

The Christian's Spiritual Training Journal

“...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise both for the present life and the life to come.”

1 Timothy 4:7,8

By E. Neil Culbertson

The Christian's Spiritual Training Journal

a 52-Week Planner for Growing in God's Grace

Copyright © 2005 by Neil Culbertson. All rights reserved.
Published by Patient Endurance Publications
P.O. Box 338 Hagatna, Guam 96932 www.christianstraininglog.com
Printed in U.S.A. by Bookmasters, Inc. www.bookmasters.com

Edited by Neil Culbertson
Cover Photo © By Rick Jones
Cover & Interior design by Neil Culbertson

ISBN 0-9769371-0-7

No part of this book shall be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without the sole, written permission of the author. All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version ®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan.

Table of Contents

Orientation

I. Introduction

II. Brief Articles (located in back of journal – Please read first)

- Accountability Partners & Mentors—Safe & Sound
- Developing a Devotional Practice
- Guidance—Hearing God
- Gracious Giving—the Generosity of God
- Hiding the Word in My Heart
- Intercession—Praying with Purpose
- Journaling—Marking the Milestones with God
- Solitude—Withdrawing to a Lonely Place
- Strongholds—Overcoming Stubborn Evil
- Using the Journal with a Small Group

Planning

III. Year-At-A-Glance Spiritual Action Plan

Doing

IV. Daily-Weekly Diary

V. My Journal

VI. Bibliography of Suggested Resources

VII. Useful information & recording charts

- My Seeker Contact Information
- Edifying Movies I've Seen & want to recommend
- Edifying Music I've Heard & want to recommend
- Virtuous Websites that I have found helpful

Introduction

Welcome to the Christian's Spiritual Training Journal© 52-Week Edition! This manual has been designed to help you become more intentional about growing in God's grace.

Spiritual training, like physical training requires deliberate effort and a definite plan. If you are like me, you have dabbled at the Christian disciplines but tend to be hit-and-miss in your overall approach. This journal is designed to help you focus on the basic disciplines of Christian growth. The Year-At-A-Glance Spiritual Action Planner, at the front of this manual, provides a template for making growth choices about your goals in the most essential areas of Christian discipleship:



Neil Culbertson, Pastor and Journal Developer

- Scripture Memorization
- The Grace of Giving
- Evangelistic Prayer for Seekers
- Devotional Exercises
- Small Group ministries
- Inspirational Reading
- Intercessory Prayer
- Christian Service Projects
- Mentoring & Accountability
- Overcoming Strongholds

The Daily-Weekly Diary follows the Year-At-A-Glance planner. The weekday diary is the main body of the manual. You will notice that everything in your Year-At-A-Glance planner is integrated into the Daily-Weekly diary. At first glance, if you are at all like me, you are almost certainly going to be overwhelmed. You exclaim, "All those boxes and spaces and checklists! I can't do this! I won't!" This is the normal response.

Better?

The presence of a for you to dutifully fill journal; it belongs to You do as much or as

needs. There are columns I never use because I don't need to hold myself accountable in that particular area. If I don't need to check off a certain box to remind me I've done this or that discipline, I don't. You don't have to either.

You are hereby given permission to leave blank spaces and not fill in every column. You do not have to check every available box.

Take a deep breath. Relax.

column is not an obligation it in every day. This is your you. You are not its slave. little as fits with your

From week-to-week, I find that some disciplines are "on" and some aren't. My most used areas are in praying my prayer lists, checking on my stronghold, memory work and going through the week in review. Living the Lifestyle of Evangelism and making note of "significant people God has brought into my life for ministry" each week are the two columns and boxes that get the most consistent attention.

Approach your training journal with an attitude of grace. Don't set impossible goals. Pace yourself with modest commitments to each discipline. Write your tentative plans in pencil. Expect to erase and make adjustments throughout your year's journey with God and fellow pilgrims. A little commitment, consistently pursued, in each area will produce what athletes call "the training effect". You will grow. So don't make this training journal a new work with which to earn God's approval. You are simply practicing the disciplines God has designed to produce growth.

Salvation is a daily workout that we pursue with reverence and trembling awe, but it is God who is actually at work in us accomplishing his own good pleasure. Take pleasure in whatever measure of progress God grants.

I would encourage you to select perhaps only four significant books, just one a quarter. But be sure to give yourself time for rest. Athletes who train all the time don't get stronger, they get stale...and even sustain injuries. I think this happens in spiritual exercises, too. Each one of us is "wired" differently and has differing capacities to practice the disciplines.

You will notice that there is a significantly large column in the weekday diary devoted to tracking the "Emerging Patterns of God's Guidance." I have long believed that there are two great errors with respect to God's guidance. There are those who take flying leaps off the slimmest shreds of scripture into the pit of presumption, saying about every holy hunch, "God told me." These folks appear to have a "hotline" to God. On the other hand, there are those who will not allow God to give any guidance for fear of taking away from the inspiration and the sufficiency of God's Word. In between these extremes there are a whole range of believers who practice, with varying degrees of clarity or confusion, success or stumbling, the discipline of being "led by the Spirit."

There are some responsible writers who take seriously the experience of God's guidance while being quite aware of the dangers. *Hearing God*, by Dallas Willard, is in my opinion one of the most balanced studies on this exciting and vital dimension of the Christian experience. *Experiencing God*, by Claude V. King & Henry Blackaby is another life-changing and important work on this subject. I include a short article in this manual to suggest some principles and encouragement on how to be alert to God's leading.

