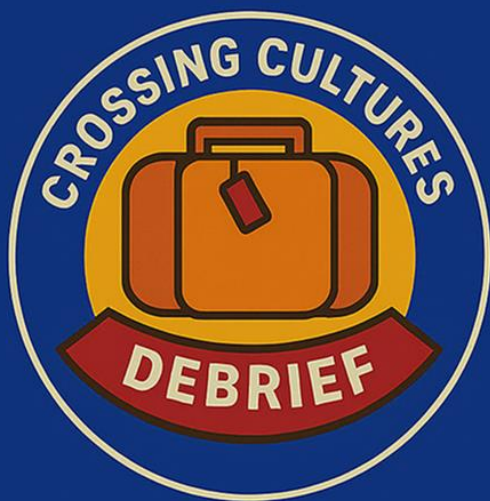


GUIDED REFLECTION



**A JOURNAL FOR PROCESSING
AND RENEWAL**



www.russellsemoncounseling.com

Welcome

Welcome to the Crossing Cultures Journal. This companion to the Crossing Cultures Debriefing Card Deck and Web App is designed to help you process your cross-cultural experiences through reflection, Scripture, and prayer. Whether you're returning from a season of international service or simply seeking to make sense of what you've walked through, this journal provides space to listen to your own story and to God's voice.

Each entry aligns with one of the 60 debriefing questions, 52 from the Card Deck and 8 additional questions from the Web App. (Designated by "App" in front of the #). Each entry includes, in addition to the question a:

- reflection
- related scripture
- journaling prompt
- fillable text boxes for your thoughts, answers, questions, etc.
- short prayer

Use this journal alongside the cards/app or on its own, at your own pace. You may wish to go through one entry per day, per week, or according to your own rhythm. However you choose to use this, I hope you'll find the time you take to provide healing, restoration and renewal.

Russell Semon, PhD
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Part 1: STORY (1–10)

1. Share a moment of unexpected joy or celebration.

Joy in cross-cultural life often arrives unannounced—a dance in the street, a feast you weren't expecting, a belly laugh with someone who doesn't speak your language. These moments are gifts, encouraging reminders that God often surprises us with goodness in unfamiliar places, at unexpected times.

Psalm 126:3 (NIV)

"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."

When did God surprise you with joy? What made that moment so meaningful?



God, thank You for moments of joy I never saw coming. Help me stay open to you working in my life, even in unexpected places.

2. Tell a story about a significant challenge you or your team faced and how you responded.

Challenges stretch us. Whether it's tension with teammates or the breakdown of a well-laid plan, these moments reveal what's deep inside us—and what God longs to refine. They are opportunities for courage, growth, and His grace to overflow.

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed... struck down, but not destroyed." 2 Corinthians 4:8–9 (NIV)

How did this challenge shape you? Where did you see God at work?



Lord, remind me of your presence in the hard places. Use the challenges I face to deepen my faith, my trust in You.

3. Describe a time you or your team found a creative or effective solution to a problem.

Ingenuity is often born out of necessity—and guided by grace. When language, finances, or logistics fall short, the Holy Spirit can stir up new ways forward. Your creative solutions are not just resourceful—they are reflections of God’s wisdom moving in and through you.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously... and it will be given to you.” James 1:5 (NIV)

What problem required a creative solution? How did the outcome reflect God’s hand?



God, thank You for the gift of wisdom and creativity. Help me see challenges as invitations to co-create with You.

4. Share about a local custom or tradition you adopted or found meaningful.

Customs carry the heartbeat of a people. When you enter into their rhythms—blessing food a certain way, sitting with elders, observing holidays—you don't just learn about culture, you learn about connection. These moments often shape your heart more than you realize.

"To the Jews I became like a Jew... I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." 1 Corinthians 9:20–22 (NIV)

Which tradition or custom changed you? What did it teach you about God, culture, or belonging?



God, thank You for showing me beauty in unfamiliar traditions. Help me carry that beauty with honor and humility so that I might reach others for your kingdom.

5. Tell about a relationship—on your team or with locals—that changed you.

Some people leave a lasting impression on your soul. Maybe they challenged you, or maybe they welcomed you when no one else did. God often uses these relationships to teach us about grace, difference, and His love for us.

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”
Proverbs 27:17 (NIV)

Who changed you, and how? What did this relationship reveal about your heart—or God's?



God, thank You for showing me beauty in unfamiliar traditions. Help me carry that beauty with honor and humility so that I might reach others for your kingdom.

6. Describe a time when cultural differences or language barriers impacted your experience.

Words fail. Gestures confuse. But love remains. Cross-cultural work reminds us how fragile communication can be—and how deeply we need patience, grace, and humility. These moments teach us to listen beyond just the words that are spoken.

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...” Colossians 4:6 (NIV)

What misunderstanding or cultural moment stands out to you?
What did you learn from it?



God, teach me to listen with my heart and speak with grace,
guided by Your Spirit.

7. Share a story of how you or your team handled a crisis or safety concern.

Crises come quickly and without warning. But even in fear, God is near. The way you responded—whether with strength, prayer, or trembling faith—reflects His steady presence. You may not have felt brave, but you were not alone.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

What crisis did you walk through? Where did you see or experience God in the midst of it?



Lord, thank You for staying close in every storm. Help me to remember and trust Your presence when fear rises.

