

Introduction

Welcome to the *Living the Word Companion Journal*, which is designed to enhance your reading of the *Living the Word Catholic Women's Bible*, published by Ave Maria Press. That Bible offers more than two hundred pages of special features written for women, by women from many backgrounds. As you read, you will find yourself drawn again and again into a “company of women” who want to share with you what they have discovered through their own encounters with God's Word. If you don't already have a copy, you will certainly want to get one!

Journaling as you read scripture is a time-tested aid to taking God's Word to heart and growing in intimacy with him. The simple act of writing can help us remember and clarify what we read, form questions, apply it to our lives, and respond to God in prayer. Keeping a journal can foster gratitude and store up reasons for hope while building a record of God's work in our lives.

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN
Sacred Scripture
SO THAT GOD AND MAN
MAY TALK TOGETHER;
FOR WE SPEAK TO HIM
WHEN WE PRAY; WE HEAR
HIM WHEN WE READ THE
DIVINE SAYING.

St. Ambrose

FEATURES OF THE LIVING THE WORD COMPANION JOURNAL

This journal will help you grow closer to Jesus in his Word as you develop a regular habit of reading and praying with scripture:

- A simple, two-page format guides your journaling for 100 days of scripture reading, with room for observations and questions, applications and prayers.
- “Today’s Living Word” is a daily scripture to inspire, encourage, and challenge you.
- Specially designed frames invite you to copy down or illustrate meaningful verses to remember from each reading.
- “Taking Stock” pages allow you to articulate the highlights of what you’ve learned in the past ten days—and be inspired by motivating quotes from the *Living the Word Catholic Women’s Bible*.
- Prayer intentions and reasons for thanksgiving can be kept handy on pages 223–25.
- Once completed, the Reading Log at the front of this journal forms a “table of contents” to help you find what you have already written about particular passages.

GETTING STARTED

These tips will help you cultivate a habit of regular Bible reading. Some have been gleaned from a feature in the *Living the Word Catholic Women’s Bible* called “Where Do I Start? A Beginner’s Guide to Reading the Bible” (pages 1923–24).

1. *Prepare a space.* Pick a place you can reasonably set aside for a daily encounter with the Lord. Schedule a convenient time, and designate a shelf or basket to hold your Bible, this journal, a pen, and maybe a rosary and a favorite icon: anything you might need as you spend time with God.
2. *Set achievable reading goals.* Plan ahead for a week or a month so you’ll always know what to read when you begin (see the suggestions in “Where Do I Start?” and the reading plans at the back of the *Living the Word Catholic Women’s Bible*). If you choose to read a book of the Bible, read the introduction first and take note of any topical essays that might be found within it. See the Women of the Word Index in this journal or at the back of the *Living*

the Word Catholic Women’s Bible to start reading about some of the women of scripture, our sisters in the faith. Or check out that Bible’s Feature Index to follow a theme of interest through scripture. Sunday Mass readings can be found at usccb.org.

- 3. *Record your plan and chart your progress* on the Reading Log on pages xiii–xxii for later reference. Your log might look something like this:

GOAL	PROGRESS	JOURNAL PAGES
Sunday’s readings	Dt 30:10–14, Ps 19:8–11	2–3
	Col 1:15-20	4–5
	Lk 10:25–37	6–7

- 4. *Read God’s Word with a heart tuned to hear.* When you read, linger at places that are meaningful to you. As described in the *Living the Word Catholic Women’s Bible’s* “Where Do I Start?” feature (pages 1923–24): pray first, persist, ponder, and be patient. The scripture will nourish and transform you even if you can’t feel it work. God wants to speak to you! The more you read, the more you’ll learn to hear his voice.

You may not understand everything you read. That is okay. Focus on the things you do understand and take note of things you might want to explore further at a different time. The more familiar you become with scripture, particularly with the overall “story” of the Bible, and the more you deepen your knowledge of it and the Catholic faith through study, the richer your devotional reading will become. (For more about this, be sure to check out Catherine Cavadini’s feature “Illuminating Fire” in the front of your Bible, pages xvii–xviii.)

 *Lord, thank you* 

FOR THE GIFT OF
SCRIPTURE. HELP ME
TO GET TO KNOW YOU
AND TO
hear you speak to my heart
AS I READ. GRANT THAT
I MIGHT GROW IN FAITH
AND LOVE OF YOU AND
OTHERS AS I LEARN
TO LIVE ACCORDING TO
YOUR WORD.

Amen.



Prayer before Reading Scripture

5. *Journal as you read.* Begin by recording the date and passage you will read, then follow the prompts to write down your insights and questions as they occur to you. Copy down a meaningful verse in the space provided; the simple act of writing will help you internalize and remember it. Finally, write a short prayer in response to what you have read, including any way you feel prompted to “live the Word.”
6. *Make your Bible your own.* As you read, don’t be shy about underlining key words or highlighting phrases that are meaningful to you in your Bible. Use the margins to add insights or to note the date and occasion when a passage gave you strength or comfort or formed the basis of a prayer. Consider keeping a list of “life verses” you want to memorize in the back of your Bible for easy reference.
7. *Continue the conversation.* As you continue to ponder the truths of scripture, ask God to help you understand what you have read in a new way. Expect the Lord to speak to you throughout the day, revealing himself to you and showing you how to apply what you have read. Memorize important verses so they will come to mind when you need them. Record prayer intentions and things you’re grateful for on pages 223–25, noting scripture that encourages or strengthens you regarding them, so you can look back and see how God has worked in your life.
8. *Finally, share your discoveries!* As you continue to explore the scriptures on your own, reading the insights of the women whose essays and other features you will find interspersed throughout the Bible text, consider inviting a few friends over for coffee to talk about what God has been saying to you in these daily encounters. Or join an established faith-sharing group at your parish. Talking and praying with your sisters in Christ, you may discover new insights into old questions and be inspired to return again and again to this well of living water you have discovered in the quiet of your home.

