



# *Come, Follow Me*

*The Spiritual Discipline of Journaling*

## **Introduction to Journaling**

You are being asked to take at least 20 minutes a day for the next thirty days to practice the spiritual discipline of journaling. The goal is to have the Word of God transform your thinking and renovate your life in the likeness of Jesus Christ. Journaling is not the goal, it is the means for God to grow you into the image of your Savior.

This journal is an invitation to you to learn directly from God as his Word speaks to you every day. The passages are chosen carefully with a view to learning from God about the power of his grace to overcome racial barriers. Still, these verses will speak to every area of your life, so let God speak to you as only he can. Listen for his voice as you open his Word daily.

You may already be journaling in Scripture, and if so, great. If not, one of the side benefits of this experiment is that you develop a habit of journaling to hear God speak to you. For this next thirty days, you are being asked to journal in a very specific way. If you are already journaling, it will be hardest on you because you will be asked to adjust your normal pattern for this 30 days.

## 8 Steps to Journaling

1. Set aside at least 20 minutes to do this. You will likely want longer, and you may have a day when you rush a little, but you need at least 20 minutes. Would you interrupt your day for 20 minutes if someone whom you love and respect asked you to? Of course, so the Creator of the whole universe is inviting you to visit with him and interact with his Word for at least 20 minutes.
2. Ask God to speak to you. You may need to confess your sin and give thanks to God for his blessings before you open his Word. Prepare to listen to God's voice as you read his Word.
3. Read the text and ask, "What does it say?" To answer this question, write out the assigned passage (with the exception of the lengthy passages on Days 20-21 and 24-25, where you can choose to write out the key verses only). Why copy the passage? Because writing it out reinforces the reading of it more deeply and you are more likely to remember it throughout the day. Do not underestimate the power of copying God's Word with your own hand!
4. "What does it mean?" After copying the passage, take time to go over each phrase one at a time. Write out or summarize the phrase, then ask God to help you discern the meaning of the phrase. Write down what each phrase means and what God may be saying to you about it. You will likely write the most in your journal in this section each day. You may want to stop as you hear God's voice and confess a sin, or thank God for something, or to ask God to change something in your life or that of others. Write down these prayers in your journal as you hear God prompting you to pray. Your journal should have a written summary of each phrase in the text and what it means in the context of your life.

5. “What do I do about it?” After interacting with the Word of God and listening to the voice of God, you cannot stop there. James reminds us to be doers of the Word, not just hearers only. For this step, you should write out what God may be asking you to change, what he is calling you to confess, what he is asking you to do. Here is where life change really takes place, the Scripture goes from a nice idea to the Living Word as you practice it.
6. Use the balance of your journal time and space to write out your prayers for the day. You may abbreviate these if you like (for example writing just the names of people while praying for them), but your prayer time will be much more focused if you write it out (or outline it in writing).
7. Tell those around you about the blessing of God today. Do you think God’s Word is only for you? Of course not, so share it. You do not have to share everything you learned that day, and you must keep in mind the context in which you are sharing, but you can find a way to let the Word of God bless those around you. Applying the Word to your life may mean telling someone else that God convicted you about something and you are asking for accountability in that area of your life. The bottom line, however, is that if you treasure God’s Word, you will share it.
8. Be aware of the spiritual war raging around you. The time you are committing to journal looks simple until you get going. You will have days when getting the time will seem like a struggle. There is a spiritual war (see Ephesians 6 for more on this), and you are preparing for the field of battle when you make this commitment to listen to God’s voice every day. Do not be discouraged! If you miss a day, do not give up. You are not alone; get back going the next day. What you will find is that as you prevail, you will grow stronger in the grace and knowledge of God, and you will be encouraged as God speaks to you daily in his Word.

**DAY 1: *In Christ we break from the old flesh and we are made new in Him.* [ 2 Corinthians 5:17 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

Write out or summarize each phrase, then ask God to help you discern what it means. You may need to look up words or other verses that relate. Go one phrase at a time. For today's first journal, you will be provided the pattern to use:

*Therefore if any one is in Christ:*

*he (or she) is a new creation:*

*the old has gone:*

*the new has come:*

**What will I do about it?**

Take time now to ask God to help you apply the truth of this verse to your life. You may ask questions like, "Does my life reflect the reality of this verse?" "What is of the old flesh in my life that needs to go?" "Am I living 'in Christ' as this verse describes?" "Am I thankful for the grace of Christ who gave me new life?" And perhaps the best question of all, "What does God want me to change in my life today as a result of listening to his voice in the Word today?"