8. Tell about a time you felt isolated or struggled to connect, and what helped.

Loneliness can surprisingly feel the deepest when surrounded by others. Cultural disconnect, language fatigue, or homesickness can leave us feeling unseen or forgotten. But God draws near to the lonely. Sometimes, just one conversation or act of kindness can shift the whole day.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18 (NIV)

When did you feel most alone? What helped restore connection or hope?



Jesus, You see me when I feel invisible. Remind me that I am never truly alone.

9. Share a story of resilience or perseverance that encouraged you or others.

Perseverance isn't glamorous. It's showing up when you're tired, listening when you're misunderstood, staying when you want to leave. But in that quiet resilience, God can write a story of faithfulness in your heart. Your endurance is not wasted—it's worship.

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest..." Galatians 6:9 (NIV)

What kept you going? Who was watching and encouraged by your perseverance?



Lord, give me strength for each step. Help me endure with faith and grace.

10. Describe a family moment or event you missed, and how you or your family stayed connected.

Missing birthdays, weddings, or family challenges hurts in a particular way. Grief sits quietly in the distance. But love finds a way—through video calls, prayers whispered across time zones, or letters that arrive late but speak loudly.

Colossians 2:5 (NIV)

"Though I am absent in body, I am present with you in spirit..."

What moment did you miss? How did you stay connected in heart?



God, thank You for holding my family close when I couldn't.
Heal the ache of distance with Your love.

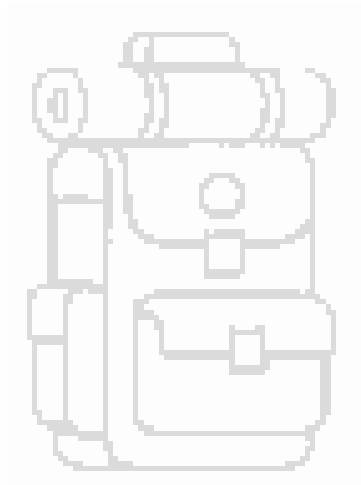
Part 2: REFLECTION (11–20)

11. What was your biggest area of personal growth or learning ?

Growth rarely happens in comfort. Often, it comes through struggle—when the familiar is stripped away and God uncovers what He wants to transform. You may not have noticed it in the moment, but something in you stretched, softened, or strengthened.

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion...” Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Where do you see growth in yourself? What shaped that change?



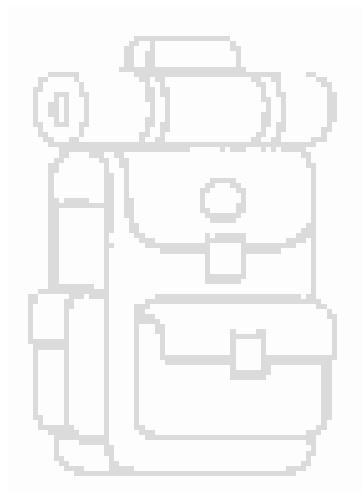
God, thank You for growing me in ways I didn't expect. I pray for strength as I continue to walk with You.

12. How did your faith or beliefs change, deepen, or get challenged?

Cross-cultural experiences often loosen our grip on the things we once held tightly. When your faith is challenged or your theology stretched, you may feel shaken—but God remains steady. He’s not afraid of your questions. In fact, He welcomes them.

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” Psalm 139:23 (NIV)

What spiritual questions or shifts did you experience? How is God meeting you there?



Jesus, thank You for staying near in my wrestling. Keep leading me deeper into truth and love.

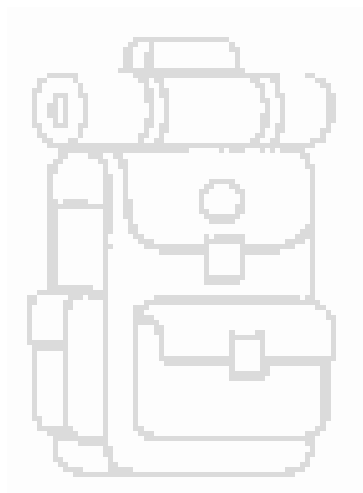
13. What scripture, spiritual practice, or habit helped you most in difficult times?

When everything else feels uncertain, the quiet rhythms of faith—scripture, prayer, worship, community—can be anchors. They may not always make the storm stop, but they can tether your soul to the One who does not move.

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Psalm 119:105 (ESV)

Which spiritual rhythms carried you? What kept you grounded?



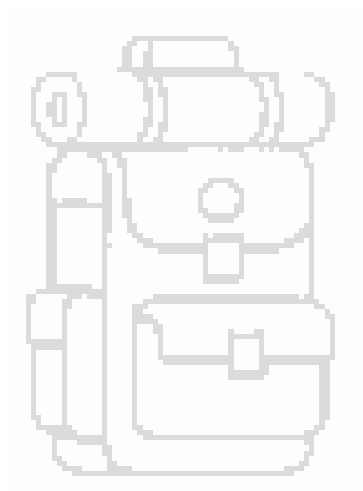
Lord, thank You for meeting me in the quiet places. Help me hold onto these rhythms of grace.

14. How did you experience or work through conflict—within yourself, your team, or with others?

Conflict exposes our limitations, fears, and needs—but also invites growth. It teaches us to listen, forgive, and seek peace. When handled with humility, conflict can become an opportunity for transformation.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Romans 12:18 (NIV)

What conflict stands out to you? How were you changed by it?



