

1 **The Hebrew Diary**

- How not to take God for granted

2 **Strange Commonality**

- What do Alanis Morissette, Bob Dylan, Che Guevara, Alec Guinness, Courtney Love, Stevie Nicks, George S. Patton, Henry David Thoreau, Queen Victoria, Andy Warhol and John Wesley ... have in common?
- The commonality is that they all kept or keep diaries.
- Probably some of us have as well -- but not all of us, for it takes a certain mindset and outlook to stick to daily journaling.

3 **Diaries in the Movies**

- Maybe for some of us the closest thing we come to keeping a journal is watching one of the following movies or TV series.
 - The Diary of Anne Frank
 - Vampire Diaries
 - Diary of a Wimpy Kid
 - Diary of a Mad Black Woman, or
 - Bridget Jones's Diary

4 **Benefits of Journaling**

- There can be several benefits to journaling:
 - Clarify your goals
 - Sort through ideas
 - Make you a better communicator.
 - Outlet for your burdens and frustrations.
 - Record of your blessings and joys.
 - Affirm the reality of God in your life.
 - Turn ideas into words.

5 **Philip E. Humbert**

- Author and success coach Philip E. Humbert says that keeping a journal just feels good:
- It will . . .
 - cheer you up,
 - reduce your stress,
 - make you smile, and
 - add to your life.

6 **Top 10 Secrets of Success**

- Focus on Values.
- Get a life.
- Eliminate clutter.
- Specify your results.
- Leave no room for failure.
- Put in more than you take out.
- Live below your means.
- Success is a process.
- Don't be penny wise, and dollar foolish.
- Give it away.

7 **Dress for Success**

- So we make it our goal to please him . . . (2 Cor 5:9 NIV)
- For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. (Eph 5:8-10 NIV)
- And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, . . . (Col 1:10 NIV)
- Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, . . . (1 Th 4:1 NIV)
- . . . receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:22 NIV)

8 **The Hebrew Diary**

- Now consider this, in Isaiah 63 along with its surrounding chapters, we have a portion of Scripture that has all the feel of a diary.
- Normally, we wouldn't say that about biblical prophecy, because Scripture is for an audience not for one's personal musings, but it appears we have something very interesting going on with this oracle.
- It appears the prophet is talking/writing to himself.

9 **The Hebrew Diary**

- I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the LORD has done for us —yes, the many good things he has done for the house of Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.
- He said, “Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me”; and so he became their Savior.”

- In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them.
- In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

10 **The Hebrew Diary**

- In fact, the readings from chapters 56-66, can be viewed as journal entries:
 - They have the same disjointed feel that diary postings produce.
 - They move from vindication to vengeance to mercy.
 - For example, the chapter 62 entry is about the promised vindication of Jerusalem and the entry in chapter 63 goes into a totally different direction and talks about vengeance on the nation of Edom.
 - And in the previous portion of Scripture (Isa. 63:7-9), the voice changes to that of the prophet/community/diarist, recalling God's mercy to Israel in the past.

11 **The Book of Lamentations**

- Another book of the Bible that seems to resemble a journal is the book of Lamentation, where Jeremiah the prophet bares his soul.
- “I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, “The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.” (Lam 3:19-24 NIV)

12 **Review**

- Keeping a diary or writing a journal has it benefits.
- It can help us to focus our thoughts and speak to ourselves what we need to express and say.
- It has therapeutic qualities that help us minister to ourselves emotionally and spiritually.
- It is also, a forum of communication used by some of the great prophets of old to express to themselves and to their audiences their own personal disappointments, hopes, and faith in God.
- So then, if keeping a personal diary, writing a journal, or recording personal Bible devotions has so many benefits, why do so many of us neglect it?

13 **Journalling**

- The number one reason why people don’t keep a journal or even read their Bibles regularly is because it takes discipline and that cramps their style.
- It is not a matter of finding time because we always find time to do the things we want.
- But somehow our faith has become so weak, we look at our “quite-times” with God not worth the effort.
- So then, if we’re going to grow in our faith and be prosperous in the Lord, we’re going to need to not only understand the benefits of seeking the Lord, but also how to accomplish it.

14 Navigators - Colossians 2:7

- In 1984, Sally and I participated in a personal discipleship program call the Colossians “2-7 Series,” by Navigators Ministries.
- The series is based on Col. 2:7, where the Apostle Paul says to the church, So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.
- In this series we learned and practiced skills on how to do daily devotions, meditate on Scripture, write and give our personal salvation story, and other skill-based topics.

15 Navigators - Colossians 2:7

- The very first thing they teach you in the “2-7” series is how to be consistent on doing daily devotional or “quite-time.”
- The initial goal is do your “quite-time” for 14 consecutive days so that a new habit can be formed.
- Once this is accomplished, the chances of us growing in your faith is greatly enhanced.
- Why? Because faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God. (Rom. 10:17)
- Besides it is from reading the word that we find out what pleases the Lord.
- Faith + walking with God = a blessed life!

16 The Pastor’s Study

- In 1985, a pastor in Fridley, Minnesota had a daily television program called “The Pastor’s Study.”
- One day in search of a guest, he called a fellow pastor to see if he had any people that would be good to have on his program.
- That pastor recommended a young man who not only was a new convert, but also was growing in the Lord and had learned to share his faith.
- One thing led to another and that young man appeared on that pastor’s television program and shared not only his testimony but his love for God’s word.

17 The Pastor’s Study

18 The Importance of Pleasing God

- What is the goal of apostolic teaching?
 - Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, . . . (1 Th 4:1 NIV)
- What is the benefit of following apostolic instruction?

- . . . receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:22 NIV)

- So then, if we want things to go right in our lives, should we frustrate the work of the Holy Spirit?
- Or do we need to show diligence in making time to be with God and be in His word?

19 **How to Have a Devotional**

- Realize that personal devotions have to be a choice and should be based on a “want to,” or even a “need to,” but never a “have to.”
- Doesn’t matter what time of the day, but for most people find early in the morning works best.
- Have a set place and method to record your observations (i.e., Devotional Journal).
- When you read the Bible, read a passage and look for principles and truth that can be applied to your life situation.
- After the devotional pray and repeat to God what you have just learned.
- Enjoy the relationship.
- Share with others what you have just discovered and learned.

20 **Sharing**

- What would happen in our small groups, if everyone had a devotional to share on how God had ministered to them?
- Just recently in one of our men’s group, one of the men did that very thing.
- We didn’t even do our lesson that night because what that person shared was so enriching and a blessing we didn’t need the lesson.
- What kind of dynamics would we have if everyone brought a devotional to share?
- I know what would happen. Not only would the group be blessed, but the people who shared would grow.

21 **Electronic Devotional**

- For those with Macintosh computers, a great App for Journaling is DAYONE. It won the best Mac App in 2011 & 2012 and is still going strong. It is also available on the iPad and iPhone. Cost for the Desktop version is \$7.99 and for the iPad and iPhone it is \$2.99.
- Another popular way of journaling is Facebook. You can create a closed group for yourself and use it to record observations and insights. Cell groups can do the same thing and list their prayer requests and praise reports as well.
- Another place to check out is WebBible.net. It is a complete Bible resource center with all kinds of help for those who want to read and study the Bible. Includes several reading plans in which to choose.

22 **New Years Resolution**

- Often during the first of the year, people make certain promises to themselves for better personal development.

- Often it involves the creation of a new habit in order to break an old habit.
- So then, what better time to shore up our spiritual lives and become more consistent in our daily devotionals.
- “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matt 4:4 NIV)
- We will indeed bless ourselves, if we honor God’s word.

23 In Closing