

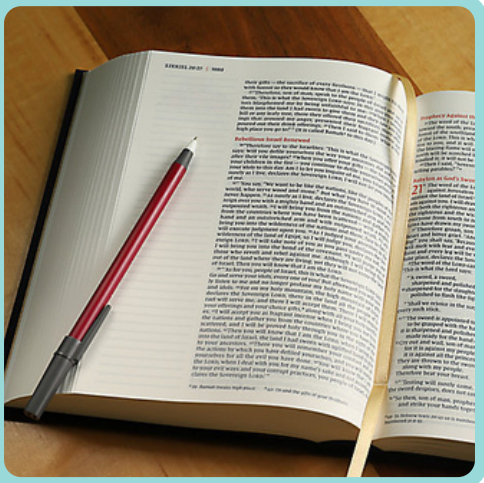
Bible Journaling

DAY 23

Bible journaling is such a fun, creative way to connect with Scripture. And if you don't know what Bible journaling is, it is writing, highlighting, and marking up the pages of your Bible. Some people will even paint, draw or sketch within the pages of their Bible.

This is a method that helps you to get deep into scripture and make it real and applicable to your life and what you're going through.

This is such a cool method because you are creating a resource for yourself as you continue to study Scripture, but you are also creating a legacy for your family. You can pass that Bible down with all the wisdom God has given you right in the pages for generations to learn from. What an awesome gift.



Gather Supplies

Journaling Bible

The first thing you're going to need is a Journaling Bible. I'm using the ESV Single Column Journaling Bible that has these nice wide margins on each side, so plenty of space to write. Most major translations have a journaling Bible or note-taking Bible. Basically, you just need a Bible with space to journal.

Blank Journal

You can also grab a blank journal if you run out of room or want to journal deeper on something God is teaching you.

Highlighters

I use gel ones from The Daily Grace, Co. and I highly recommend them, they don't bleed through the pages or smear, and they last forever. I've had mine for about 5 years, and they are still going strong.

Something to write with

I personally use sharpie pens, but you can use any pen. I recommend something with a fine tip that doesn't smear.

Extra-Biblical Resources

I personally use a study Bible in a different translation, so mine is the NIV Life Application Study Bible and those are great for getting the background and historical, cultural, and Biblical context as well as cross-references and character notes, maps, all the things.

Commentary

StudyLight.org is a great resource and I use their verse-by-verse commentary when I am studying.

Book & Background

You can Bible journal through any passage, but do so deeply and effectively, it is important that you have background and context on what you're reading. I also recommend taking a book and going through it from start to finish rather than hopping around, especially if it's the first time you're studying through it. So pick a book to study. If you're new to studying the Bible I would choose a Gospel and start there.

After you've picked your book, you're going to want to get as much information about it as you can. This is where a good study Bible will be really helpful.

As you are reading, you'll want to ask yourself a basic set of questions about the text,

- Who wrote it? To whom was it written?
- When was it written? Where is the story or letter taking place?
- What is the subject of the story or letter?
- What does this passage tell me about God and His character?

Most of these questions can be answered by a good study Bible or commentary and by tuning into the Holy Spirit speaking as you study. God's Word is alive and active and as you engage with it, God is going to engage with you. He's going to speak to you and you just have to listen.

what do you actually write in your Bible?

What you choose to journal is up to you and what God is speaking to you during your Bible time, but I'll give you a few ideas of what you can journal. You can write the answers to those questions we just talked about right in your Bible, so that's an option.



Paraphrase verses in your own words

Do you remember in grade school when your teacher would make you rewrite a definition in your own words? He or she was not just giving you busy work. This exercise helps us to create neural pathways in our brains to remember what something means and helps us understand it.

Write out key verses

If a verse resonates with you or you find yourself reading part of passage over and over again, write it out in the margins or in the space after a book (some journaling Bibles have a blank page between books!). You can even use pretty lettering. There is a lot of evidence in the education world that physically writing notes helps you learn.

Define words

Maybe you come across a word you don't know, or you wonder about how it was translated. Research the definition or original meaning and write the information in the margins. When you study or read this passage again, the notes will be right there for you, and you won't have to look that up again and you'll learn a new word.



Write your questions

Study materials help to answer a lot of the questions we have, but there can still be theological or practical questions that are more complicated. It is okay to let a question go unanswered and then continue to think and meditate on it for a while. Put those right on the pages!

This will get your brain stirring and will make it more likely that you'll remember to ask another mature believer about their thoughts, such as a small group leader, or pastor. You will also be reminded to do further research and read books on the topic.

Make note of cross-references or related verses

Scripture often repeats itself and references itself. I especially love making notes of when the New Testament refers to fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament. Doing this helps you to see how the Bible is one big story that points to Jesus, and it helps you connect what you are reading to other books and passages.

Prayers

Sometimes as I'm reading, I will feel convicted about something or a pull to pray that verse and so I'll write that prayer right in the pages. Like Lord, give the heart of David or Lord show me where I need to be showing love, things like that.

Write out applications to your life

So this is the last thing you are going to do as you study. After you have read the text a couple of times, made observations, and asked questions, then you can start to ask yourself, okay how does this passage apply to me? What have I learned about God and how does that change how I'm going to live?

This is probably what I do the most in the margins of my journaling Bible.

Our lives should be reflections of what Scripture teaches, so I write out what lessons I learn from each passage and how I can live it out. Sometimes I'll even write prayers in my Bible margins.

Highlighting

As far as the highlighting goes, you can use a color-coded system where each color represents something, like the promises of God, Jesus's words, prophecies, parables, etc. I use the highlighting to mark what verse my notes go to, so I will highlight the verse that has stood out to me and then highlight around my block of notes that go with that verse so it's easy to see and keeps it organized.



This is a slow, deep method and you may only get through a few verses at a time, but I believe deeper is better than quicker. If you choose to use this method, your Bible will become a workbook. The more you work through God's Word the more it will work in you.

Challenge

Bible journaling can be an incredible method for studying and memorizing scripture. When you're studying the Word next take time to try some of the methods listed above. Grab a notebook or some highlighters and write out your personal applications, take aways, and key verse!

What is your one takeaway from this session?

