



SCHOOL OF
PROPHETS
AOTEAROA



CONVERSATIONAL JOURNALING...

with God

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A note from Lyn

Hi, I'm Lyn Packer and I lead the School of Prophets Aotearoa.

I love talking to God. It's a vital part of my daily walk with Him, and crucial for building and deepening our relationship together, for gaining understanding, context, and wisdom in both life and ministry situations.



God has made us so that we can have relationship with Him. Passivity and emotions are not enough to build a true relationship; it needs a process of self-disclosure to happen on the part of those in the relationship. It needs conversations and experiences with Him, so we can get to know Him better. Learning how to communicate with God conversationally, instead of passively hoping and waiting for Him to speak to me, has been a critical part of building my relationship with Him. That communication has happened both in actual speech and in writing or journaling my conversations with Him.

In this guide, I want to introduce you to something I call Conversational Journaling (It is also referred to by others as two-way journaling). This way of communicating with God has been something I've loved doing over the years. I pray that it will be a help in deepening your relationship with the Lord, too.

Bless you heaps

Lyn

LET'S DO IT!



WHAT THE BIBLE TELLS US

The Bible is full of records of people's interactions and conversations with God, and is in many ways a journal of those interactions throughout the centuries. Right from the beginning, when God created Adam and Eve, He walked with them and He talked with them. God loved that time of intimacy with them, just as He does with us today.

God keeps a journal about His desires and plans for our lives, and about our daily happenings. Here are a couple of verses that tell us about that.

Psa 139:16 "...but with your own eyes you saw my body being formed. Even before I was born, you had written in your book everything about me."
(CEV)

Psa 56:8 "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?"

Rev 12:20 tells us of books kept in heaven that hold records. *"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works"*



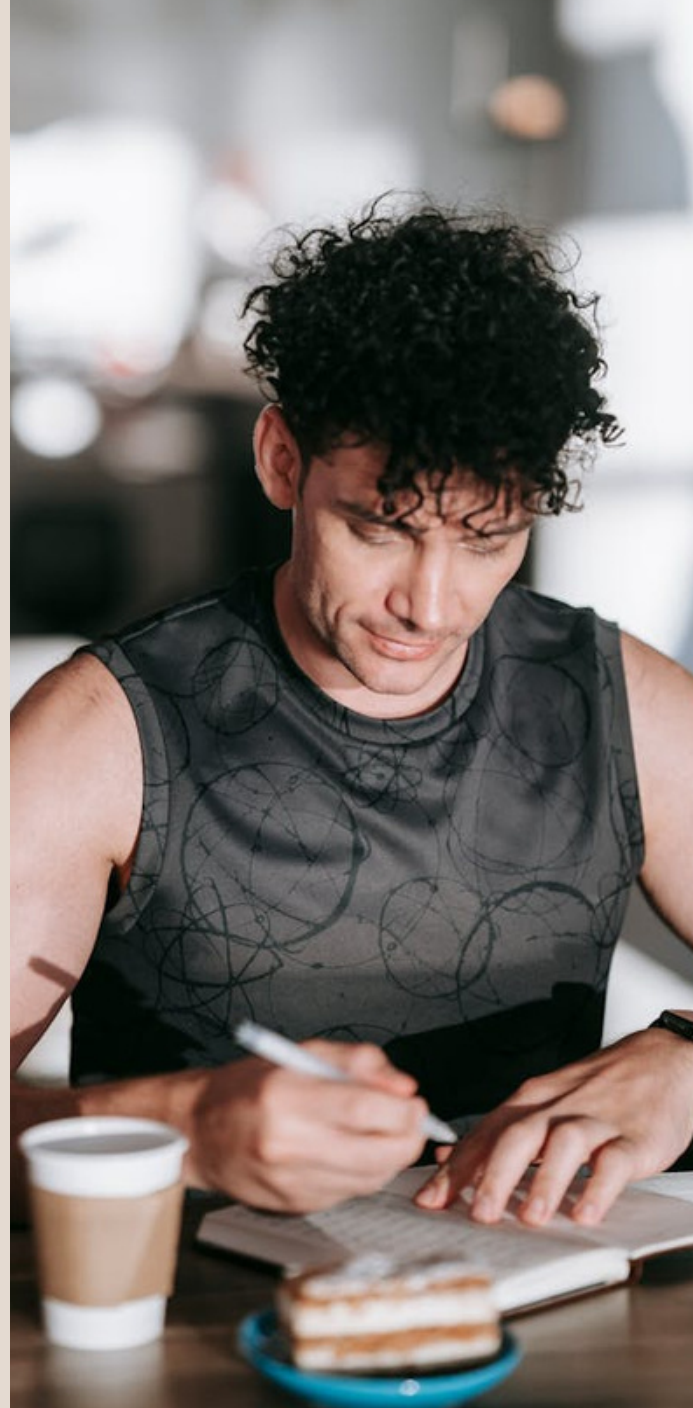
David was someone who kept extensive records of his conversations with God. That's how we got the book of Psalms. In Psa 32:7,8 David says to the Lord, *"You are my hiding place; you will preserve me from trouble, you will surround me with songs of deliverance."* God answers him back saying, *"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with my eye."* David knew that God wanted to talk to him, and he expected to hear from Him.

