

LEADERS WHO REFLECT | Russ Smidt

Journaling offers an opportunity to slow down, reflect, observe and track what God is doing in your life and ministry. It will overflow into deeply personal and biblical prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and intercession. How do you get started with journaling? What are some new approaches you could try to revive the practice? There is something here for everyone to learn, share and make an action plan for being more reflective in prayer.

WHY reflect?	HOW do you reflect?
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Verses and quotes that invite reflection

Psalms 119:59-60	Jeremiah 17:9	Lamentations 3:40
Matthew 7:3-5	Romans 12:1-3	1 Corinthians 11:28-29
2 Corinthians 13:5	James 1:22-24	1 John 1:9

'Whatever we pay attention to is our reality' Richard Foster (Celebration Of Discipline)

'Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things' Apostle Paul (Philippians 4:8)

'The mind is renewed by applying it to those things that will transform it' Donald S Whitney (Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life)

'Do not welcome sleep upon your soft eyes before you have reviewed each of the day's deeds three times' Pythagoras

To reflect is a common human discipline. It is not unique to Christian spirituality.

- Confucius: The superior man will watch over himself when he is alone. He examines his heart that there may be nothing wrong there, and that he may have no cause of dissatisfaction with himself.
- Benjamin Franklin: Virtue Chart
- Mindfulness movement builds on disciplines of self-reflection

At the heart of Christian reflection and self-examination is the GOSPEL for...
Pardon | Perspective | Power to change (Philippians 1:6)

Without the gospel we are prone to...

RUMINATION (unhelpful spiral of doom) and RETRIBUTION (fixated punishment of self or others)

- Spurgeon: Any practice that detracts from faith is an evil practice, but especially that kind of self-examination which would take us away from the cross
- M'Cheyne: For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18)

REFLECTIVE GOSPEL-founded PRACTICES

Journaling: Slow down to pay attention to our lives and what God is doing in the immediate and across seasons. Written as diary or prayers; stream of consciousness or ordered learning; creative and beautiful or scribbled ink in a cheap exercise book. There is no right or wrong way to journal - write as you can.

Examen: A set of questions/themes you return to at regular intervals. The father of 'examen', Ignatius would pause several times a day. 1) What am I grateful for? 2) How have I sinned? 3) How have I spent my time? 4) Seek forgiveness before God 5) Ask for grace to make amends. Create your own focus questions/themes from your personal Bible reading and character formation objectives.

3 Ms: Mirror, Magnifying Glass & Microscope. A focused journaling practice. As I read God's Word today... 1) how is it helping me to see myself as I really am? (mirror) 2) what does God want me to magnify in my life today? (magnifying glass) 3) what am I not seeing that needs focused attention? (microscope)

Reflection Circle: Used to reflect on an experience/event/issue. 1) Context: what was going on around/before that influenced the situation 2) Emotion: What was I feeling? 3) Image: or metaphor that captures the situation 4) Theology: How does the Bible guide your reflection? 5) Presence: What is God doing here? 6) Insight and action: What are you learning about yourself? What is your decision/next action?

Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

James 1:22-24 (MSG)