

HEAR JOURNAL¹

The HEAR journaling method promotes reading the Bible along with your D group (discipleship group). The goal is to understand and respond to God's word together. The acronym HEAR stands for Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond. Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere to hear God speak. Your HEAR journal entries will become the basis of your week's discussion with your D group.

At Caversham Community Church, many members engage in inductive Bible study, which takes up to five hours per week. We encourage these members to base their HEAR journal entries on the biblical passage they are already studying inductively. For example, if the inductive study for the week covers John 20, your HEAR journal entries should derive from John 20, or cross-references related to John 20.

If a D group is not using inductive Bible study as the basis for discussion, the D group should decide upon an alternate reading plan. Highly recommended is one of the F-260 plans at the following website: <https://replicate.org/foundations/>. You can read the Old and New Testaments together, or just the New Testament.

How to Write a HEAR Journal

Highlight. After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open your notebook or journal and write the letter H at the top left-hand corner. This exercise will remind you to read with a purpose. In the course of your reading, one or two verses will usually stand out and speak to you. After reading the passage, highlight a verse or two that speaks to you by copying it under the letter H. Record the following:

- Date and location where you are
- The passage of Scripture, with the reference
- A title to describe the passage

Explain. After you have highlighted the passage, write the letter E under the previous entry. Now you will explain what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of God's Spirit, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse. Here are a few questions you can ask:

- How does it fit with the verses before and after it?
- Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?
- What does the Holy Spirit intend to communicate through this text?

At this point, you are beginning the process of discovering the specific and personal message God has for you from his word. You should be engaging the text and wrestling with its meaning.

¹ Excerpt from Robby Gallaty and Chris Swain, *Replicate: How to Create a Culture of Disciple-Making Right Where You Are* (Chicago: Moody, 2020), 71-80.

Application. After writing a brief summary of what you think the text means, write the letter A. This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally:

- How does this apply today?
- What would the application of this verse look like in my life?
- What is God saying to me?

These questions bridge the gap between the ancient world and our world today. They provide a way for God to speak to you from the specific passage or verse. Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

Respond. Finally, below the first three entries, write the letter R for respond. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing a prayer to God.

We could give you hundreds and hundreds of testimonies of people who were hesitant at first to log HEAR entries. After just one week of digging into God’s Word, many have commented that it has changed their lives. Our challenge is to try journaling for one week. We’re convinced you’ll never be the same.

HEAR Journal Example

H (Highlight): “This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him” (1 John 5:14-15).

E (Explain): Verses like these can be confusing because the idea of a God who gives us whatever we want is attractive. The key in this passage is “according to his will.” The idea may be summarised like this: Make your wants God’s wants, and then ask for whatever you want.

A (Apply): I find myself wanting all sorts of things. Sometimes it’s something different every day. I need to focus on aligning myself with God’s will so that when I ask something, it’s already something that He wants too. His ways are higher than mine, so are His wants higher than my wants.

R (Respond): Father, make me more like You in every way—in my thoughts, actions, and desires. Make the desires of my heart the same things Your heart desires, so that I can devote myself to the things that bring You joy.

For more info, please visit: <https://replicate.org/what-is-a-hear-journal/>