The Psalms are a record of David's (and other people's) life experiences and conversations with God, and are in some ways a form of journaling that was made public. Much of the Bible is a record of peoples' conversations and experiences with God. If they hadn't recorded them, we wouldn't be able to read them and learn from their relationship with God.

Self-disclosure and intimacy

All self-disclosure or revelation of oneself is an invitation to greater intimacy, dialogue, and co-operation within our relationships, and all three aspects are equally important. Our relationship with God is no different.

God reveals His heart to us because He loves us, and He shows us things so we will grow in our relationship with Him, and understand Him more, as well as partner with Him relationally in releasing Heaven into Earth.



THE ADVENTURE OF JOURNALING WITH GOD...

Relationships are built by conversations and shared experiences. God has made us so that we can have conversations with Him and get to know Him better, and talking with the Lord is a great way to experience Him. Just as David and others in the Bible recorded their conversations with God, so can we. Journaling is a great way of keeping track of what the Lord has shown us, and of getting to know Him.

There are different ways of journaling that range from normal written journaling to art journaling, art therapy journaling, photographic journaling, and probably more, with many containing a written component in them.

Normal written journaling is where we write about our day, and it usually includes what we did, highlights and downsides of events that happened, and how we felt about the day and the things it contained. It is you recording your memories and thoughts about the day.

Conversational journaling with God is slightly different. It's where you write down your thoughts, questions, and prayers, and then listen and write down what God answers back. It's actually very simple and easy to do.

Conversational journaling is great for teaching us how easy and natural it is to hear God and hold conversations with Him throughout the day.



What materials do you need to do conversational journaling?

- A journal – it can have lined or unlined pages, it's your choice.
- A pen – Hand-writing your entries is the best way of journaling, in that it uses your brain in a way that is more holistic and beneficial for you than typing on a computer keyboard. (There is plenty of information you can check out about this online if you want to know more.)
- A quiet place and time where you won't be disturbed by unnecessary interruptions. I suggest you turn your phone off, or leave it outside the room, unless it's crucial that you have it with you for urgent communication purposes.

How long you spend is up to you, but I can guarantee you will end up wanting to spend heaps of time with God. The more time you spend chatting, the more you want to spend. That's what developing a relationship is like – being with someone you love and want to know them more...



HOW TO DO CONVERSATIONAL JOURNALING

Quieten yourself and focus on Jesus.

Psa 46:10 tells us, *“Be still, stop striving and know that He is God.”* This verse gives us some important tips.

- **Be still** – bring your body, heart, and mind to a state of stillness. Sit somewhere comfortable. Exhale and give yourself permission to spend this much-needed time with God.
- **Stop striving** – Relax! God wants to spend time with you and talk with you and His wanting to do that isn’t based on how good you’ve been. He wants to spend time with you because He loves you – full stop!
- **Know that He is God** – the word ‘*know*’ means ‘to make oneself known, to know by experience, be instructed or learn’. It means that we can reflect on, learn about, and discover for ourselves, the nature and character of God in all His goodness and love.

As you start your session, spend some time thanking Him for loving you, or worshipping Him, until you feel that peace and stillness in your heart. Still your thoughts and emotions, focus on the Lord, picture Him there with you in your mind’s eye. It’s important that your focus is on the Lord, and not on your needs or desires. To hear from the Lord we must honestly want to hear His opinion or wisdom, not just to have Him confirm our desires or opinions. If our focus is on Him, that’s who we’ll hear; but if our focus is on our desires, we’ll possibly hear our heart speak, not Him.





Believe that God will speak

In Hab 2:1 we see the prophet Habakkuk standing watch to see what God will speak to him. Notice that he is expecting God to speak, and is listening and looking with expectation. I believe that means Habakkuk was being alert, listening and looking with anticipation with both his internal ears and sight and his physical ears and sight.

It's important that we believe that God will speak to us, that we go into our times with Him with expectation. Expectation is important, as it makes us focus with a listening heart.

Write what you see or hear

Begin to write down your thoughts, questions, and requests. Write just like you would speak; there is no special language needed except honesty. Then after you've done that, fix your attention on Jesus and listen with expectancy.

Be open to God speaking into your mind. His voice will most likely come as a spontaneous flow of thoughts that enters your mind. or God may also speak using visions, feelings, or impressions.

None of these are better ways to receive than others, they are simply different. If you're aware that God can speak in these different ways you'll be less likely to automatically dismiss what comes. We'll talk about weighing and testing later. Describe any visions that come, as God will have treasure for you to find and unpack in them.

As that spontaneous flow of thoughts, impressions, and vision happens, begin to write it down. Don't question at this stage, just write what comes into your heart and mind. You will get to check it later.