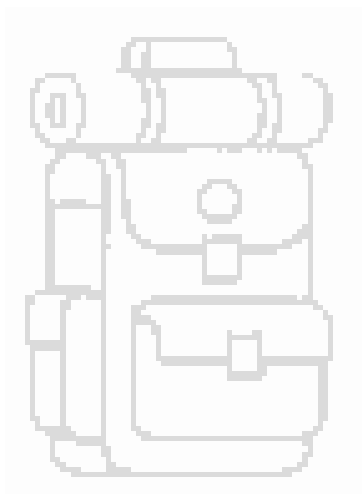
God of peace, teach me to enter conflict with courage and grace. Make me an instrument of reconciliation.

15. What was the hardest lesson in patience, humility, or trust you learned?

These virtues aren't learned in theory—they're learned in waiting, in failing, in trying again. Cross-cultural life often forces you into spaces where you're not in control. That's where trust grows deepest.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." 1 Peter 5:6 (NIV)

What tested your patience or pride? How did God meet you in this time?



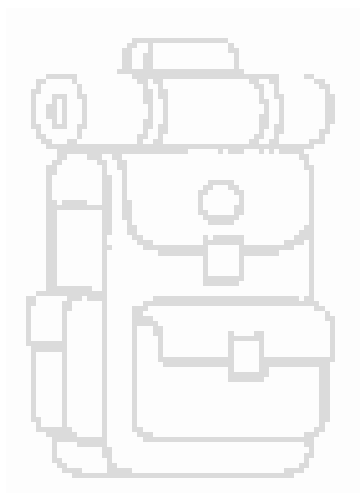
Lord, make me willing to wait, willing to bend, willing to trust
You in the unknown.

16. How did you balance your own identity with adapting to a different culture?

It's a delicate dance—honoring your own story while learning to live within someone else's. Cross-cultural life reveals both who you are and who you're becoming. Jesus embraced culture yet never lost His identity. He invites us to do the same.

"So God created mankind in his own image..." Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

When did you feel pulled between two identities? How have you come to understand your identity ?



God, anchor me in Your identity your image, even as I grow and adapt. Help me embody both humility and wholeness.

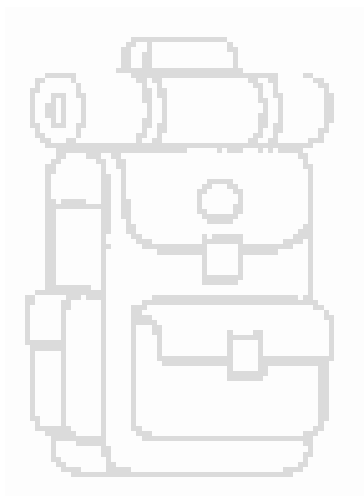
17. What losses, grief, or unresolved issues are you still processing?

Grief doesn't always look like tears—it can be a dull ache, a silent emptiness. Sometimes what we leave behind is heavier than we admit. God invites you to bring that grief into His presence, where it can be named, held, and healed.

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

Psalm 147:3 (NIV)

What losses still feel raw? What might God be inviting you to grieve?



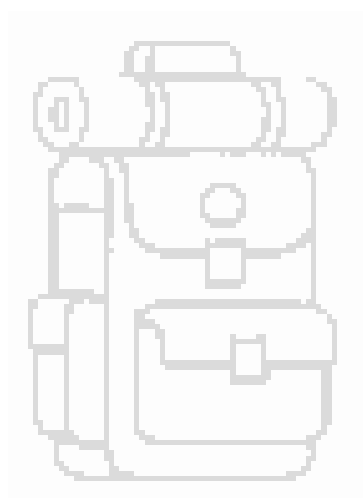
Lord, I bring You my sorrow—spoken and unspoken. Heal what still hurts. Hold what I can't.

18. How did you handle feelings of burnout, stress, or being overwhelmed?

Serving cross-culturally can push you to the edge of your capacity. You carry so much—and sometimes you forget you're allowed to rest. Even Jesus stepped away to be alone and pray. You are not a machine. You are a beloved child.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

When were you overwhelmed? What helped—or what do you wish had helped?



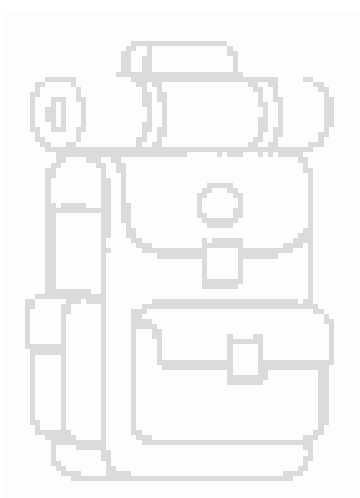
Jesus, when I am tired, teach me to rest. Remind me that my worth isn't in what I do, but in who I am in You.

19. What did you learn about power, privilege, or stereotypes in your context?

Crossing cultures often reveals invisible systems—who is heard, who is overlooked, who holds power. It can be uncomfortable, even painful, to face privilege. But awareness is the beginning of justice. Jesus used His power to serve and lift others. So can we.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition... rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

Where did you notice power dynamics or injustice? How did God invite you to respond?



God, give me eyes to see and courage to act. Help me steward any privilege I have with humility and compassion.

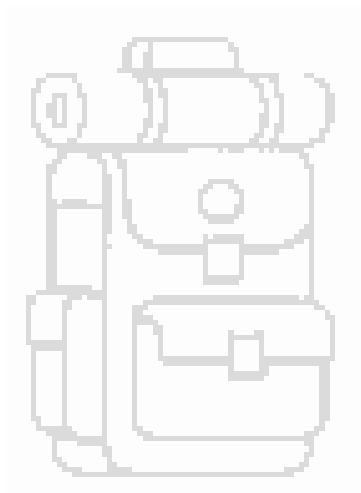
20. How did your relationships—positive or negative—affect your sense of calling or purpose?

