

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

Reflective Writing and Bible Study¹

Reflective writing is a written meditation in God's presence, a way of keeping track of what I'm discovering as God reveals Himself and His truth.

Getting Started

Step One: Prepare a spiritual journal to hold your meditations and other journal entries. Use a notebook or keep journal papers in a folder.

Step Two: Set aside at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted time.

Step Three: Read the passage through in its context, highlighting words or phrases that stand out to you.

Step Four: In your journal copy part of the passage you want to focus on.

Step Five: For the first 10 minutes simply "discuss" on paper what you're seeing in the passage. Write down the thoughts going through your mind. This is not structured writing. Don't edit out insights, questions, problems, or tangents that seem to be "off track." Write everything down.

Step Six: Write a summary of what you learned in this meditation.

Step Seven: Include creative writing ideas or research decisions. After completing the previous steps, you may want to try writing a poem, a song, or a creative essay on what God has been showing you. Or you may want to write down a topic or phrase for further study or research for answers.

Step Eight: Be receptive to God's continuing demonstration of truth. Over the days following the initial meditation on a passage, be receptive to what God is showing you that underscores His truth and its applications. When this happens, take time to write it down.

Example of journal entries for Steps Four and Five: Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Jesus is speaking to me! I'm carrying my own burdens and feeling exhausted. I can't find a solution!

Jesus is offering relief. I'm listening!

"Take my yoke upon you."

Taking His yoke seems to imply a relationship because we'd be together in it. Is that what happened when I was born again? What a word picture! Why haven't I seen this before?

"and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart."

Besides taking the yoke of salvation, Jesus is also offering me a wonderful lifelong apprenticeship at His side to learn how to live as He did, gently and with humility. His life will be my focus once I'm in the yoke with Him. God will change me.

"and you will find rest for your souls."

He says I'll find soul rest—my mind and emotions will be at ease. I won't be striving anymore.

"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Could it be that "light" is not the opposite of heavy but it is that light spoken of in relation to Jesus in Jn 1:9 *"The true light that gives light to every man"*? Then if we are truly yoked with Him, we are walking in the same light as He did.

¹ Slightly modified. Kulkarni, D. (1997). Reflective writing and Bible study. *Discipleship Journal*, 99, 18-19.