To my knowledge no spiritual journal currently exists that provides what this one does. I am quite excited to share it with the larger body of Christ as I think it will be a very effective tool of growth for many. After years of writing a training log for joggers, long-distance runners and marathoners, I finally figured out a way to apply the principles of physical fitness to the process of spiritual fitness and growth. It all comes down to training.

“...*train yourself to be godly*. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise both for both the present life and the life to come.” (emphasis mine)

I Timothy 4:7,8

Consider the other passages in God’s Word that urge us to see spiritual growth as a matter of discipline and exercise:

“All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and *training in righteousness*, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (emphasis mine)

2 timothy 3:16

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, *so that everyone may see your progress*. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (emphasis mine)

I Timothy 4:15,16

So, enjoy your Journey with Christ. Make perfection your aim but be satisfied with whatever progress the Lord grants. Run the course he marks out for you with patient endurance and your eyes fixed on him. He is the One who began our faith and he will surely bring it to completion.

Growing & Going in His Grace,

Neil Culbertson, Pastor
Faith Presbyterian CRC, Guam – USA

P.S. Be sure to read those articles on the disciplines located toward the back of this journal. And, if you need encouragement or ideas to motivate you along, you can always check the website we maintain for this purpose: www.christianstraininglog.com

My Action Plan for Spiritual Growth

Year At A Glance

My Start Date: _____

<p>Scripture Memory</p> <p>“...in my heart have I hidden Your word...”</p>	<p>Books for Heart & Mind</p> <p>...adding knowledge to faith...</p>	<p>Devotional Guides</p> <p>... in His law he meditates day and night...</p>	<p>Prayer & Intercession Lists</p> <p>...Pray without ceasing...</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Exodus 20:1-17</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 46</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 51</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 90</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 91</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 95</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 100</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 103</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 23 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 121</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 24 <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 139</p> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 3:5-10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Proverbs 7:6-27</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ecclesiastes 3:1-8</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ecclesiastes 12:13-14</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 53 <input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 55</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Malachai 3:6-12</p> <hr/> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 5:3-12</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 6:5-15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 11:28-30</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 28:18-20</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> John 1:1-18</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Romans 10:9,10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Romans 8:28-39</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Romans 12:1-21</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Hint: Four well-chosen books (one a quarter), with time to really reflect, is better than racking up quantity.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing God</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My Utmost for His Highest</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Today – The Family Altar</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our Daily Bread</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Hint: Don't confuse devotions with full-blown bible study. Keep it simple. Talk with God about the daily reading.</p>	<p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p> <p>6. _____</p> <p>7. _____</p> <p>Hint: Use pencil. Pay attention in your Weekly Daily planner to those people God keeps bringing across your path.</p>

Day	Reading	Memorization	Devotional	Intercession	Overcoming Strongholds	
MONDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<h1 style="text-align: center;">WEEK 1</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">Record of Emerging Patterns of God's Guidance</p> <input type="checkbox"/> A specific verse/text seemed to especially apply to my situation. Text(s): _____). <input type="checkbox"/> Sensed the Holy Spirit leading me to take a specific action. <input type="checkbox"/> Leading doesn't violate any known Scriptural principles. <input type="checkbox"/> Have received encouragement from trusted spiritual advisors. <input type="checkbox"/> Had unusual & independent confirmations of this impression. <input type="checkbox"/> I may have manipulated this one. Describe your impression of God's Leading: Action Taken: Results: New Developments and/or Follow-up Actions:
TUESDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	
WEDNESDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	
THURSDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	
FRIDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	
SATURDAY	TIME: BOOK:	Passage: _____ Practiced: <input type="checkbox"/> Have it memorized: <input type="checkbox"/>	AM <input type="radio"/> NOON <input type="radio"/> PM Family <input type="radio"/> Myself <input type="radio"/>	Seekers List <input type="radio"/> Missions/aries <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	

Overview Of Weekly Growth

Week: _____ thru _____

- I have met once this week with my mentor or accountability partner.**

Comments on our meeting:

- This week God has helped me grow by showing me:**

- I participated in my small group ministry by:**

- showing up.
- I shared to the benefit of others.
- I ministered with my spiritual gift or in some other special way.
- I worshiped the Lord wholeheartedly.
- I did the small group assignment.
- I invited a friend to my small group.

- I lived the lifestyle of Evangelism this week by**

- Praying for people God has led into my daily/weekly routines.
- I performed a creative act of kindness for one of my seekers.
- Sharing the gospel message with an individual.
- Prayed with a person to receive Christ.

- I have participated in the Lord's Day Celebration by:**

- showing up.
- listening carefully & taking notes on the message.
- worshiped the Lord wholeheartedly
- got distracted by the enemy & circumstances.
- sharing a testimony or request in the prayer time.
- I gave my tithe & offerings eagerly & joyfully and as a true act of worship.
- I invited a friend/co-worker to service.
- I invited a visitor to join me for fellowship or a meal after the worship service.
- After the service I spoke at length with someone I did not know (or know well).

- God has brought the following significant people into my life for ministry this week:**

This Week's Message

Preacher:
Scripture Passage:
Sermon Title:

Date:

Notes:

Based on Today's Message, how does God want me to apply this word to the details of my life?

Persons to remember in prayer this week (from congregational prayer):

My Journal

“May the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
be pleasing in Your sight,
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Psalm 19:14

