

Hints and Tips on How to Journal

A journal isn't primarily a diary of events, but rather a personal tool to aid reflection. Through journaling we monitor what is going on in our lives. Like all tools it helps to find the one that most fits our purposes.

- Some keep a journal on a daily basis, but others do it weekly, monthly, or occasionally.
- Some use a computer or tablet, others use paper and pen, often buying a particularly nice 'journal' (and some even using a particular pen!).
- Some write prose, others write down bullet points.
- Some draw, paint or sketch, others write poetry, Psalms or songs.
- Some write prayers (in fact some write all their prayers), others copy out key quotes.
- Some take five minutes, others much longer.

There is no one way of doing it, the key is to find a way that works for you.

Here are some suggestions of what to cover in a journal:

- **Meditation on the Scriptures** What is God saying to me at this time and what am I going to do about it?
- **Reflection on life** What am I enjoying/struggling with? Why? What am I learning?
- **Self-reflection on our mood, attitudes, feelings, health, stress, dreams** What I've thought and felt, the highs and lows of the day, ways I've experienced change within myself.
- **A record of spiritual experiences** Ways I've been aware of God's presence, what this might mean.
- **Working through relational issues** How to engage with a particular person, why I struggle in particular relationships, coming to terms with a bereavement.
- **Saying things to God** Hopes, longings, dreams, worries, anxieties, fears.
- **Pondering problems** Decisions I'm concerned about, discerning God's perspective on life and seeking his will for the future.

You may also like to use the following four questions:

- What is the next step in my relationship with God?
- What is the next step in the development of my character?
- What is the next step in my relational life?
- What is the next step in my work?



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IS NOT WORTH LIVING.'
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THE 22 QUESTIONS OF JOHN WESLEY'S HOLY CLUB

Over 200 years ago when Charles and John Wesley were students at Oxford University, they started a small group that met for regular prayer, Bible study, and discipleship. In their private devotions, they would use these questions to 'methodically' examine their spiritual lives to help them be spiritually accountable in the faith and encourage growth in their commitment to Christ. This became the beginning of the Methodist movement.

John Wesley asked himself these questions every day and recorded his responses in a journal in order that he could grow spiritually. How might a commitment to this kind of honest examination of your spiritual life sharpen your commitment to Christ? How might this kind of spiritual accountability impact the mission of Christ in the world?

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I go to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not like other people?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

