



Scripture Journaling

Laying the Groundwork:

FIRST: We need to better understand God's will. (Matthew 6:7-10)

7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9"This, then, is how you should pray:

" 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
10your kingdom come, your **will** be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let's not babble like the pagans and pray self-centered prayers that totally miss the mark. For us to be more effective in our prayer-life and to be more effective for God, we need to know his will. We must know about him and we must know what is important to him.

SECOND: The Word of God transforms our lives and helps us know the will of God. (Romans 12:2)

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what **God's will is**—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The more we truly understand and meditate on the Word of God, the more we will know about God's will.

THIRD: The importance of God's Word. (1 Tim. 3:16-17)

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We must allow God's Word to teach us, to correct us, and to train us so that we can actually be used by God.

Common “Quiet Time” Experience:

Have you ever sat down to read the Bible, read a chapter or two and then realized that you didn't really take any notice of what you were reading? Have you ever felt like the Bible wasn't making any sense or not applicable to your life? You are not alone. Many people have a lot of trouble understanding, retaining and applying what they read in the Bible. I was the poster-child for this situation for most of my life. The result was a life that was slowly, at best, being changed and truly lived for God's glory.

How to Study God's Word on Purpose:

Scripture

In-sight

Pray-er

Scripture Journaling, using what I call the SIP acronym, is a process that I find useful. The method is simply a matter of following the letters of the word sip: **S**cripture, **I**n-sight, and **P**ray-er. I adapted the SIP method from the more prevalent SOAP method (Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer). I find it most effective when you work through a book of the Bible, reading a different chapter each time (I recommend daily). This keeps the passages in context and helps ensure more accurate interpretation. In fact, I think it is best that before starting a new book of the Bible to read it through in its entirety in one sitting.

What you need - You will need a Bible, a pen and something to write in. Use a journal to keep your reflections together. I actually use the computer and type my SIP into an ongoing MS Word document. I also occasionally will publish portions of my journal / SIPs to my blog at www.TransformedDaily.com.

Scripture - Read the chapter that you have chosen. Don't skim over it or read it too fast. Try to enter into what you are reading. Remember that this is God's Word and he has something to say to you. You may need to read it two or three times. When a verse, phrase or word stands out or catches your attention, write it down in your journal.

Insight - What is it about that verse or that phrase or word that struck you? What is it that seemed to catch your attention? What insight or observation do you actually want to write down? What might this verse have meant to the original writer or reader (it is important to understand the context)? Write your insights of the verse in your journal. And then, how does your insight impact you? How should that thought, that observation, that insight, actually change you? Are you challenged or convicted? Good. God isn't speaking to you to just increase your information; he's speaking to reveal his will and bring about transformation. He wants your life to grow, to develop, to change. Again, write your thoughts down. What might God be saying to you through this verse? What action will you take as a result of what you are hearing from God in this way? *CAUTION: make sure your insight and actions line up with the whole Bible: context is so important.*

Prayer - Respond to God with a prayer. Tell him how you feel about what you've read, tell him what you think. Ask him to help you as you seek to apply it to your life. Ask for guidance as you act upon it. You may even want to pray the scripture itself. If the scripture is convicting you to change or repent, ask God for his grace to empower you as you turn to live for his will. (*Titus 2:11-12*)

Additional Thoughts:

If you are having problems understanding something or really want to dig deeper into the scripture, read different translations of the Bible. I also suggest reading a good Bible commentary that will help provide proper context to the passages you are meditating on (*Matthew Henry's, Gordon Fee, JC Ryle & use BibleGateway.com*). I know that prayer is the third item in the process. However, you need to start your SIP with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the Truth and to speak to you through this scripture.

This process is going to last more than 5 minutes. But we are not looking to do the minimum for God and our relationship with him. Let's invest in knowing God and his will for our lives. I find it particularly important to give God my first fruits and meditate on his word first-thing daily. Put on the armor of God. Don't go into battle naked and vulnerable.

Scripture journaling is usually done individually, but can also be incorporated into a group environment. As a group, pick a common passage and report back what you've written at the end of an agreed time.

EXAMPLE SIP:

January 27, 2007

1 Tim 4:7-8	7Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly . 8For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things , holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.
Insight	The word that jumped out at me was train. This is a call to action, commitment, perseverance, and dedication. I am reminded of the popular saying in athletic training, especially weight training, "no pain – no gain." To grow our muscles and our cardiovascular abilities we must, at frequent times, push them to the limit. This process is usually very uncomfortable and even hurts in the beginning, but after a period of time the body gets used to the process and actually craves the training. Training also involves a healthy diet of putting into yourself the good stuff and not the bad stuff. Paul is making this comparison of physical training to spiritual (godly) training. The process of growing in Christ, in holiness, in righteousness, and in godliness requires training. It seldom just happens; it takes action. However, just like physical training, it can be uncomfortable and outright painful at times. But, it is when we push through this pain and persevere that we experience the growth and ultimately the victory. Here's some good news, we do not have to go through this training on our own. We have a personal trainer: Jesus. He has developed our training program and is with us every step of the way encouraging us, spotting us, and lifting us up when we fall.
Prayer	Thank you Lord. Help me breakthrough to the next level of spiritual fitness. I need your help. I call on your strength. I am tired and find myself slowing down at times. Please help me push through and persevere. Pour out your grace on me.