## **DAY 2: *Seek God, not earthly things.* [ Colossians 3:1-4 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

On this passage, you may want to summarize the phrases. Take time to ask God to speak to you about the meaning of each verse and how each phrase is telling you something.

**What will I do about it?**

Remember the questions, What is God saying about what needs to change in my life? Is there a habit to give up? Is there someone I need to care for? Is there a priority I need to change? This is the action step to put to feet what God has revealed to you in his Word.

## **DAY 3: *Put to death the flesh.* [ Colossians 3: 5-7 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

Take time to ask God to speak to you about the meaning of each verse and how each phrase is telling you something. Ask God to speak to you about each of the words in this text. Go slowly and listen for God's conviction.

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying about what needs to change in my life? Is there a sin to confess and to reject? Am I living in the old flesh or have I put it to death? Is there a priority I need to change? If you will grow in the likeness of Christ, some things have to go. Are you ready to put to death the flesh?

## **DAY 4: *Rid yourself of sins, put on the new.* [ Colossians 3:8-10 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

Take time to ask God to speak to you about the meaning of each verse and how each phrase is telling you something. Ask God to speak to you about each of the words in this text. Go slowly and listen for God's conviction.

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying about what needs to change in my life? Is there a sin to confess and to reject? Am I living in the old flesh or have I put it to death? Is there a priority I need to change? Have you put on the new self which is being renewed in the image of Christ?

## **DAY 5: *No racial distinctions, Christ is all and is in all.* [ Colossians 3:11 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

Remember the context of the previous verses. Life focused on Christ puts the death the old flesh and puts on the new in the image of Jesus. Now we are being told the image of Christ is in everyone, including barbarians and Scythians (who were the least liked peoples in the empire). Ask God to speak to you about each of the words in this text. Go slowly and listen for God's conviction.

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying about what needs to change in my life? Do I treat every single person as Christ would have me? Have I allowed racial preconceptions to affect how I view others? Is there a sin to confess and to reject? Am I reflecting the image of Christ as I build friendships? What can I do build a bridge over racial barriers in my friendships?

## **DAY 6: *Put on Christlikeness, carefully applying each quality.* [ Colossians 3:12 ]**

**What does the passage say?**

**What does it mean?**

Go slowly over each word in this passage. Consider that God dearly loves you. Then carefully describe each of the qualities we are to “put on.” Do you have room to grow in any of these? What is God saying to you about each one? Carefully listen for God’s voice in this powerful verse.

**What will I do about it?**

This is one of the most important verses anyone can apply to life. By Grace you have been redeemed, and now you are invited to clothe yourself in the likeness of Jesus Christ. The vision for your life must include being like Jesus in all of these characteristics. This would not be commanded of you if it were not possible in the grace of God to develop in the likeness of Jesus. Go over each quality and ask God what you can do to grow in each one. Ask a friend to help you be accountable in these areas. Write down what you plan to do with God’s Word today.

## **Day 7: *Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* [ Colossians 3:13 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Carefully think through each phrase asking God to help you understand his Word. This verse assumes you may have grievances against someone, so ask God to help you discern if you do. As you write out each phrase, look at each one closely and listen for God’s voice about how to forgive...

**What will I do about it?**

Think carefully about persons you need to forgive. Listen for God’s voice here. Is there someone from whom you need to ask forgiveness? Is your life characterized by the grace of Jesus? Do you take offense easily? Are you easily irritated? Do you get mad quickly? If so, dig deeply into the grace of Christ so that you can grow in his likeness and love mercy.

## **DAY 8: *Over all the virtues, love is essential for Christlikeness.* [ Colossians 3:14 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

As you look at each phrase, ask God to show you how each phrase speaks to you personally. How does this relate to John 13:35? Look back at all the virtues in this passage and see how love relates to each one.

