

A GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR
Word of the Year

A single word can change your perspective and grow your faith.

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We all have that pile of laundry that moves from the bed to the couch to the chair until its been picked through until a few unmatched socks remain. Have you ever treated your spiritual formation like that pile of laundry? We can put faith off to the side with our best intentions at heart, hoping we can come back around to it when... (insert any excuse here).

When it comes to our faith, we can feel overwhelmed by setting goals and making resolutions. Choosing to read the entire Bible in a year or memorizing a verse per week are wonderful disciplines, but there are some of us who struggle to complete these lofty goals and we're left feeling guilty, ashamed, or defeated. That isn't the point of spiritual formation exercises, they are meant to encourage our hearts, deepen our faith, and connect us to the Holy One. Which brings me to why you are here...*finding your word of the year.*

I discovered the joy of choosing a word of the year in 2012. The simplicity of this discipline has been a powerful tool for connection with God. I have been able to accomplish effective, deep-heart change through the focus on a single word for the year. My words each year have brought clarity, comfort, guidance, and assurance. Each year has been unique and unbelievably impactful, which is why I truly believe in this process. No, this won't make you into a saint, theologian, or super spiritual guru, but embracing a word for the year will allow you to grow your faith in a subtle, focused, and steady approach.

The pages of this workbook are meant to be a guide as you discover your word of the year and what you can do with your word for the next 365 days.

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1 PRAYER & REFLECTION

The process begins with prayer and reflection. We must offer an invitation to God to partner with us in developing this rhythm for our daily walk of faith. We also must take time to reflect on where we have been, where we are, and who we are becoming.

The following are prompts to assist your thinking toward reflection and prayer. As you are sitting with these questions, don't edit your answers, write down your thoughts, even if it seems silly or out of place. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you and enjoy a moment of calm.

PROMPTS

- How do I want my heart to be more like Jesus?
- What plans do You (God) have for me?
- What do I need to leave behind?
- What do I need to pick up?
- What areas of my life need improvement?

Reflect on words, themes, and Scriptures that pop up. In my experience, God has already started planting seeds for my word before I even approach Him. This step can take some time, so be patient and continue to ask God for your word and if this process is right for you. Take a deep breath and remember, God's timing is perfect. This is a personal process and it will work for you if you allow God to lead.

- + If you have discovered your word, proceed to step 3!
- + If you are still waiting for your word to find you, proceed to step 2!

2 INSPIRING WORDS

Review the notes and journaling you have been keeping. Pay attention to repeating themes or words in your journaling. If no words seem to be making their way to your heart, take a look at the list of words below. Circle the words that trigger an emotion or memory. Pray over the words you have circled and continue to be patient.

JOURNEY	FOCUS	WONDER	FAMILY	DETERMINATION
PROSPER	GROW	EMBRACE	SLOW	ENOUGH
CONTRIBUTE	ORGANIZE	COURAGE	POSSIBILITY	IMPROVE
DISCIPLINE	SIMPLIFY	HUMBLE	PERSEVERE	STRENGTH
LAUGH	BLOOM	WISH	LOVE	ENCOURAGE
READY	BRAVE	CHANGE	MORE	WAKE
SHIFT	INSPIRE	LISTEN	REFLECT	PRESENT
DELIGHT	THRIVE	FREE	LIGHT	BEAUTY
PATIENCE	GRATITUDE	BUILD	HEART	ENTHUSIASM
CULTIVATE	CONSISTENCY	FLOURISH	NOW	CONNECT
STILLNESS	BALANCE	MOVE	PASSION	ALIGNMENT
SERENITY	BE	RENEW	JOY	PRIORITY
VISION	WORTH	PROGRESS	UNLIMITED	CREATE
WISDOM	ELEVATE	EXPLORE	RELAX	NEW
VULNERABILITY	TODAY	FINISH	PRAY	FAITH
ADVENTURE	LESS	HOPE	SPARKLE	BELIEVE
EXAMPLE	MINDFUL	FEARLESS	REPRESENT	TRANSFORM
COMFORT	CONSIDERATE	HAPPY	WHOLE	INTEGRITY
GIVE	CALM	SPIRIT	KINDNESS	GENTLE
RISE	POSITIVITY	GLORIOUS	PLAY	EXPANSION
PERSPECTIVE	RESPECT	GRACE	THOUGHTFUL	GROUNDED
GLOW	APPRECIATE	TRUTH	DELIBERATE	HARMONY
FORGIVE	ENLIGHTEN	BELONG	TRUST	ACTION
OBSERVE	INTENTIONAL	STRIVE	CONSCIOUS	AMBITION
SOUL	FLOW	ALWAYS	INCREASE	PURPOSE
HERO	TRY	COMPASSION	BREATHE	WORK
DREAM	TEACH	ENERGY	COMMIT	SMILE
POSITIVE	COMPROMISE	SACRED	SEEK	MEDITATE
SHINE	IMAGINE	PERSIST	PAUSE	LEAD
PEACE	LEARN	BRIDGE	FORWARD	CELEBRATE

3 MY WORD

Now that you have had time to reflect, pray, and observe, its time to confirm your word. Write it down below and begin to search the Bible for Scripture that is associated with your word. Look up your word in topical Bibles or commentaries to get started! There is space to write out a prayer specific to this process and your word.

MY WORD IS

SCRIPTURES FOR MY WOTY

MY PRAYER

4 NOW WHAT

Keeping your WOTY active means you need to see it, experience it, reflect on it, own it, and feel it. Use this list as a reference for accountability ideas, creativity, and inspiration.

Dig in!

Find a core Bible verse that matches up with your word and discover the biblical foundations of your WOTY. Grab a Dictionary & Thesaurus to study the meaning, root, and origins of your word. Develop biblical affirmations to speak, meditate, and pray over your heart.

Lean in!

One of the most inspirational moments I have had with my word is when the Holy Spirit prompts me. My word will pop up in seemingly random places like shopping, conversations, books, podcasts, Bible Study, and when I'm being still. I've learned to straighten my spine and lean into those moments to listen for Him.

Get creative!

Create an art piece such as, a vision board, canvas, Bible journaling, etc. Creating something inspired by your word will allow you to process and take ownership of the word. Checkout the *One Little Word* workshop by Ali Edwards for an immersive, scrapbooking experience (Ali is the one who inspired me to choose a WOTY years ago!).

Display it!

Put your word all around you as a visual reminder. Quotes, scripture, and imagery placed in your line of sight will prompt you daily. Some places to consider displaying your WOTY are:

- *Mirror*
- *Dashboard*
- *Screensaver*
- *Refrigerator*
- *Nightstand*
- *Desk*

Write it!

Journal experiences, circumstances, and prayers about your word. It is a treat to look back at the end of the year to see all the ways God has used your word to speak to you!

Have fun!

Wear jewelry (this can be a fun conversation starter)
Meet with friends and discuss your WOTY monthly
Make lists: music, quotes, Scripture, movies/documentaries, and books