

Solitude Practice

Emmanuel Journaling

Immanuel (literally, "God with us") Journaling is a method of journaling that helps you think with God about your current situation. Essentially, you are writing a letter to God and then writing out His response to you, based on what you know of Him from His Word and the prompting of His Spirit. It's important to engage in Immanuel Journaling in the context of a regular habit of Bible reading and meditation. As you reflect on your current situation and need, the Word of God with you and in you will shape how you think about God's response to you.

Set aside about 30 minutes in a quiet space where you can be still and engage in this practice. Turn off your phone (or put it in airplane mode).

Start your time by centering yourself in the truths of the Gospel. As you do this, your mind and heart will naturally wander. Rather than feel angry or frustrated at yourself for wandering, just see these moments as invitations to return back to God. He's happy to be with you!

Settle into the quiet. Pay attention to your breathing and take slow deep breaths in and out. As distractions come to mind, release them to God. Picture them floating away like leaves floating down a river.

Try praying a "breath prayer" that will help center you in the Gospel. Breathing in, you pray the first part; breathing out, the second. For example: breathing in, pray, "Father"; breathing out, pray, "I belong to you."

Try one of these breath prayers and spend a few minutes in this:

- Father, I belong to you.
- Loving Father, I am your beloved son/daughter.
- I follow close to you, your right hand holds on to me. (Ps. 68:3)
- Be still, and know that You are God (Ps. 46:10)

Immanuel Journaling Continued...

After a few minutes centering yourself in the Gospel, try practicing Immanuel Journaling. Open your journal, or use this page, and write out your prayer and God's response using the prompts below.

Write your prayer based on what's happening right now in your life. God invites and desires your honesty about what you're feeling and what you're experiencing as you come to Him. You don't need to pretend. Be honest with God! Then, let the Word of God shape what you write as "God's response" to you.

Write Your Prayer

Dear Father,

I need your help with (briefly describe a specific situation of need)...

I appreciate that you (e.g., are emotionally present for me, empowering me, etc.)...

Immanuel Journaling Continued...

Write God's Response

Dear (Your Name),

I see you in this situation and notice your physical demeanor of (e.g. being busy, tossing and turning in bed, clenching your jaw, slumping your shoulders, crying)...

I hear what you are saying (out loud and/or in your mind)...

I understand that you're feeling (e.g. sad, angry, afraid, hurt, lonely, shame, guilt, glad)...

I realize this is really big for you because you want or long for...

I'm glad to be with you and I'm proud of you for your (e.g. vulnerability, courage, kindness, perseverance, honesty, etc.)...

I want to encourage you and help you by (e.g. a Scripture promise)