

## The Practice of Journaling

### A Pathway for Drawing Closer to God

Journaling is a tool that helps us to pay attention to the presence, work and Word of God in our lives. It is a process that involves listening, reflecting, writing, and praying. It is a heart level engagement with God, His Word and the events in our lives. Journaling is not intended to be just an intellectual exercise.

#### Listening

The practice of journaling is not simply an attempt to write a lot of words that describes the events of the day. It is rather a listening process that seeks to hear God in order to discern the meaning and purpose of events and our reactions to those events.

#### Reflecting

To reflect is to consider. It is an exploration of thoughts, ideas, feelings or events. When we reflect, we weigh and ponder in order to discover. We chew on an idea, turning it over and over in our minds. We take a thoughtful look at where and how God is at work, and why He has said certain things. It is a search for meaning. This is the biblical concept of meditation. (Psalm 119.15)

#### Writing

Writing is the process that identifies, clarifies, and records the inner landscape of your heart as you listen and reflect. Writing is a way to sort out your thoughts and feelings which are often a messy mixture. Writing is a way to recognize the unspoken inner thoughts in order to understand them.

#### Praying

Journaling is a continuous dialogue with God. It is a conversation between your heart and God's heart. Journaling takes place in the presence of God with a desire to draw near to Him.

## The Benefits of Journaling

There are several benefits to journaling that make it a worthwhile practice to develop.

- ◆ It helps to bring clarity to your spiritual journey.
- ◆ Writing helps to slow down your thought process, and allows you to target a particular idea or thought.
- ◆ Journaling will help you to remember. Your journal serves as a record of your conversations and encounters with God. Over time, your journal reveals the great movements of God in your life and important themes of spirituality.
- ◆ Journaling helps you to see the areas of faith in which you need help.

## How to Practice Journaling

- ◆ Take a minute to relax and prepare to meet with the Lord
- ◆ Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and to make your time fruitful.
- ◆ Read a passage in the Bible, or Mentally review your day or Choose a theme or question you have been thinking about
- ◆ From the above, what stirs your heart? Pay attention to your positive and negative feelings. Often the Holy Spirit uses them to point out certain things in our lives and the areas in which He wants to work.
- ◆ Write your thoughts and feelings about these things. Take time to listen. What is God saying to you? What is your response? Be open and honest. Stay in a spirit of prayer.