

The H.E.A.R. Method

How to complete a HEAR Journal

The acronym **H.E.A.R.** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps contributes to creating an atmosphere to hear God speak.

For an illustration, let's assume that you begin your quiet time in the book of 2 Timothy, and today's reading is the first chapter of the book. Before reading the text, pause to sincerely ask God to speak to you. It may seem trite, but it is absolutely imperative that we seek God's guidance in order to understand His Word (1 Corinthians 2:12-14). Every time we open our Bibles, we should pray the simple prayer that David prayed: *"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Word)"* (Psalm 119:18).

After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, open your notebook or journal, and at the top left-hand corner, write the letter H. 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 of Scripture, **HIGHLIGHT** each verse that speaks to you by copying it under the letter "H". Write out the following:

- The name of the book
- The passage of Scripture
- The chapter and verse numbers that especially speak to you
- A title to describe the passage

After you have highlighted the passage, write the letter "E" under the previous entry. At this stage, 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 to get you started:

Why was this written?

To whom was it originally written?

How does it fit with the verses before and after it?

Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?

What is He intending to communicate through this text?

After writing a short summary of what you think the text means, write the letter "A" below the letter "E". Under the "A", write the word **APPLY**. The application is the heart of the process. As you have done before, answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally, questions like:

How can this help me?

What does this mean today?

What would the application of this verse look like in my life?

What does this mean to me?

What is God saying to me?

Answer these questions under the "A". Challenge yourself to write between two and five sentences about how the text applies to your life.

Finally, below the first three entries, write the letter "R" for **RESPOND**. This is the last part of the HEAR Journal. 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 out a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous in your giving. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read. Try to be specific in your response and be prepared to ask your Discipleship Group to hold you accountable to any commitments that you make.