H.E.A.R. JOURNAL

The HEAR journaling method promotes reading the Bible with a life-transforming purpose. No longer will your focus be on checking off the boxes on your daily reading schedule; your purpose will instead be to read in order to understand and respond to God's Word.

The acronym **HEAR** in **HEAR Journal** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond.** Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere to hear God speak. After settling on a reading plan and establishing a time for studying God's Word, you will be ready to H.E.A.R. from God.

How To Complete a H.E.A.R. Journal

For an illustration, let's assume that you begin your quiet time in the book of 2 Timothy, and today's reading is the first chapter of the book. Before reading the text, pause to sincerely ask God to speak to you. It may seem trite, but it is absolutely imperative that we seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). Every time we open our Bibles, we should pray the simple prayer that David prayed: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Word)" (Psalm 119:18).

H - Highlight

After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open your ***HEAR Journal*** notebook or journal, and at the top left-hand corner, write the letter H. This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage of Scripture, **HIGHLIGHT** each verse that speaks to you by copying it under the letter "H". Write out the following:

The name of the book. The passage of Scripture. The chapter and verse numbers that especially speak to you. A title to describe the passage. This practice will make it easier to find the passage when you want to revisit it in the future in your ***HEAR Journal.***

E - Explain

After you have highlighted the passage in your ***HEAR Journal***, write the letter "E" under the previous entry. At this stage, you will **EXPLAIN** what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse. The next chapter will teach you in detail how to understand the meaning of a passage. Until then, here are a few questions to get you started:

Why was this written? To whom was it originally written? How does it fit with the verses before and after it?
Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book? What is He intending to communicate through this text?
At this point, you are beginning the process of discovering the specific and personal word that God has for you from His Word. What is important is that you are engaging the text and wrestling with its meaning.

A - Apply

After writing a short summary of what you think the text means, in your ***HEAR Journal***, write the letter "A" below the letter "E". Under the "A", write the word **APPLY**. This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

How can this help me? What does this mean today? What would the application of this verse look like in my life?
What does this mean to me? What is God saying to me?
As you complete your ***HEAR Journal***, these questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and your world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from the specific passage or verse. Answer these questions under the "A". Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

R - Respond

Finally, below the first three entries in your ***HEAR Journal***, write the letter "R" for **RESPOND**. This is the last part of the ***HEAR Journal***. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous in your giving. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read.