Relationships can shape our path. Encouraging voices can breathe life into calling. Hurtful voices can make us question everything. Yet God's voice pierces even through others' opinions, He remains the Author of your purpose.

"The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."

1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NIV)

Whose voice shaped your sense of calling—for better or worse? What is God speaking over you now?



Jesus, silence the voices that distract or diminish. Help me to hear Your calling above all.

Part 3: SUPPORT (21–30)

21. What support (logistical, emotional, spiritual, or financial) was most helpful to you?

Support doesn't always come from the places we expect—but when it arrives, it can be life-giving. Whether it was a timely donation, a prayer partner, or someone who simply listened, God's care often shows up through others.

“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19 (NIV)

Who supported you well? What made their care so meaningful?



God, thank You for providing through others. Help me remember that I am never alone in Your care.

22. Where did you feel support was lacking—before, during, or after your term?

The absence of support can feel like a silent ache. When promises are unmet or people disappear, it's easy to feel abandoned. Yet even there, God's presence remains steady, and He understands what it means to be forsaken.

"But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength..."

2 Timothy 4:17 (NIV)

Where were you hoping for more support? How did God meet your need ?



Lord, help me not to harbor bitterness over the support I needed and didn't receive. Fill those empty spaces with Your love, strength and care.

23. How did your organization's communication, policies, or conflict resolution affect your experience?

Policies and procedures influence systems and impact services. When communication flows and conflict is addressed with grace, people can flourish, goals are met. When it doesn't, systems fail, ministry suffers. God invites us to pursue truth and justice—even when systems fall short.

"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8 (NIV)

How did your organization's structure help—or hinder—your experience?



God, give me clarity and courage as I reflect on what was helpful and what was harmful. Teach me how to move forward with integrity.

25. Were you able to access mental health or self-care resources, and what would have helped more?

Tending to your mental and emotional well-being is not a luxury—it's a sacred responsibility. Jesus withdrew to rest and pray. You are allowed to do the same. Caring for your soul honors the God who made you.

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." Mark 6:31 (NIV)

What did you need emotionally or mentally during your service?



Jesus, help me to care for myself with wisdom and compassion. Show me what I need, and how to receive it.

26. How did your family or community back home support or challenge you?

Support systems can be both a lifeline and a source of pain. Some stand with us faithfully; others fade away. The ache of feeling misunderstood or forgotten can be heavy—but so can the warmth of a late-night message or a care package that arrived just when you needed it. God sees both.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

Who showed up for you? Who didn’t? What do you need to grieve or give thanks for?



Lord, thank You for the people who stood with me. Help me forgive those who didn’t, and heal any wounds I still carry.

27. What training or preparation do you wish you'd had before going?

Sometimes, the lessons we most need only come through experience. Still, thoughtful training is a gift. What you lacked before doesn't have to limit you now—God is still equipping you.

"[May God] equip you with everything good for doing his will..."
Hebrews 13:21 (NIV)

What do you wish you'd learned earlier? What are you learning now?



God, thank You for teaching me along the way. Keep equipping me for the journey ahead.

28. What support systems do you now see as essential for cross-cultural workers?

Reflection brings wisdom. Now that you've walked the road, you know what really matters—consistent check-ins, emotional safety, space to rest. Your experience can help shape healthier paths for others.

“Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.” Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NIV)

What support systems proved essential? How can you advocate for them now?



Lord, help me use what I've learned to bless and support others. Make me a voice for sustainability and care.

29. How do your organization's values align (or not) with your own?

Discerning alignment can be difficult, especially when values clash with actions. God gives wisdom to see clearly, courage to ask questions, and grace to lead with integrity. You are allowed to notice—and to seek better alignment.

"The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding." Proverbs 4:7 (NIV)

Where did your values align—or not? What tension do you still feel?



God, give me discernment. Where there is misalignment, guide me toward peace, purpose, and truth.

30. What would have helped you or your family feel more secure or cared for?

Feeling cared for creates room for flourishing. You may not have received everything you needed—but identifying those needs is the first step to healing. God wants you to feel safe, seen, and sustained.

“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.” Isaiah 40:11 (NIV)

What care or support would have made a difference for you or your loved ones?



Thank you God for keeping me close and where I feel unseen or uncared for, bring comfort and restoration.

Part 4: ACTION (31–40)

31. What new habits, skills, or practices do you want to continue?

Not everything from your time abroad is meant to stay there. Some habits—quiet mornings, communal meals, walking everywhere, praying without hurry—are worth keeping. These small rhythms of grace can anchor your life in beauty and intention, wherever you go next.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2a (NIV)

What practices gave you life? How can you protect and nurture those practices going forward?



God, help me carry forward the good I've gained. Make my life a rhythm of intentional grace.

32. How will you set or adjust boundaries differently in the future?

Boundaries are not walls to keep others out—they're fences that protect what matters. Healthy boundaries allow you to give from a place of rest, not depletion. Jesus often withdrew to rest, even when needs remained. You can too.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Where were your boundaries too tight—or too loose? What will you change moving forward?



Lord, teach me to set boundaries with grace, boundaries that honor both others and myself. Help me serve from overflow, not exhaustion.

