

S.O.A.P. DEVOTIONAL



LIFE JOURNAL READING PLAN

Fresh Wind Christian Center

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SOAP

Scripture - write
Observations - who
Applications - how
Prayer

Published by

New Breeze Ministries
Phil and Toni Williams
Memphis, TN 38111

Printed in the United States of America

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Greetings! It is our desire that every student, believer or participant would not just attend church and Bible study, but also hear from God by sitting at His feet daily through His Word. As we read the Bible, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions helps to outline the way we think, transforms the spirit of our mind, and helps us become more like Jesus, the Word made flesh!

We believe it is God's will and we encourage you to read God's Word every day. Our Weekly Bible study group has joined together to participate in the S.O.A.P. Bible reading program.

S.O.A.P. stands for **S**cripture, **O**bservation, **A**pplication, and **P**rayer. It's a great way to delve more deeply into your Bible reading, and record your thoughts, emotions and connections when studying scripture. The Bible in Joshua 1:8 (NIV) teaches us to ***“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”***

S.O.A.P. journaling is a simple and excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken to you. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time when you want to reflect on and review some of the 'gems' that you have received. Without writing them down, you may forget those blessings and important lessons! Furthermore, while journaling is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily journaling with your Bible study group, small cell group, Sunday school class or spouse, so having a written record becomes very important! Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insight, and even encourage others!

Instructions

Four things you will need to start your SOAP devotional:

- Bible (Paper or electronic)
- Pen
- Journal
- Daily Bible Reading Guide

Use the S.O.A.P Method of Bible Reading

Step 1 Find a quiet time and space to read your Bible, preferably at the same time each day. Many people find that reading scripture in the morning helps get their day off to a focused start. Some others feel that it's a great way to close their evening.

Step 2 Complete the “S” by reading the daily scripture. Don't just skim through it, but really think about what it means. Imagine what the people involved were experiencing. Write down a verse or two that really stood out to you in your journal.

Step 3 Complete the “O” by writing down observations about the scripture you just read. You may want to write your own summary of the passage, but more importantly, think about what God has to say to you through this part of His Word.

Step 4 Complete the “A” by writing down how this Bible passage applies to you right now, in your daily life. For example, in the parable about the prodigal son, which character do you identify with most: the loving and merciful father, the son who squanders his inheritance and then repents or the resentful older brother? Do you see similar situations in your life right now? How can you respond in the way Jesus has taught you?

Step 5 Complete the “P” by writing down a prayer. This is a personal message from you to God, so don't worry about getting the perfect words down. Just make it honest and heartfelt. Remember that God always listens, and already knows your needs. He just wants to hear from you.

SAMPLE JOURNAL ENTRIES

SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:5 (NLT) 5 When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

Luke 19:10 (NLT) 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

OBSERVATION

There are two key principles that I want to apply to my life as I grow in leadership as a Christian. The first is Jesus already knew Zacchaeus by name and called him by name, which is a huge plus when wanting to draw closer to a person. The second thing is Jesus was not ashamed to spend quality time with what was considered one of the worst of sinners (tax collectors).

Jesus probably knew he would have to walk through all the smoke that people blew in his direction. The smoke of negative reactions and murmuring, the grumbling of why he chooses to reach out to sinners.

APPLICATION

Jesus' words, "Today salvation has come to this house," did not imply that the act of giving to the poor had saved Zacchaeus, but that his change in lifestyle evidenced his right relationship before God. Zacchaeus, a son of Abraham by birth, had a right to enter the kingdom because of his connection with Jesus. That was Jesus' mission—to seek and to save those who are lost. I make that my mission - and that is to seek and to save those who are lost. I must be able to walk through the smoke of what people may think or say about my choices of saving lives and winning souls to Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord my prayer for today is that I focus my eyes and thoughts on You. I must continue walking and pointing towards Jesus. That's the desire of my heart. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

10 "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. 11 And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?"

13 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." **Luke 16**

OBSERVATION

Interestingly enough, tonight I'm teaching a short lesson on Stewardship to our church family coming to Growing Deep, Growing Strong, so this passage in Luke is so appropriate! Thank You Lord, You bless me to overflowing.

Let's think of stewardship in terms of a river. If water is flowing, there is life; plants thrive, fish and sea creatures are plentiful and multiply. Life-giving nutrients flow in from upstream and also flow out giving life

and causing growth downstream. But, if water flows in but there is no outlet – what happens? Death, like the Dead Sea. The body of water becomes stagnant and there is no life. We don't want our lives to be a cul de sac, where things come in but don't flow out; we should live as a conduit where life flows through us and brings life to those downstream.

If we bring life to those downstream of us then God will pour more in from upstream and if we are faithful with little, then He will trust us with more. We cannot out-give God, He will always give us more than we have earned and more than we deserve.

APPLICATION

In times of plenty and in times of little, I must put God first and be faithful that He will continue to provide, as He has always done in the past. Faith is really a journey, we never quite arrive and often we have to travel over the same territory time and again. I must trust God now and forever, it's not a one-time thing, it's over and over and over again, no matter what the circumstances.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,

May my life be a conduit of love, support and financial stewardship, not for You, Lord, but for me. May I always have faith in You whether times are lean or in overabundance.

Thank You for providing and blessing me undeservedly.

In Jesus name,

Amen

SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:1-4

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

OBSERVATION

As a doctor of his time, Luke understandably desired to document all that transpired with Jesus so that there would be an orderly account, or in other words, an accounting of history and fact of Jesus so that others would have the ability to learn with certainty, the things of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, documentation records for recall what transpires. However, furthermore writing things down is a critical way of how we all learn things with the intent of retaining what we learn. But all of this in the interest that those that follow us would know all about Jesus with certainty, rather than hearsay which is open and prone to misrepresentation of what truly transpired.

APPLICATION

So to is it with our journaling in devotions. We journal so that we set with certainty what God has spoken to our hearts, that we in the future can recall the testimonies of God, as well as share it with others. It also enables us to retain what we learn of the Lord. As Luke approached the things of the Lord as a scholar would, we can benefit also by approaching what God speaks to our hearts in the same way.

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift of journaling that I may better learn of your Word, be able to recall it, to share with others, the wonder of my Lord Jesus Christ!

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