**JOURNALING . . . “FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS”**

**Selected Texts**

“That there is a crying need for the recovery of the devotional life cannot be denied. If anything characterizes modern Protestantism, it is the absence of spiritual disciplines or spiritual exercises. Yet such disciplines form the core of the life of devotion. It is not an exaggeration to state that this is the lost dimension in modern Protestantism” (Donald Bloesch). One of the seldom-practiced but very valuable Spiritual Disciplines is journaling. Though not commanded in Scripture, God has blessed its use since Biblical times. Journaling is one way to express the pursuit of Christlikeness commanded in 1 Timothy 4:7: “Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.”

1. **EXPLANATION OF JOURNALING**

A journal is a book in which a person may keep a variety of things, including a record of the works and ways of God in his life, of daily events, of personal relationships, of insights into Scripture, of prayer requests, of his feelings about and responses to these things, and the interpretation of all these from his own spiritual perspective. The Bible itself contains many examples of God-inspired journals. Many Psalms are records of David’s personal spiritual journey with the Lord. The journal of Jeremiah’s feelings about the fall of Jerusalem we call Lamentations. A journal not only promotes spiritual growth by means of its own virtues but it’s also a valuable aid to the other Spiritual Disciplines as well.

1. **VALUE OF JOURNALING**
   1. **It helps in self-understanding and evaluation (Rom. 12:3)**
   2. **It helps in meditating on the Lord and His Word (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3)**
   3. **It helps in expressing one’s deepest thoughts and feelings to the Lord (Ps. 62:8b)**
   4. **It helps in remembering the works of the Lord (Ps. 77:11-12)**
   5. **It helps in creating and preserving a spiritual heritage (Deut. 6:4-7; 2 Tim. 1:5)**
   6. **It helps in clarifying and articulating insights and impressions (1 Pet. 3:15)**
   7. **It helps in monitoring goals and priorities (Phil. 3:12-16)**
   8. **It helps in maintaining the other spiritual disciplines (1 Tim. 4:7)**
2. **WAYS OF JOURNALING**

“Your way of keeping a journal is the right way. . . . There are no rules for keeping a journal! . . . If you make journal-writing a painstaking exercise in perfection, you probably will not keep it up for long” (Ronald Klug, *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal*).

As a starting entry for each day, try listing the one verse or idea from your Bible reading that impressed you most. Meditate on that for a few minutes, then record your insights and impressions. From there consider adding recent events in your life and your feelings and responses to them, brief prayers, joys, successes, failures, quotations, etc.

***MORE APPLICATION***

1. ***As with all the Disciplines, journaling can be fruitful at any level of involvement with it.***
2. ***As with all the Disciplines, journaling requires persistence through the dry times.***
3. ***As with all the Disciplines, journaling must be started in order to experience its value.***

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