33. What changes will you make to your self-care or resilience strategies?

You've learned what drains you—and what restores you. Don't ignore those lessons. God invites you to steward your energy with wisdom, not guilt. Caring for your soul is not selfish; it's sacred.

"Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep... All at once an angel touched him and said, 'Get up and eat.'" 1 Kings 19:5–6 (NIV)

What restored you during your time of service? What practices will you keep—or start?



God, thank You for meeting me in my limits. Teach me how to build rhythms of rest and strength.

34. How will you approach conflict or relationship challenges differently next time?

You've seen what happens when conflict is avoided—and when it's faced with grace. Every challenge is a chance to grow in humility, honesty, and forgiveness. The way you respond can change the relationships around you.

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:2–3 (NIV)

What did you learn about handling conflict well—or poorly?
How will you respond differently next time?



God, give me humility in disagreement, courage in hard conversations, and love that seeks peace.

35. What steps will you take to stay connected to the people or culture you served?

Distance doesn't have to mean disconnection. With intention and prayer, relationships can continue to grow even across oceans. Honor the bonds you've made—they are a part of your story now.

"I thank my God every time I remember you... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

Philippians 1:3–5 (NIV)

Who do you want to remain connected to? How will you do that practically and prayerfully?



Lord, help me nurture the friendships and cultural ties You've given me. Keep my heart open and connected.

36. How will you measure success or impact differently?

Success in the Kingdom often looks like seeds, not spotlight. You may never see the harvest—but faithfulness is never wasted. God sees the quiet work, the hidden prayers, the unseen love.

“Well done, good and faithful servant... Come and share your master’s happiness!” Matthew 25:21 (NIV)

What did success mean to you before? What does it mean now?



God, help me value faithfulness and obedience to measure outcomes in light of your work, not my own. Let my life reflect Your priorities.

37. What will you do to maintain your spiritual health and growth?

Spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident—it grows in rhythm, in quiet, in community. The same Spirit who met you in your cross-cultural work, walks with you now. Stay close to the Source of your strength.

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself...” John 15:4 (NIV)

What spiritual practices sustain you? What new habits do you want to build?



Jesus, draw me near each day. Let my faith grow not just from experience, but from intimacy with You.

38. How will you use what you learned about safety and crisis management?

Experience in crisis teaches both humility and wisdom. You now carry tools—emotional, practical, spiritual—that can serve others too. Don't forget what you learned. Let it guide your steps—and help others walk safely too.

“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.” Proverbs 22:3 (NIV)

What lessons will you carry into the future? How can you help others prepare or respond wisely?



Lord, make me wise and alert. Help me use what I've learned to bring safety, peace, and preparedness to others.

39. What will you do to support others who are preparing for or returning from cross-cultural work?

Now that you've walked the road, your insight is a gift. Others need your presence, empathy, and wisdom. Sometimes the most powerful support is simply saying, 'I've been there too.'

"[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble..." 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NIV)

Who do you know who is starting or finishing a similar journey? How can you walk with them?



God, make me an encourager to others. Let my story become a source of comfort and strength for someone else.

40. How will you apply lessons about power, privilege, or cultural adaptation in your life?

The insight you gained is meant to grow compassion. If you have seen imbalances of power or abuse of privilege, you can help shift it —through your posture, your choices, your advocacy. Walk in humility and boldness.

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed...” Isaiah 1:17 (NIV)

What have you seen or experienced and how will you let it shape your actions and advocacy?



God, show me how to live justly. Keep my heart soft and my hands ready for the work of restoration.

Part 5: NEXT STEPS (41–46)

41. What unfinished work or relationships help you consider returning or staying involved?

Sometimes, the pull to return is more than nostalgia—it's calling. Unfinished conversations, unreached dreams, or relationships that linger in your prayers may be the Spirit's invitation. God often uses our heart's stirring to point toward what still matters.

"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept... and prayed before the God of heaven." Nehemiah 1:4 (NIV)

What still feels incomplete? Is God calling you to continue, revisit, or release something?



God, give me discernment for what's unfinished. If You are calling me back—help me go with courage. If not—help me let go with peace.

42. Who will you look to for guidance or mentorship as you move forward?

We are not meant to walk alone. Seeking out a mentor, spiritual director, or wise friend can offer clarity and grounding. Even Paul had Barnabas. Ask God to send the right person or people for this next chapter.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

Who do you trust to walk with you now? What kind of guidance do you need most?



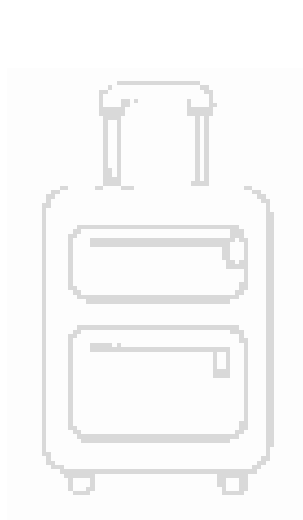
Lord, bring wise and caring voices into my life. Give me humility to listen and courage to follow good counsel.

43. What support or resources do you need for your next season?

Every season brings new needs—and that's not a weakness. Recognizing what you need, and asking for it, is a sign of strength and growth. God loves to meet your needs, sometimes through the hands of others.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find..."
Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

What support do you need emotionally, spiritually, or practically? Who might be able to help?



God, help me identify what I need and be willing to ask. Open doors for support, and give me peace as I wait.

