

ALIGN WITH GOD MINISTRIES

JOYFUL IMMANUEL TWO WAY JOURNALING EXERCISE

We'd like to emphasize that this way of connecting with God is one way, not the only way. You may have a way that works better for you. This one is in line with how the brain connects which makes it unique. If you already connect well with God that's wonderful! You may want to try this approach to see if it's a good fit for you, deepens your experience of him, or allows better access during difficult emotional issues (See shalom for the soul handout). If you don't connect well, take the steps slowly, maybe one at a time for a few days, until you get the hang of it. Let God lead the pacing and the conversation. It's as simple as having a conversation with another person.

It helps before journaling to take a few moments to quiet, at least 2 minutes. Simply close your eyes and deeply breathe. There's nothing expected of you but to just sit in God's presence and notice what this is like. Notice how your body feels. Notice what emotions start to bubble up. Notice what thoughts are trying to take you away from this moment. Just notice.

If you have a hard time quieting or slowing down your brain or are in the middle of a difficult emotion, it may help you to do "Shalom for my body" first before attempting two way journaling, an exercise invented by Jim Wilder. (See the video section for a demonstration of this technique by Jim Wilder.)

After you are finished journaling you will want to check your journaling against "The Filter Checks" (see in resources) to make sure what you are hearing comes mainly from God (see also: "Basics of listening prayer"). Do not filter during your journaling or wonder if what you are getting is from God while you are journaling. Save that for later. Otherwise the left more logical and analytical part of the brain will shut down the relational right brain process of connecting and attuning. If you have the thought during your journaling, "I wonder if that is just me, or the enemy, or the Lord?" put it aside for the moment and just write it down. After you are finished you can use the filter checks. Also remember we are not hearing at the level of inspired biblical revelation. Our spirits are simply mind "synchronizing" with God, since "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:3-4, 27) it is possible to do that. We *can* have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). So relax, enjoy and remember we're not asking you to produce anything or to do this perfectly. This is really about toning, stretching and training your "connecting" muscles to better connect with God and others. Remember, you are made for this. The more you do it, the stronger the muscle grows, just as in a gym workout. It won't happen with one visit, it takes multiple repeated, daily journaling. Make it a habit, gather a group of friends to share it with, and enjoy the process! (see "Creating Immanuel Community" at the end of this document).

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START THE JOURNALING:

1) GRATITUDE: (5-10”)

A) Step #1- Gratitude from ME to GOD

Write something you are grateful to God about. Specify details. If you'd like you can state it out loud in a prayer.

B) Step #2 God's response to our Gratitude:

Listen and Write: Write what you think God is saying in response to your gratitude.

As an alternative to step two, you can just keep going back and forth with your gratitude as you are doing and his reply to your gratitude for quite some time. Do what fits your schedule and needs for the moment.

2) THOUGHT RHYMING: (25-30 “) – God's attunement to us and our attunement to God: You feel understood, validated, seen and known.

Here is the point in the journaling where you can bring up a particular issue if you would like, and ask the following questions in regard to that issue. You can also simply ask the questions below to see where God goes, not related to a particular issue.

The most important thing is to surrender your agenda and your perspective before you do this. Have the attitude of receiving whatever he has for you, not what you “expect” to hear from him. (see hand out on Surrender). **As you journal, ask the Lord the following questions, and write down your impressions:**

A) Step #1- Lord, how do you SEE me today? or start with “I see you” (as coming from the Lord to you)

Listen and Write your impressions: God watches us with love and describes to us what He SEES. (Psalm 33:13-19, Psalm 34:15, Neh 9:9, 2 Kings 14:26, Exodus 3:7-9). Start with “**I see you.....**”

B) Step #2- Lord, what are you HEARING from me today? or start with “I hear you”. Listen and Write your impressions about what you sense God has HEARD you say with your words and thoughts (Psalm 34:17, Exodus 3:7-9). Start with “**I hear you.....**”

C) Step #3- Lord, what do you understand about my ability to carry this problem? OR- Lord, what do you UNDERSTAND about me right now? Or start with, “I understand this is too much for you to bear on your own..”

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Listen and Write your impressions about how God understands how big and hard this is for you, or how it is too much for you to bear alone. (Exodus 3:9, John 5:19). Let God validate this for you. Start with something like, "I understand this is too much for you...." (as written from the Lord to you as a starter sentence...then listen for the rest)

D) Step #4- Lord tell me how you are GLAD TO BE WITH ME right now. Or start with, "I'm glad to be with you in the midst of this right now (as coming from the Lord to you)" Listen and write what you believe the Lord may be telling you about his desire to be with you in spite of your weakness or circumstances (John 14:26-28, Ex 4:12, Matthew 28:20).

E) Step #5- Lord, what are you DOING about this right now? Or start with "I am doing something about this..."

Listen and Write your impressions of what God may be doing right now in the midst of your situation or issue, how He may be acting on your behalf to work all things together for your good, or how He is with you to help you in life (Romans 8:28, John 5:20, Psalm 34:19, Psalm 35:10). An example you may hear could go something like this...."remember that call you got the other day from John? That was me putting it on his heart to call you.."

3) CLOSURE: Notice how you feel now that you've interacted with the Lord in this way. Do you feel more aligned with him? Do a shalom Check: Notice if you've gained any Godly insight into your situation:

Repeat Step #(1), both parts (A) and (B).

TIP: If you are short on time you can just do Step 1, part A and B, going back and forth with God for as much time as you have.

5) CREATING IMMANUEL COMMUNITY (30-40")

A) Meet with a group of at least 3 people who consistently practice Joyful Two-Way Journaling, that you feel comfortable with. Decide on the time, place and how often you will meet. This can be done over the phone on a conference call or Skype call (or try www.zoom.us), or in person.

B) Appoint a Facilitator for each meeting: The Facilitator reminds the group to have good eye contact, attune to each other, avoid criticism of the journaling and instead directs the person back to the journaling if it seems to not resonate or pass the filter checks, to ask Jesus more about it, and sets the timer for the meeting.

C) READ: Each person reads about their journal entry if comfortable.

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D) DO SHALOM CHECK: Pay attention to God's presence and how you feel afterwards, more peace and/or more of God's perspective.

E) Check journaling with the filter checks

F) CLOSE: Close with prayer, gratitude and hugs. Repeat as neededJ

Read "Joyful Journey" by Jim Wilder et al.

See www.joystartshere.com for more information

For prayer ministry training see www.alivewell.org