with a clasp so you can add items to it—like a giant key ring. Onto this ring, you can place anything that reminds you of how blessed you are: pieces of paper, photographs, letters, check stubs, postcards, quotes, poems, or even small tokens or gifts you’ve received. (*ex: a car key for a car that we were given, or a house key reminding of a parsonage we’d lived in our a beach or mountain house we were blessed to go to on vacation for free*)...

Ours came with printed instructions on card stock that read something like this:

“Each time someone encourages or congratulates you in word or action, place it on your ring—it may be a card, letter, postcard, token, quote, poem, newspaper or magazine clipping, or photo. Punch a hole in it and add it to your Blessing Ring. Hang it somewhere visible in your home as a reminder that you are loved by God and to count your blessings.”

We now have several Blessing Rings hanging in our home. At the end of each year, we love looking back through that year’s ring—and even revisiting past ones—remembering the countless ways the Lord has blessed us. It has truly become a beautiful, tangible way for us to “count our blessings.”

MUSIC JOURNAL: For those who connect deeply with music or poetry, you might be inspired to write lyrics, prayers, or even your own psalms that reflect your emotions and spiritual insights. With the Spirit’s leading, you can then try setting those words to music. The biblical Psalms are a wonderful starting point, offering rich examples of heartfelt expression.

Poetry and song give us unique ways to shape our faith through word choice, rhythm, and tone. Just as words convey emotion, so do musical styles, instruments, and melodies. A joyful hymn can stir celebration, a gentle and contemplative song can draw us into prayer, and an upbeat praise song can boldly proclaim God’s glory. Each becomes a beautiful act of worship.



Practical Applications for Journaling (con't)

SCRIPTURE STUDY JOURNAL: Use this type of journal to explore a specific verse, passage, theme, or topic in Scripture. For instance, you might meditate on **Luke 10:27**—“**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength**”—and reflect on what each part of that commandment truly means. Or you could journal your thoughts while reading through one of the Gospels or Paul’s letters, recording what you’re learning and how it’s speaking to you. Your entries could be as detailed as reflections after each chapter, or as simple as a few notes on particular verses or stories. In a way, this becomes your own personal commentary on Scripture—or a written record of how you’re applying the “living Word of God” to your life.

For this type of journaling, you might use a Bible with wide margins for note-taking, or explore spiritual practices like **Lectio Divina** and Ignatian Meditation. (See our website for more on these approaches.)

SERMONS & TEACHING NOTES: You might use this type of journal while attending church services, small groups, conferences, or seminars. In it, you can jot down key points, Scripture references, and questions that challenge or inspire you. Over time, it becomes a rich resource for future spiritual growth and a record of God’s goodness as revealed through the preaching and teaching of others. I’ve even seen sermon notes inserts placed in 3-ring binders.

STILLNESS “4610” JOURNAL: **Psalm 46:10** says, “**Be still and know that I am God.**” As you engage in the spiritual discipline of Silence & Solitude, (perhaps outdoors) you may consider journaling your experience(s). You may simply sit in silence during your designated quiet time and write what you notice around you—the beauty and wonder of God’s creation, your thoughts, feelings, or impressions. You may even sketch with a pencil something you’ve seen. You may want to include photos, leaves, or small mementos to help remember special “God-moments.”

A Stillness Journal may also be one in which while you are still you engage in the experiences of God through all of your senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. And as you experience and embody the goodness of God through your senses, considered writing those reflections down.



Practical Applications for Journaling (con't)

TRAVEL & RETREAT JOURNAL: You may consider keeping a journal when traveling, especially on mission trips, retreats, spiritual pilgrimages, etc. For some people, breaking away from the normal and daily routine of work and home, they're more apt to being open to hear from God. So consider taking a journal with you to reflect upon your what you sense God is revealing to you.

For example, when on a Spiritual Pilgrimage to Israel, or exploring the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul in Greece, journaling may help you to reflect deeply on walking in the very places Jesus walked, and where Paul walked.

You may consider complimenting your writing with photography and video, capturing how God reveals Himself through geography, history, architecture, archeology, creation, the culture, and other people. My father (a photographer) used to tell me, "A picture is worth a thousand words". There's nothing quite like visually capturing the goodness of God in a photograph or video.

Final Thoughts

There are no rules in journaling other than our intentions be to reflect and to remember the goodness of God. The only boundary is to not let it become a chore or a burden. Use the **Spiritual Discipline of Journaling** as a creative, honest, and sacred space to reflect on your journey with Christ.

Whether you're writing prayers or books, taking notes, sketching scenes, making music, or recording memories via photography and video—may it draw you closer to the heart of God, knowing, trusting, and believing more and more, that

God is Good, & God is Faithful