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying specifically to you about how to apply this verse to your life? Is there someone you need to show love to? How can your relationship with Christ affect how you love others? Apathy is the antithesis of love, have you ignored someone?

## **DAY 9: *Peace of Christ should rule our hearts and relationships.* [ Colossians 3:15 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Compare the peace of Christ here with John 16:33. What does it look like to have the peace of Christ ruling your heart? Notice the key word “rule.” Pay close attention to the phrase, “members of one body.”

What does this verse teach about thanksgiving?

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying to you about letting his peace rule in your heart? What would that look like? How do you get there? If we are to have God’s peace ruling the body of Christ, what are you doing to bring down barriers between Christians of different backgrounds? Have you thanked God for his grace to you?

## **DAY 10: *As the Word of Christ dwells richly in you, do all in the name of Christ.* [ Colossians 3:16-17 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

How does the Word of Christ dwell richly in you? What is necessary to teach or admonish someone? When the Word of Christ dwells in you, what are some expressions of the presence of the Word in your life? Think carefully about the meaning of verse seventeen, especially the “whatever” concept. The verse is comprehensive in its scope.

**What will I do about it?**

In what ways can you grow in allowing the Word of Christ to dwell richly in you? Does your time reflect a commitment to the richness of the Word of Christ in your life? What makes you sing? How do you practice private worship? Do you worship Christ in public? Does your life reflect doing everything in the name of Christ? How can you show it more?

## **DAY 11: *Gospel is a work of grace to change our lives for God’s purposes.* [ Ephesians 2:8-10 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Is your salvation the result of your works? What role does grace play? What about faith? Why do you think boasting and works are joined together? How does the fact that God created you affect how you see yourself? What do you think God has prepared in advance for you to do?

**What will I do about it?**

Am I grateful for the grace of Christ shown to me? How do I show that gratitude in relationship to verse 10? Today, what good does God want me to do? Am I living with the confidence that my faith is in Jesus as my Savior rather than in the confidence of my works?

## **DAY 12: *Gentiles once excluded, now brought in by grace.* [ Ephesians 2:11-13 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

This is being written to Gentile Christians who were once considered hopeless by the Jews. What does this verse say about God caring for outsiders? What does this say about God caring for you? for your neighbor? for those who are far from God? What is the one thing that can bring people to God?

**What will I do about it?**

How does this verse speak to how I view myself and others? What does this verse say about how to treat those who are far from God? What does this verse say about the blood of Christ in relationship to lost people around me?

## **DAY 13: *Atonement of Christ destroys barrier of hostility.* [ Ephesians 2:14-15a ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Who is our peace? What does the sacrifice of Jesus do to people who were once divided? What does the cross of Jesus do to barriers that divide?

**What will I do about it?**

What does this verse say about barriers of race or culture? How should I view a Christian of another race or culture? How does Jesus view Christians who are racially or culturally different from me? If Jesus destroyed these barriers, why are they still sometimes present? What are you doing to follow Jesus in breaking down barriers?

## **DAY 14: *Purpose of God to make one new man out of two.* [ Ephesians 2:15b-16 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

What was the purpose of Christ on the cross? What is the source of peace? Look closely at the word “reconciliation.” Who initiates the reconciliation? What is the basis for it? Where does it extend? Is there hostility that must be put to death?

**What will I do about it?**

What does this text say about racial division? What does this say about how I view Christians of other races? How will your life reflect this truth more fully today? What does this verse say about my relationships with those of other races? Should I seek out Christians who are not culturally or racially identical to me? Are you grieved by the division in our society? Are you grieved by the division that often is found in the Christian community?

## **DAY 15: *Christ came to bring peace between formerly alienated peoples.* [ Ephesians 2:17-18 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Jesus preached peace to those who were near and far. What does this mean? There is one access to the Father by one Spirit. Do you see the mention of all three persons of the Trinity in this text? Write out each phrase in this text, then ask God to speak to you and write down what each phrase means:

**What will I do about it?**

What are you doing to promote the gospel of peace? Are you sharing it? What are you doing to live the peace of Christ and cross barriers of race?

