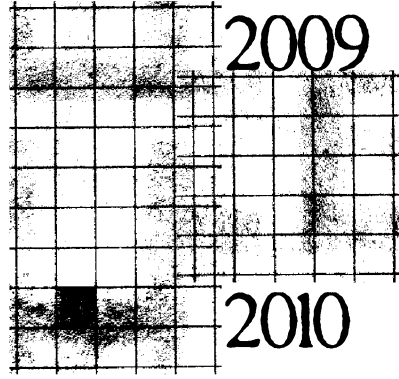


WINTER

GOspel
JOURNAL



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HOW THE GOSPEL (JOURNAL) CAN HELP TRANSFORM YOU.

Jesus is the centerpiece of the entire Bible. In Luke 24, he explained this to the grief-stricken disciples who didn't realize he was resurrected.

“Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Every Christian asks this question, “How can I understand the Bible and apply it to my life?”

This journal is a tool to help you answer this fundamental question.

We call it the Gospel Journal because the gospel is the thread that runs throughout the whole Bible and the key to spiritual transformation.

HOW CAN I SEE JESUS IN THE TEXT AND BE TRANSFORMED TO OBEY HIM?

The Bible is essentially a story about how God loves and pursues his people. The Bible is God's inspired revelation. The Bible is God's invitation to get to know him and be transformed by truth. But the Bible doesn't work by osmosis.

We must practice "Bible intake" through reading, study, meditation, and memorization.

The Gospel Journal will help you worship the Father as you focus on Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to transform your head, heart, and life as you spend time in the Word of God.

The Journal will help you prepare your mind and heart to be on mission for God so that you might bring the Gospel to others. It will also help strengthen your identity as a follower of Christ.

HOW TO USE THE GOSPEL JOURNAL

STEP 1

Locate the Scripture for today.

STEP 2

Pray and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth. Then read all of the passages for that day, praying that you will see Jesus in the text and be transformed so that you can obey the truth.

STEP 3

As you are reading, the Holy Spirit will highlight a verse or a phrase, or even a word. When this happens, record this insight on a page in the "Journal" section. Follow the S. O. A. P method for each new day and record your thoughts.

Scripture: Each day you will be asked to read certain verses. Take a look at the verses in the Bible, write them down, and look at them often. "For the Word of God is living & active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

Observe: Look at the verses. What is going on in the passage both broadly and deeply. What do you see? What jumps out to you? Answer the following... Who? What? Where? Why? How?

Application: After reviewing the verses, how does God's Word apply to your life? How does this affect the way you live your daily life? How can you apply the verses to Love Jesus more? To Love others more? To be on mission for Christ?

Prayer:

Praise—Acknowledge God for who He is & thank Him for what He has done in your life.

Purpose—submit your prayers to God's will.

Provision—God knows your needs. Acknowledge them and place them before Him.

Pardon—Come clean before God from your sins and be free from the guilt that sin brings.

People—Pray for the needs of others, our forgiveness of others and our relationships.

Protection—Ask God to help battle life—every day temptation; physical protection.

THE JOURNAL





ECCLESIASTES

background

Ecclesiastes is a written out sermon by Solomon that analyzes life's experiences and its meaning. Solomon takes us through his life explaining how everything he tried, tested, or tasted was meaningless. When Solomon became king, he asked God for wisdom and he became the wisest man in the world. He studied, taught, judged, and wrote.

Kings and leaders from other nations came to Jerusalem to learn from him. But with all of his practical insight on life, Solomon failed to heed his own advice, and he began a downward spiral. Near the end of his life, Solomon looked back with an attitude of humility and repentance. He took stock of the world as he had experienced it, hoping to spare his readers the bitterness of learning through personal experience that everything apart from God is empty, hollow, and meaningless.

Questions to Ponder...

How does the world described in Ecclesiastes compare with the one we find ourselves in?

The book begins and ends with the exclamation, "vanity of vanities! All is vanity" (Eccles. 1:2; 12:8). While "vanity" is obviously a key word throughout the book (its 38 occurrences account for more than half of its total usage in the OT), it is notoriously difficult to translate.

Literally the word means "vapor" and conjures up a picture of something fleeting, momentary, and indescribable. How does this definition of "vanity" change your understanding of what Solomon is saying?

How does Solomon describe the fallen world and the good gifts of God? How can we recognize God's goodness in this fallen world?



