

Journaling – SOAP

Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer

SOAP is one approach to journaling and is a simple but effective method for reflecting on and engaging with the Bible. This approach is based on the acronym SOAP, which stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. Each letter in the acronym represents a step in the process of journaling, which can help you engage with the text and apply it to your daily life.

By using this approach, you can deepen your understanding of the text, find practical ways to apply its message to your daily life, and develop a deeper relationship with God through prayer. Whether used as part of a daily devotional practice or as a way to dive deeper into specific passages, the SOAP approach can help you grow in your faith and live more intentional and purposeful lives.

1. Scripture

The first step in the SOAP approach is to choose a verse or set of verses that stand out to you. The chosen scripture should be meaningful and resonate with you in some way. Read the passage of scripture several times and write it out word for word. This becomes the scripture portion of the journaling process.

2. Observation

The second step is to observe what is happening in the chosen scripture. This means paying attention to the context of the passage, the characters involved, and any significant themes or messages. Observations might include noting the emotions of the characters, the setting of the scene, or any repetition or symbolism in the text.

3. Application

The third step is application, which involves reflecting on how the scripture relates to your life. This could involve asking questions like, “What does this passage teach me about God?” or “How can I apply this passage to my own life?” The goal of this step is to connect the scripture to your personal experiences and find ways to incorporate its message into your life.

4. Prayer

The final step is prayer, which involves using the insights gained through the SOAP process to communicate with God in prayer. This could include expressing gratitude for the message of the scripture, asking for guidance in applying it to daily life, or seeking wisdom and strength to live in accordance with its teachings.

Example:

Following is an example of how to use SOAP referencing Psalm 1:1-2 (NIV).

1. Scripture

Write out the Scripture passage you want to study, word for word. Read it several times.

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

2. Observation

Here are some possible observations:

- The passage begins with the word "blessed," which means happy or fortunate.
- The first verse describes three things the blessed person does not do: walk in step with the wicked, stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers.
- The second verse describes what the blessed person does do: delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night.

3. Application

Here are some possible applications:

- The passage encourages me to avoid the company of people who do not follow God's ways and instead focus on meditating on His word.
- I need to make sure that my delight is in the Lord's law and that I am meditating on it regularly.
- When I am struggling with feelings of unhappiness or dissatisfaction, I can turn to this passage and remember that true happiness comes from following God's ways.

4. Prayer

Here is a sample prayer:

Dear God, thank you for this passage from Psalm 1. Help me to avoid the company of people who do not follow your ways and instead focus on meditating on your word. Please help me to delight in your law and to meditate on it day and night. I pray that I will find true happiness in following your ways. Amen.