44. What will help you keep joy and hope, even when things are hard?

The journey ahead may feel uncertain, but joy and hope are not dependent on your clarity—they're anchored in God's constancy. Even when you don't see the road, you can trust the One who walks beside you. Joy is not a mood—it's a resolute trust in a good God.

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."

What practices, people, or truths help you stay rooted in joy?
Where do you need God to rekindle hope?



God, help me identify what I need and be willing to ask. Open doors for support, and give me peace as I wait.

45. How will you process or share your story with others?

Your story matters. It's doesn't have to be perfect, but it's sacred. When you tell your truth, others see God's faithfulness in new ways. Whether through writing, speaking, or quiet conversation—your story can be a bridge for healing and connection.

"Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story..." Psalm 107:2 (NIV)

What parts of your story are you ready to share? Who needs to hear them?



Jesus, give me courage to tell my story. Use it to shine light, spark hope, and glorify You.

46. What goals or dreams do you have for your next steps?

As one chapter closes, another begins. The dreams in your heart may feel fragile or unfinished, but God is still writing. Trust that He who led you this far is not finished with your story.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord...”

What dreams are stirring in your heart? What steps might you take toward them?



Lord, breathe life into my dreams. Guide my steps, and help me trust You with every unknown.

(App) 47. How will you maintain or rebuild relationships with family and friends back home?

Reconnecting across distance takes attention and intention. You've been there. You know just how encouraging regular calls, care packages, or sharing stories and photos, can be to help bridge the distance and remind both you and them that you remain invested in one another's lives.

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now," Philippians 1:3-5 (NIV)

What concrete steps will you take to stay close?



Lord, give me the creativity and consistency to nurture my relationships, even from afar.

(App) 48. What do you hope your team or those you served will remember about you?

Your legacy is woven from moments of service, encouragement, and authenticity. Reflect on the qualities—compassion, diligence, joy—that you want to use to influence others, so that God can continue to use that influence in the hearts of others long after you leave.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...but encouraging one another...” Hebrews 10:24–25 (NIV)

What character or action do you most want them to carry forward?



Jesus, shape my life so that my influence points others to You and honors the work we've done together.

(App) 49. How will you continue to grow in faith, resilience, and cultural understanding?

Growth seldom happens in comfort zones. Being disciplined in the study of scripture, seeking community, and intentionally immersing yourself in new cultural experiences strengthen both your soul and your sensitivity to the world God loves.

“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14 (ESV)

Which practices or resources will you adopt to keep pressing forward?



Holy Spirit, lead me into deeper faith and teach me resilience as I engage diverse cultures with Your love.

(App) 50. What is one thing you want to do differently in your next season?

Every chapter of life brings lessons—some hard-earned. Identify one behavior, attitude, or approach you sense God calling you to adjust, and lean into the discipline needed to make that change stick.

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19 (ESV)

What’s the change you’ll commit to, and what is your first step?



Lord, empower me to embrace new rhythms and to walk boldly into the things You’re doing within me.

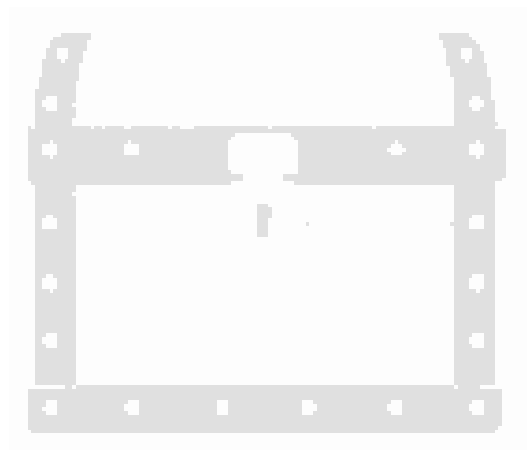
Part 6: WILD CARD (47–52)

51. Share a moment that made you laugh out loud.

Laughter is holy too. It breaks tension, softens grief, and reminds us of joy's resilience. In cross-cultural life, these moments are especially precious—a shared joke, a cultural mix-up, or laughter that overcomes language.

“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” Proverbs 17:22 (NIV)

What memory still makes you smile? What did laughter heal or reveal in that moment?



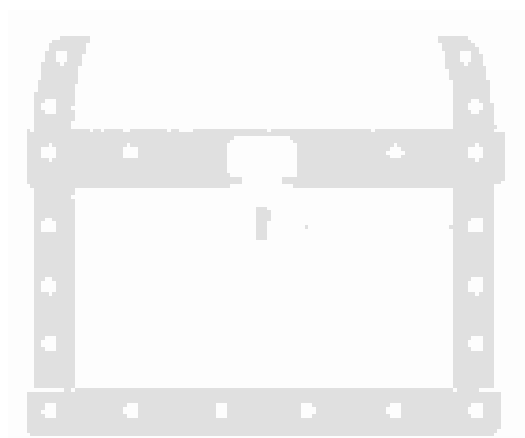
God, thank You for joy that surprises and laughter that heals.
Help me carry a light heart even in heavy seasons.

52. Tell us about a surprising friendship you made.

Some friendships defy logic or background. They sneak up on you and suddenly become essential. These unexpected connections are reminders of God's creativity and the beauty of hearts that speak a common language—even when words are limited.

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile... for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

Who became a friend when you least expected it? What did they teach you?