Scripture tells us that when we ask God for bread He won't give us a stone, so believe that you are hearing from Him. Write in faith, and after the flow of receiving from the Lord is ended you can then check what you've recorded the Lord saying.

I suggest that you don't break the flow part way through in order to stop and read. The reason we often want to do that is because sometimes we may get hit by thoughts like, "What if I'm just making this up, imagining that God is speaking to me?"

Our brain is so used to being in control that it can take a while for it to get used to letting our spirit rule. Also, the devil doesn't want you to hear from the Lord – remember we talked about that earlier – his is one of the voices we may hear speak to us internally, and he may try to use distracting and discouraging words to stop that flow.

You can address both your natural brain and the devil in the same way. Simply tell them to stop interrupting – that you will read over what you've written after you've finished and answer any questions then. Don't let your thoughts or the devil take over this precious time with the Lord.

After Habakkuk waits to hear and see, the Lord speaks to him and tells him to write the vision out so those who read it may run with it. It is like that with us, too; God will speak so much to us that if we don't write it down we may forget what He has said, and we won't be able to run with it (to follow through on it).



Read what you've written

Now is the stage where you read through what's been written from the Lord to you. You'll be amazed at the things He says! What you've written down from Him will be full of things you wouldn't think of saying, and it will contain wisdom beyond your understanding. Sit and soak it all in for a few minutes and feel His love and care for you. Then thank Him, worship Him, and ask Him what He wants you to do as a result of what He's shared with you. Again, write His answer down, as it will give you something to help you remember what He's asked of you.

Check it out, test it and weigh it

How will you really know that it's God that has spoken, and not your mind, or Satan? Below are five ways you can check it out.

Check its origin – Our own thoughts are usually progressive, whereas thoughts from the spirit realm are spontaneous. As you were writing did you force any of it and try to 'think what to write next' or did it just flow without your thinking it through? If it flowed spontaneously then it probably did come from the spirit realm. Now check whether it came from God or Satan. With practice, learning to recognize God's voice becomes much easier, but the points below will help you know for sure where it came from.



Compare it to the Bible – God's words will not violate the overall principles of the Bible, and He will never tell you to do something that contradicts those principles. For example, He will not endorse sin, breaking the laws of our land, lying or adultery, or things like ongoing unforgiveness, hating someone, etc. He will encourage us to work things out with people, to love, to forgive, to be generous etc.

Compare it to the names, nature and character of God – God will not say anything contrary to His nature. For example, He is loving, kind, merciful, and slow to anger. One of His names is ‘Jehovah Jireh’ – the God who provides. He is also the God who heals, the ever-present one, and much more. Knowing what the Bible says about God, Jesus and Holy Spirit will help you discern whether what is written is from them. So spend time reading your Bible to find out what they are like and what their names, nature and character are. There are also some good books available to buy that share all the names of God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, and their meanings, that you can use alongside your Bible to double check.

Test its fruit – Does what is written draw you closer to the Lord? Does it strengthen your faith and increase your love, joy and peace? Does it make you think of others more kindly etc? If what you’ve recorded is from God it will cause good fruit to come in your life and in the lives of any others it affects.

Check it with others – Checking things out with others is not a sign of unbelief, it’s a sign of maturity and trust. We all need people we can check things out with, and who can provide us with another point of view, ask questions, encourage us, and confirm what we’ve heard God say.

Check it out with your spouse, your parents, or your group leader – preferably choose someone who is a mature and wise Christian. They don’t have to be perfect – no one is – but it’s preferable if they love God and are trustworthy, know their Bible, and have a good relationship with God.

Don’t choose someone who wants you to listen to only them and no one else, who is authoritarian, or who believes they have the right perspective on everything, and they no longer need to listen to others. That sort of person will lead you astray.



Follow through

If there was anything in what was written that you need to follow through on, then do so.

After you've done anything the Lord has asked, you can journal when you did it and what happened. It's wonderful to have the record of God's goodness and faithfulness to you recorded so that when hard times come – and they will – you can look back on what the Lord has done and be encouraged that He will be faithful yet again.



Activation time – Let's do this!

Buy yourself a journal and set aside some time to have a conversation with the Lord using this method of communication. Approach it with expectation – you're about to start a grand adventure!

Figure out when and where you are going to do your journaling and set the space up so it's comfortable and has the things you need on hand. (Some suggestions – a bottle of water or cup of coffee or tea, a spare pen, tissues, and a comfy chair and table)

Then, when you're ready, simply follow the steps I shared in this booklet and enjoy the first of many profound and potentially life-transforming times talking with the Lord.

IN FINISHING

Journeying with God, getting to know Him, and doing life with Him, is the grandest adventure anyone can embark on. Keeping a record of it to look back on helps us remember the things He said and did, and can be an immense help in our hard times.

My prayer is that you will not only enjoy conversational journaling, but also that it will be a huge blessing to you and provide you with heaps of testimonies to share with others about how great this grand adventure with God truly is.

Thanks for allowing me to share this with you.

Arohanui - much love

Lyn

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Thank you

For allowing me to walk alongside
you in your growth journey.