May God bless you as you read his Word!

Sarah Christmyer

General Editor

Living the Word Catholic Women’s Bible



ONE GLANCE AT
the holy Gospel,
AND THE LIFE OF JESUS
BECOMES A PERFUME
THAT FILLS THE VERY
AIR I BREATHE.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

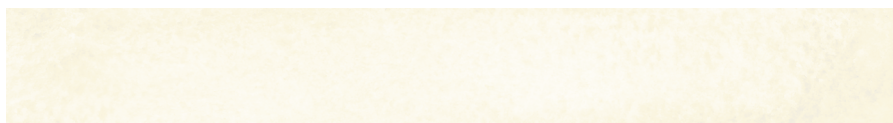
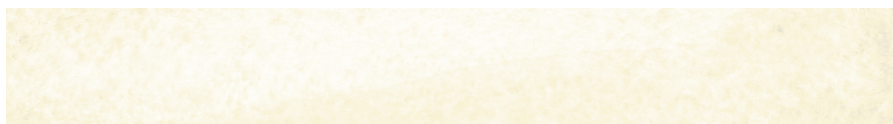
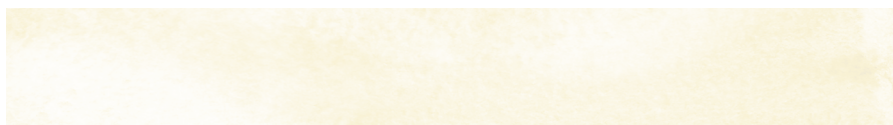
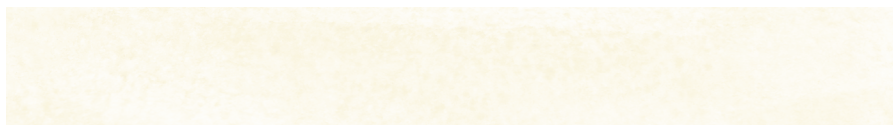


Reading Log

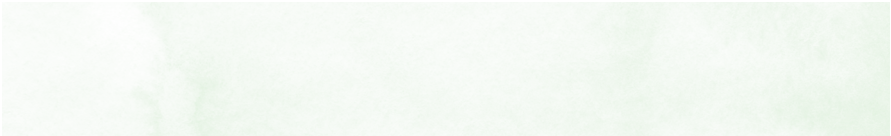
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PROGRESS

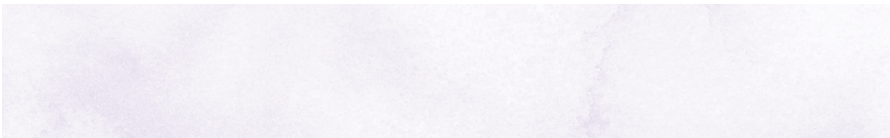
JOURNAL PAGES



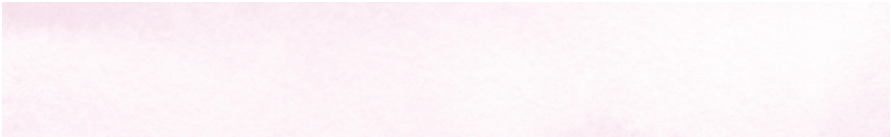
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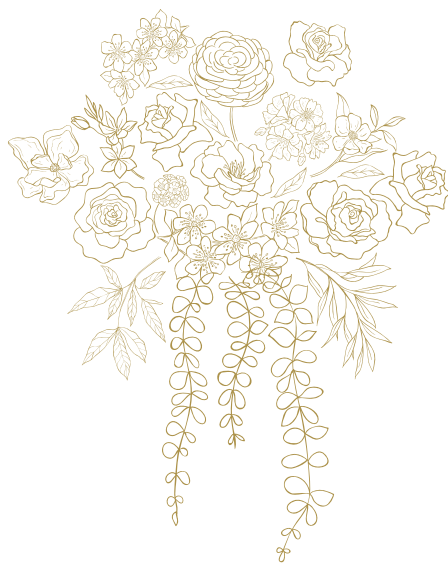


GOAL	PROGRESS	JOURNAL PAGES
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Journal Pages

100 Days
in the Word



Today's Living Word

Date:

Today's Scripture Passage:

Key Verse



Notes and Observations:

(What does this say? What catches my attention? What do I not understand—or want to know more about?)

Going Deeper:

(How does this touch my life? What is God saying to me?)

My Prayer Response:

(How will I live this Word today?)

SO FAITH, HOPE, LOVE
ABIDE, THESE THREE;
BUT THE GREATEST OF
THESE IS LOVE.

1 Corinthians 13:13



Today's Living Word

Date:

Today's Scripture Passage:

Key Verse



Notes and Observations:

What does this say? What catches my attention? What do I not understand—or want to know more about?

Going Deeper:

(How does this touch my life? What is God saying to me?)

My Prayer Response:

(How will I live this Word today?)

BE WATCHFUL, STAND
FIRM IN YOUR FAITH, BE
COURAGEOUS, BE STRONG.
LET ALL THAT YOU DO
BE DONE IN LOVE.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14



Today's Living Word

Date:

Today's Scripture Passage:

Key Verse



Notes and Observations:

(What does this say? What catches my attention? What do I not understand—or want to know more about?)

Going Deeper:

(How does this touch my life? What is God saying to me?)

My Prayer Response:

(How will I live this Word today?)

SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM
AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS,
AND ALL THESE THINGS
SHALL BE YOURS AS WELL.

Matthew 6:33