**DAY 16: *The foundation of reconciliation is Christ's atonement.*** [ Ephesians 2:19-20 ]

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Were you an outsider before you came to faith in Christ? What does the gospel say about outsiders who come to faith in Christ? Who are citizens of God's people? Who are members of God's household? Who is the cornerstone?

**What will I do about it?**

How does this verse speak to you as you relate to outsiders? Is your life built on the foundation of Christ? What would this look like in your life today?

**DAY 17: *All of God's people make up his temple, each essential.*** [ Ephesians 2:21-22 ]

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Take each phrase and write down what each means. Listen for God's voice on how this applies to you. What is the "temple" being referred to here? Is God building your life? What does it look like? Design?

**What will I do about it?**

If God is building Christians into a beautiful community symbolized by the Temple which was the most beautiful and impressive building of its day, what is he saying to you today? Is your life a dwelling place for his Spirit? Does your life in any way quench the Spirit's presence and power?

## **DAY 18: *Faith in Christ makes us brothers and sisters.* [ Galatians 3:26-27 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Write out each phrase and write out what it means. “Sons of God” is not meant to be sexist, but in the ancient world that was a term meant to describe a place of favor in the family. What does it mean to clothe yourself with Christ? What would that look like in your everyday life?

**What will I do about it?**

Think of how God has adopted you as his own. What does this mean for how you live? When you clothe yourself in the righteousness of Christ, what does that look like in your life this day?

## **DAY 19: *In Christ, all the old divisive distinctions are not real.* [ Galatians 3:28-29 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

As you write out each phrase, look to see the varieties of division in human society. What does this text say about those divisions? The title of this day’s text suggests these divisions are artificial and human invented rather than designed by God. What does this verse indicate? What does this text say about the unity of God’s people?

**What will I do about it?**

How does this text speak to your relationships? What is God saying to you about the poor or persons of another race? What are you going to do to put this verse into practice in your life?

## **DAY 20: *Vision of racial unity in heart of God.* [ Psalm 67:3-5 and Revelation 7:9 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Write down each phrase in these two texts and ask God to show you the meaning. Look to make the correlation between the Old Testament and New Testament passages. How does the vision of Heaven compare with your life today?

**What will I do about it?**

How do these verses apply to your life? Your church? Your family? Your future? Your choice of friends? How does your heart for people match God's heart for people?

## **DAY 21: *Jesus reverses all the conventional divisions, "Savior of the World"* [ John 4:1-42 ]**

**What does it say?**

Here with a long passage, you will want to read the passage carefully and copy out the key verses...

**What does it mean?**

Identify all the key people and describe each one briefly. Jesus was breaking the "rules" of his day in three ways: He spoke to a woman in public (not allowed), he spoke to a Samaritan, and he took water from the same pitcher as a Samaritan. They had segregation in that day. Write down the key phrases in the story and give the meaning. Notice what happens when the woman is presented with the truth of her own life and that of Jesus as Messiah. Notice what he is called by the rest of the Samaritans, all the prejudice goes away in the gospel.

**What will I do about it?**

Will you follow the example of Jesus when relating to people who may be considered outcasts? How does this passage speak to life in your community now? What is God saying to you about your life?

**DAY 22: *Jesus praises the centurion's faith, a Gentile in the hated Roman army is loved by Jesus.***

[ Matthew 8:5-13 ]

**What does it say? Write out verses 5-10, then 13**

**What does it mean?**

The centurion was a non-Jew in the Roman army, which was hated and reviled by the Jews of the day. Notice how Jesus treats this man. Describe the details of the story. Take time to note the big ideas and ask God to help you hear his voice and write down what these verses mean to you.

**What will I do about it?**

What does the Centurion's faith say about how to live your life? How do you respond to the amazing mercy of Jesus toward this man who was hated by Jews? Do you think the Romans looked down on the Jews? What does the Centurion teach you?

**DAY 23: *The Great Commission reflects God's heart for every people.*** [ Matthew 28:18-20 ]

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Write out each phrase and carefully consider what God may be saying to you in each phrase. When Christ claims all authority, what does that mean? Notice the progression in this text along with the promise.