LUKE

background

The gospel of Luke tells Jesus' story from Luke's unique perspective as a Gentile, a physician, and the first historian of the early church. Even though he was not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry, Luke nevertheless is concerned that eyewitness accounts be preserved and communicated accurately to the next generation of the Christian church. Luke gives us the most detailed account of Jesus' birth, childhood, and development. Luke affirms Jesus' divinity but the real emphasis on his book is to show Jesus' humanity-- Jesus, the Son of God, is also the Son of Man.

Thoughts to ponder...

Luke 1-3 tell us the most detailed account of Jesus' birth. Yes, our savior was at one time a helpless infant. His life was preserved and protected by God and He grew up under the guidance of His Father in heaven, while also being fully human. He had emotions, He experienced pain, He did not always receive what he wanted, and He had a bunch of siblings that he had to get along with. We cannot even begin to fathom the depths of the struggles that he faced on His journey through life, being physically separated from His Father. He has known our hardships and he bore the greatest hardship of all—the full wrath of God. As you read, ponder the humility of Jesus and His servanthood. He made himself a servant to save us.



Zephaniah

background

Zephaniah (meaning, “defended by God”) was a prophet who warned the people of Judah that if they refused to repent, the entire nation, including the beloved city of Jerusalem, would be lost. The people knew that God would eventually bless them, but Zephaniah made it clear that there would be judgment first, then blessing. This judgment would not be merely punishment for sin, but also a process of purifying the people. Though we live in a fallen world surrounded by evil, we can hope in the perfect kingdom of God to come and we can allow any punishment that touches us now to purify us from sin in a process called refinement.

Questions to ponder...

How do you respond to God’s sovereignty? Do you desire to be in control? Zephaniah claims that God’s judgment and action are perfect. It’s when we believe that our judgment is greater that we disobey or we become angry with the Lord.

Zephaniah calls the people to repent, trust and obey when they go their own way. Did you know that the word *repent* means “to confess and turn from,” not just to confess?

In the last chapter, we see how precious we are to God, despite our sin. He redeems us, but then we play a role in obedience. What sin have you been confessing without destroying? Experience the love of the Lord and turn!



Lamentations

background

Lamentations was written by Jeremiah to teach people that to disobey God is to invite disaster, and to show that God suffers when his people suffer. In this book we see Jeremiah grieving deeply because of the destruction of Jerusalem and the devastation of his nation. But half way through, in the depths of his grief, there shines a ray of hope. God's compassion is ever present and His faithfulness is great. Jeremiah realizes that it is only the Lord's mercy that has prevented total annihilation. We see the serious consequences of human sin and how we can still have hope in the midst of tragedy because God is able to turn it around for good. We see the timeless importance of prayer and confession of sin. We will all face tragedy in our lives, but in the midst of our afflictions, there is hope in God.

Questions to ponder...

Lamentations speaks greatly of God's grace despite the great sin of his people, but restoring the relationship with God only comes through prayers of confession and petition.

Where is your relationship with God broken? What do you need to confess and repent?

Lamentations expresses the great lament at the destruction of Jerusalem, but also of renewed hope for the future. Do you lament and grieve with the Lord over the difficult realities in your life? Over your sin?

God's never-ceasing mercy is spoken of throughout the book. How is God demonstrating his patience, love, and mercy in your life?



1 John

background

First John was written to dispel doubts that were arising about the validity of who Jesus was and to build assurance by presenting a clear picture of Christ. Jesus was and is God in the flesh and God in focus--seen, heard, and touched by the author of this letter, John the Apostle. John walked and talked with Jesus, saw him heal, heard him teach, watched him die, met him arisen, and saw him ascend. John knew God and enjoyed fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all of the days of his life.

However, false teachers entered the church denying the incarnation of Christ. John wrote to correct their serious errors. So John's letter is a model for us to follow as we fight modern heresies.

Questions to ponder...

The words of 1 John have a way of really testing the legitimacy of our faith. It poses the question: Do our actions reflect the fact that we have a savior? If you abide in Christ, do you walk as he walked? Do you seek to obtain what/who you want more than you pursue a close interaction with the Lord?

The Lord, himself, is the definition of love so be careful not to elevate your "love" for other things above Him. You will never find anything more satisfying in this life than abiding in Him.

