

## *Valley Bible Church How to use these Journals*

### How To Use These Journals

The purpose of these journals is to assist believers in change. For us to grow in Christ, we must become more effective in doing what the Word of God says. Why is the Bible central to change in the Christian's life?

The Christian who obeys Scripture is equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3.16-17), is able to turn from sin (Psalm 119.9-11), can grow in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2.1-3) and is blessed by God (James 1.22-25). Because these things are true, our journals focus on God's Word. Godward change occurs when we, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, subject our thoughts and actions to His Word. These journals are designed to facilitate such a process.

Choose the journal which best fits your area of desired change. Commit yourself to completing one of the journals every day. Read through the verses periodically throughout the day. Consider, how do these truths relate to my life? Answer each section honestly and completely. Regard what you write as communicating to the Lord. Be sure to include the time of prayer as part of completing the journal. If sin was revealed, confess it to the Lord and stay in prayer until you can honestly say to God that your purpose is to refrain from sinning similarly in the future (that's repentance: Proverbs 28.13). If, by God's grace, you did well, give thanks for His help and care.

The process of change which occurs when using these journals usually includes different stages. The first stage is realization. By completing the form daily, you become aware of thoughts, motives and actions which were previously unnoticed. As you review the verses from Scripture, you see many things in a different light. Often this stage involves recording instances of not doing what the Word says, in fact not even thinking about it at the time of decision. Don't give up! All this understanding is good---it enables real, thorough, lasting change.

The next stage is typically war. You seek God's help to put into practice what you now know about how the Word applies to your life (Hebrews 4.15-16). There is great hope! The reason you will be able to alter these long term habits is not your own power but that of the living God (John 16.33, Hebrews 2.18). Be faithful to pray, repenting of sin and asking God's help to obey. This is the stage where the Word causes change in the heart of the one who seeks it. As you faithfully fill out your journal, soon you begin to remember, as you go through the day, "Hey, I'm going to be writing about this later. This is my opportunity to put the Word into practice. I have a choice. Lord, help me to do right!" Your conscience has been strengthened through the Word. You now understand the spiritual implications while in the moment of decision. The Lord answers those prayers of repentance and request for help.

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The final stage is usually the permanentizing of change. The cement hardens. Through the practice of saying "no" to self and "yes" to Christ over and over, one day this new God-honoring way has become normal. By God's grace, change has occurred.

Many have traveled this road. What a blessing it is to look back on completed change with the Lord. We know then, as Paul did, that God's grace was sufficient (2 Corinthians 12.9) and that it is only by His grace that we are what we now are (1 Corinthians 15.10). We have seen Him do in our own lives what only He can do through His Word: teach / reprove / correct / train in righteousness (2 Timothy 3.16-17). Then it's on to the next part of life where we are to put off sin and put on righteousness (Ephesians 4.22-24).

May the Lord bless your efforts to change to be more like Christ through these tools.