**What will I do about it?**

How does the authority of Jesus work in your life? The Great Commission includes all nations, every race, language, and culture; how does this truth impact your life? Are you making disciples of others? Are you leading others to Christ?

**DAY 24: *The Acts Commission predicts the path of the Gospel to all.* [ Acts 1:8 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Notice the place of the Holy Spirit in this verse. What kind of power does the Spirit possess? Who is to receive the witness?

**What will I do about it?**

Have you sought the Spirit's power? What might the Spirit's power change in your life today? To whom will you give witness of Christ today?

**DAY 25: *The gospel goes to Samaria—this was a huge racial barrier.* [ Acts 8:4-8 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Who went preaching? Philip went to Samaria which was unheard of in his day. Jews and Samaritans were at odds with one another, Jews actually considered them to be beneath them. What is significant about Philip's journey to Samaria in light of the prejudice against Samaritans? What is significant in light of Acts 1:8?

**What will I do about it?**

Will you follow Philip's example and consider the needs of those of another race or culture? Will you share Christ to people around you? What is God telling you to do?

**DAY 26: *The gospel goes to Ethiopia, text indicates this is perfectly natural to reach a person of another color.***

[ Acts 8:26-40 ]

**What does it say?** This is a longer passage, choose to write out the key verses as you read this text.

**What does it mean?**

**Notice the role of the Spirit in guiding Philip. Was race a consideration for Philip before he spoke to the Ethiopian? Notice how Philip drew the Ethiopian to Jesus and the gospel.**

**What will I do about it?**

Philip was a pioneer in cross-cultural ministry. Is God calling you to build a bridge with a person of another culture in order to share the gospel? Are you willing to build friendships across racial lines?

**DAY 27: *Peter at the house of Cornelius, gospel for all.*** [ Acts 10:34-35 ]

**What does it say? (Please read starting in verse 24 to get the context, then write out verses 34-35)**

**What does it mean?**

Peter learns that God does not show partiality, what are implications of this truth in our context? Listen for God's voice on the meaning of fearing God and doing what is right. How must it feel to be an outsider in culture or race and yet be welcomed by God?

**What will I do about it?**

Is there any place where discrimination has affected your life? Ask God to show you any discrimination toward other races or cultures in your soul. Confess it as sin and ask God to renovate your heart in his likeness.

## **DAY 28: *God does not discriminate, no more “us” and “them.”* [ Acts 15:7-9 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Peter had been directed by God to preach to Gentiles. Why was this so significant? What does it mean that God knows the heart? What was the basis mentioned in this text for the unity of Jew and Gentile believers? Notice the terms “us” and “them.” How can these terms do harm to Christian unity?

**What will I do about it?**

Examine your own heart as you read this passage. What is God saying to do today? “Us and them” can be about race but people can divide over any issue. Pray about your own spirit, do you have a tendency to choose sides?

## **DAY 29: *Authentic disciples truly love one another, all backgrounds.* [ John 13:35 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Take each phrase carefully and consider what God is saying to you about himself and your life. What is God saying about how the Christian community is to look?

**What will I do about it?**

What is God saying to you about your life? Do you love as Jesus loved others? Is there someone to forgive? Is there a barrier that needs crossing? Is there someone you have wronged or hurt in any way? Is there someone you have ignored? Apathy is antithetical to love.

## **DAY 30: *Obedience to the word of Christ essential.* [ John 14:23-24 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Jesus is speaking plainly here. As you think on each phrase and interpret its meaning for your life, evaluate how your life matches the Word of Christ here.

**What will I do about it?**

Is there any place in your life where you have not obeyed Christ? Have you submitted all you know of your life to Christ's leadership and authority? Saying and doing are not the same. What will you do today to more fully obey Christ with your life?

## **DAY 31: *The Lord's Prayer for you: unity in the Body of Christ.* [ John 17:20-23 ]**

**What does it say?**

**What does it mean?**

Write out each phrase carefully. This is the Lord's actual prayer for you and for the church in our day. What does it mean for God's glory to be given to you? How does this compare with John 15:5?

**What will I do about it?**

Ask God to show you how your life can reflect his glory better. How can you take specific texts today to grow in grace and promote unity in the Body of Christ?