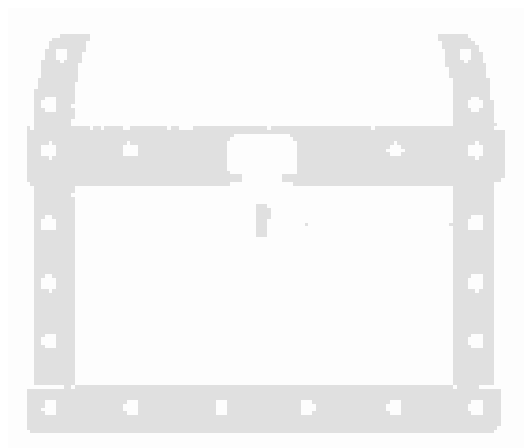
Lord, thank You for the gift of unexpected friendships. Make me open to relationships that stretch and bless me.

53. Describe a place or experience that felt like “home” while you were away.

Home is rarely just a building—it’s a comfort, a feeling of security, or belonging. A meal, a sunset, a routine, a person—these can ground us when everything else feels foreign. God gives us these feelings of “home” in unfamiliar places to remind us we’re never far from His presence.

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.” Psalm 90:1 (NIV)

Where did you feel at home during your cross-cultural work ?
What about that moment grounded you?



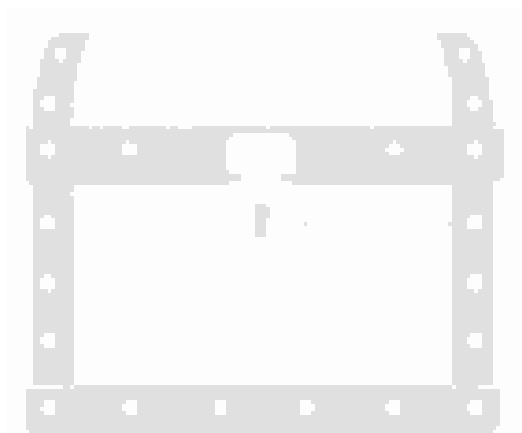
God, thank You for giving me a sense of home—even far from familiar places. Teach me to dwell with You wherever I am.

54. If you could go back and give your pre-service self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Looking back gives us wisdom. You know now what you didn't then—about resilience, surrender, and grace. This reflection isn't about regret, but about clarity. God was shaping you all along the way.

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

What would you tell yourself before this journey began? What would you reassure or warn?



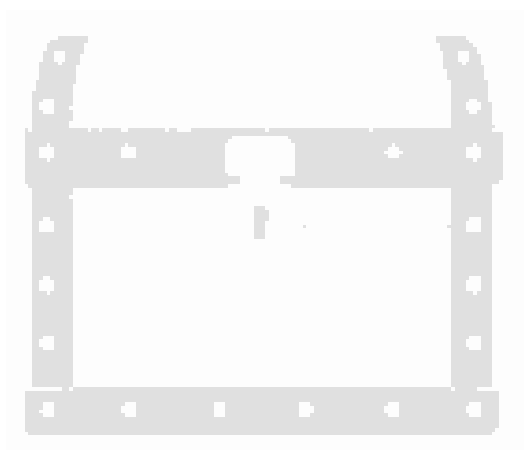
God, thank You for all You've taught me. Help me share this wisdom with grace—with myself and others.

55. What's a misconception people often have about your experience?

You've likely heard the assumptions—about ease, adventure, suffering, or impact. Few truly understand the weight of what you carried. But you don't need to defend or justify. God knows the truth—and your faithfulness speaks for itself.

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at... the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7b (NIV)

What do people often get wrong about your journey? What truth do you carry instead?



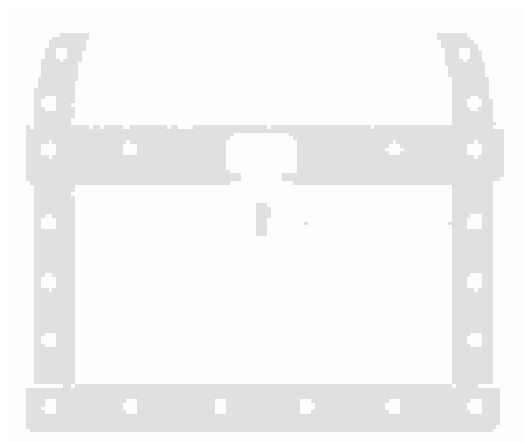
Lord, free me from the need to explain or impress. Let my quiet obedience be enough in Your eyes.

56. If your cross-cultural experience was a movie or book, what would the title be?

Your experience is a story—full of drama, wonder, heartbreak, humor, and grace. Naming it could help you honor the journey. God is the Author, and your pages still matter. This is a story worth remembering.

“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...”
Hebrews 12:2a (NIV)

What title captures the heart of your experience? Why does it fit?



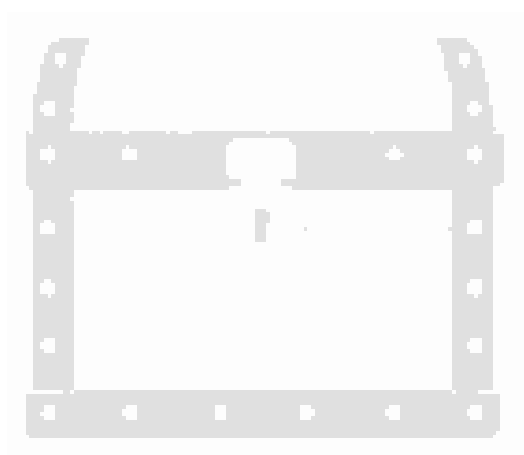
Jesus, thank You for using my life in your story. Help me trust You with every chapter—past, present, and still to come.

