

Bible e-Study /Pennies From Heaven #5

How Much is in Your Penny Jar - The Value of A Daily Prayer Journal

7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD. Ps 25:7

NUGGET – We are going to look here in the **NUGGET** at the two major ‘how’s’ for keeping a prayer journal. The *reasons* for keeping a prayer journal will be discussed in greater detail in the **GOING DEEPER** section.

But in our nugget verse today the psalmist writes, ***Remember not and according to your love remember***, as he addresses God. When we write down what God has done – how we have seen Him answer our prayers that can be helpful in making our memories of what God has done in our life last beyond a fleeting moment. Writing His answers to our prayer down helps us also to *remember*.

But for now let’s look at two basic formats of keeping a prayer journal. Depending on your personality and preferences, on how you ‘see’ the world, one of these two will be easier for you. Neither is better than the other and both help us to focus on God’s action in our lives. And there are variations and refinements that can be made within these two broad categories of either:

- ⌘ Date or
- ⌘ Topic

The date method being primarily chronological and can make easy use of calendars and day-timers or planners. A biblical example of this would be Kings or Chronicles. Both of these books record the actions of God in a more or less chronological fashion. The point being that as we record our prayer requests to God by *when* we pray we can return to that section of our history and see what God’s response has been. Also we can, over time perhaps, see how God has led us to a renewed or fresh understanding of His answer as we grow in our faith.

The topic method tends to make use of lists. Such lists can include things like family, health and nation or travel, thanks and knowledge of saving grace. This method allows great flexibility and can, for some people, remove anxiety relating to the timing of God’s answers. Examples from scripture include the Psalms and Proverbs.

Neither method need be mutually exclusive of the other. And there can be variations within each that suit your own way of entering your world. Also you can choose a variety of books, journals, and calendars along with differing ink colors to keep track of things.

Remember, that the method is important only in so far as it is useful to you. (Using neither is also a method if you’ve a good memory.) The method is there to help us focus on the purpose, which is to remember in a meaningful way, the action of God in our lives and in the world around us. Whatever the method, it is an aid, as the psalmist said today, of ***remembering*** and seeing the love of God in action in our lives.

APPLICATION –

1. Try writing out a list of 4 – 8 topics that you would like to ‘track’ and put one or two people’s names in them. Also take a calendar and look back over the last week or month and think about how God has answered your prayers.
2. Pick one method and use it for a week then switch.

PRAY – Ask God to give you His direction in this matter.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
'HEARING, SHARING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL'
Rev. Thomas A. Rhodes, Pastor



*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

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Take a look at [Philemon 4-7](#). St Paul writes down the prayer request he makes for Philemon. He also writes what God has caused to happen through Philemon. As you read these verses, what stands out for you as an example of remembering God at work and why?

Remember that seeing God act in our lives is one of the beneficial results of keeping a journal. Read [2 Peter 1:12-15](#). Peter speaks of refreshing his reader's memories of having, as he says in verse 9, "**been cleansed from (his) past sins**". Peter is using this letter, this written thing, to do that reminding. Is there anything else that Peter says that contributes to why using a prayer journal can be useful or helpful?

Now take a read of [Psalm 77:10-15](#). Do we often rehearse in our own thoughts and minds the things that God has done like is mentioned in this psalm? This psalm is a good example of a written reminder of the great works of God. When you read this list what images or thoughts are you reminded of out of the life of the Hebrew people? How does having a list like this stimulate further prayer for the life of the church in our day?

Read please [Psalm 42:1-8](#). When we pour out our heart to God, things get remembered. We remember the joy of the Lord being with us when we experience times of dryness, loneliness or pain. A journal can help us to recall those things that God has stretched out His hand toward us and accomplished in our daily life. It's not something that has to be made public or shared with anyone.

Keeping a journal is not a new law or order of things being suggested. It can be a discipline that can become a source of strength and comfort. It can be a thing that helps us as David was helped by writing out his songs of praise and lament, of imprecation and pleading, of sorrow and exuberant joy.

All of these things are what the Psalms teach us. The Psalms are often called the 'prayer book' of the bible. They are a great example of a prayer journal. There is nothing out of bounds for David to bring to God in prayer. There is nothing that he has hidden from God in these written prayers of poetry, and beauty.

When reading Psalm 42 certainly you identified in some way with what David was saying. That identification is borne of life experience. What did you come to learn about David and his life experience that comes through in this written prayer?

Finally let me say 2 things. The first being one more method of keeping a prayer journal that you may want to try. Follow the example of Psalms and write out whole prayers. Give some time to putting voice to paper and then keeping that tucked away. Decide a time frame to come back and review those written prayers (weekly, monthly, once a quarter) and see what God has done with them.

The second thing is that a prayer journal is not necessary. Prayer can happen at a level too deep for words. Remember a journal is there as an aid, it doesn't replace prayer. Don't let the keeping of a journal interfere with keeping up a vital prayer life.

By the same token though, don't rule out the benefits that may come by using such a discipline simply because you've not done it before. I pray God give you guidance to uplift you and to see His action in your life.

In the peace of Christ, PR