(App) 57. Describe your cross-cultural experience using only three words.

Sometimes simplicity speaks volumes—three words can capture laughter and tears, growth and challenge. Let these words serve as both testimony and invitation for deeper reflection on your journey.

“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.” Habakkuk 2:2 (ESV)

Which three words encapsulate your story right now?



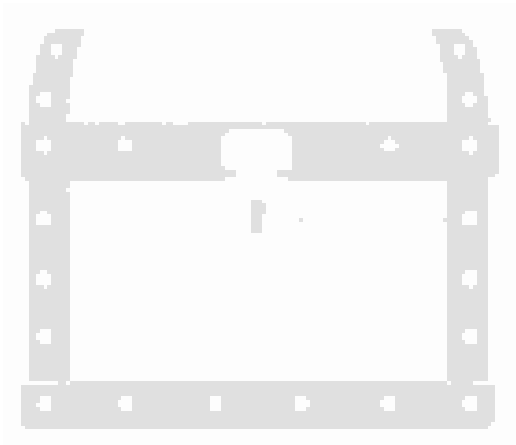
God, distill my story into words that honor You and invite others into the adventure You've led me through.

(App) 58. Share a humorous language faux pas.

Mistakes in translation can become treasured memories—moments where laughter reminds us both of our humility and the warmth of human connection in every misstep.

“A glad heart makes a cheerful face,” Proverbs 15:13a

What funny phrase mishap still makes you smile?



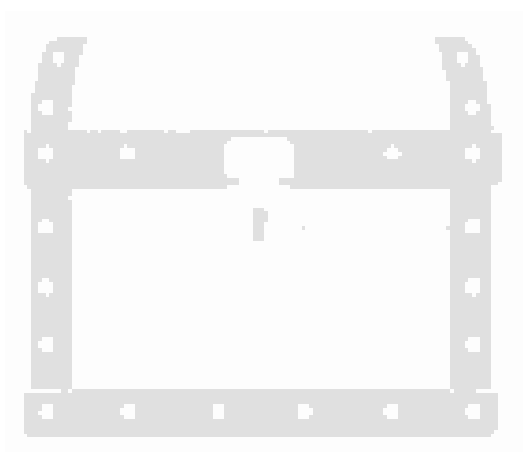
Lord, thank You for laughter that bridges cultures and for the grace that meets us when we fumble with words.

(App) 59. What is one thing you learned about yourself that surprised you?

Crossing cultures often reveals strengths and blind spots we never knew we had. Celebrating those discoveries helps us give thanks for God's refining work in every season.

*"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."*
Psalm 139:14 (ESV)

What unexpected truth emerged from your time of service?



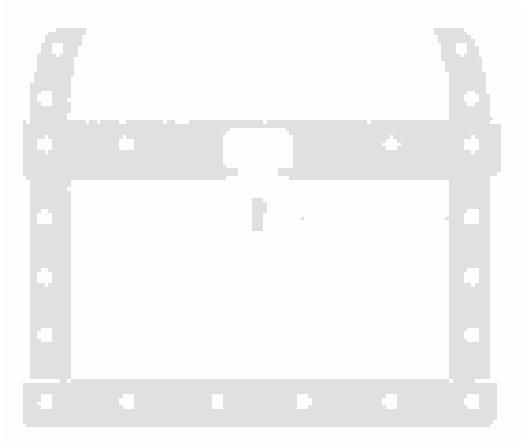
Jesus, thank You for revealing who I am in You, and help me live out these qualities for Your glory.

(App) 60. What is one resource or support that you wish every cross-cultural worker had access to?

Whether it's language coaching, mental-health care, or support teams, the right support can make all the difference. Identifying the gap you experienced may help to identify needs others may share.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil." Ecclesiastes 4:9 (ESV)

What resource would you champion for every global worker?



Father, raise up the people and provisions needed to equip every worker You send to the nations.

Ideas for Group Use

This journal isn't just for individuals. It can be a powerful tool for:

- Debriefing circles during reentry retreats
- Small group processing over a meal or video call
- Staff meetings for cross-cultural teams
- Missionary care retreats led by member care providers

****Suggestions:****

- Choose 1–2 prompts per session and give everyone space to reflect and share.
- Use the prayers and Scripture as a guided conversations.
- Respect different pacing—some may share right away, others after journaling.
- End with encouragement, prayer, and affirmation.

This journal is intended to create space to be vulnerable. Be gracious with it—and each other.

Crossing Cultures: Guided Reflection

A Journal for Processing and Renewal

Whether you're returning from cross-cultural service or supporting others, this *Crossing Cultures: Guided Reflection* is intended to gently guide you toward clarity, healing, and spiritual renewal.

Designed as a companion to the *Crossing Cultures Debriefing Card Deck* and *Web App*, this journal can also stand alone. Inside are 60 entries (52 from the Card Deck and an additional 8 from the Web App) all offering:

- Reflection
- Scripture Reference
- Additional guided journaling prompts
- Space for your thoughts, reflections, prayers
- A brief statement of prayer

Explore themes including:

- Personal and spiritual growth
- Handling stress and support during challenges
- Navigating identity and conflict
- Renewing vision and purpose

Perfect for individual reflection or group sharing, this journal invites you to slow down, reflect deeply, and experience renewal.

Pause. Reflect. Be Restored.

Russell Semon, PhD

www.russellsemoncounseling.com