The logo consists of a large, light blue circle. Inside the circle, there are two curved, swoosh-like shapes. The top swoosh is light blue and curves from the top left towards the right. The bottom swoosh is light green and curves from the bottom left towards the right. The text 'Writing Techniques' is centered over the circle in a white, outlined, serif font.

Writing Techniques

Barbara Westberg

A Global Association of Theological Studies Publication

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LESSON 1

God Said, “Write”

“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever” (Isaiah 30:8).

Focus

The written word is important.

Aim

Realize that the written word has power. Feel a passion to write. Record a personal experience.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

And God Wrote

God is the original writer. The first record we have of writing is when God put a mark on Cain. Marks (signs, pictures, letters) came to be used to record ideas. These symbols were later called *hieroglyphics*.

Moses was the first to mention God’s record book.

“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:32).

With His finger God wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone (Deuteronomy 5:22). What a finger to engrave words on stone! Was it the

finger of God that wrote on the wall pronouncing judgment on Belshazzar? Remember when Jesus wrote on the ground? (See John 8:8.) Is this the same finger that writes God's laws on the tables of our hearts? (See Jeremiah 31:33; II Corinthians 3:3.)

Always when God assigns a task, He gives the person an example. So before God commanded humanity to write, He wrote—not with pen and paper, but with His finger on stone.

And God Said, “Write”

Moses was the first man in biblical record to write. He did so at God's command.

“Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel” (Exodus 34:27).

Scholars believe Moses wrote the Pentateuch (books of the Law—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), a monumental task undertaken while leading several million people on a forty-year journey.

Halley's Bible Handbook's chapter on “Archeological Discoveries” states:

- In the ruins of Ur, libraries with thousands of books have been unearthed, revealing a period of great literary activity, even before Abram's day.
- Archeological discoveries prove that recording important events was common from the dawn of history. The events of Genesis could have been recorded from the beginning.
- Hebrew and Christian tradition says that Moses, guided by God, composed Genesis out of ancient documents existent in his day.

According to *Halley's Bible Handbook*, the literary profession was important in Egypt as much as a thousand years before Moses. Everything of importance was recorded on stone, leather, and/or papyrus. Every Pharaoh had the history of his reign carved on his palace walls and monuments. Egypt had vast libraries of state documents. Growing up in Pharaoh's palace, Moses had access to all the wisdom and learning of Egypt. He was handpicked by God and trained to be one of the world's greatest leaders and writers.

God is still handpicking men and women to lead and to write. That is why you are in this class. Never belittle the God who has called you by discrediting yourself. The God who has called you will prepare you.

Exercise 1

Your instructor will lead the class in a game of Gossip. After the game, write both the original message and the final one in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Talk about It

What happens when the spoken word passes from person to person, from generation to generation? What happens when the written word passes from person to person, generation to generation? Why did God tell Moses to write His covenant with Israel?

“And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. . . . And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:4, 7).

The Lord spoke the Law to Moses. Moses wrote it, and then he read the written words to the people. Only after the people heard the Law could they obey it. How important was it for Moses to write the words of the Lord?

“And he [Moses] said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it” (Deuteronomy 32:46-47).

Moses was a busy man, but he made writing a priority. God did not say, “Moses, when you get time, jot down a few notes about these rules I’m giving you.” God said, “Write.”

In the last book of the Bible, God commanded John, an apostle in exile, to write.

“What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia” (Revelation 1:11).

Over a period of fifteen hundred years, God instructed some forty men, "Write." They took pen in hand and wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (See II Peter 1:20-21.) From Genesis to Revelation, we read words written by men who were moved by passion, stopped their daily routine, and took pen in hand. Because these men wrote, we have the Bible.

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever" (Isaiah 30:8).

The Purpose of the Written Word

Although the written Word of God is complete, the command to "write" still goes out to the church.

Exercise 2

Read Deuteronomy 32:3; Psalm 26:7; Jeremiah 50:2; and Mark 1:45. According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* the root of *publish* means "to proclaim, to read, to tell, to cause to hear, to herald, to preach." Look again at these verses and note what was to be published. Write the answers on the table in the "What Have You Learned?" section.

Talk about It

What picture does *publish* paint on your mind? How do we publish the Word?

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Great Commission does not mention writing, but this command is carried out around the world when teachers use curriculum developed by God-anointed writers. The printed page speeds the spread of the gospel to all nations.

"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a

testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psalm 78:1-7).

The psalmist wrote of a parable, dark sayings of old, a testimony, and a law. These were to pass to their children, “to the generation to come,” the children yet to be born. How was this done? By relying on the spoken word? No. By the written word—the psalms that were composed, the laws that were recorded, the testimonies that were written. Writers preserved Israel’s heritage for their children.

Scripture records numerous reasons why God’s Word was written:

- To preserve history (Exodus 17:14).
- For future generations (Psalm 102:18; Proverbs 22:20-21; Isaiah 30:8).
- For instruction (Exodus 24:12; Deuteronomy 6:9; 17:18-20).
- For recording the Law (Deuteronomy 27:1-4, 8).
- For keeping records (Joshua 24:26-27; Ezra 5:9-10).
- For inspiration (Deuteronomy 31:19).

Exercise 3

Use a concordance to find Scripture verses giving other reasons why the Word of God was written. Key words to look up are *written*, *wrote*, *write*, *book(s)*, *letter(s)*. Make a note of these references and reasons on a sheet of paper and be prepared to share these with your class.

Compare the findings listed in exercise 2 to the findings in exercise 3. Although we are not writing the infallible Word of God, we are writing for the same reasons that men of old wrote.

Church history is made every day, but is it written? Unless it is written, it will be lost. The command continues to resound, “Write.”

The Power of the Written Word

“The pen is mightier than the sword.” —*Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton*

The written word can start wars or bring peace. It can bless or curse. It can bring hope or pronounce judgment. It can incite violence or win victory. It can exalt God and put down evil.

“When a man puts in circulation a good, religious book,” said Dr. Stonebridge, “he sets in motion an influence the extent and duration of which he cannot estimate. It is a teacher that requires no outfit, no money for traveling expenses, no salary, is not affected by the climate, is never sick, and consequently has no druggist’s or doctor’s bills to pay, and experiences no diminution of physical or mental activity because of age. Always ready for work; no blue Mondays; always as bright as the morning stars.

Books can go and stay where it is not practical for missionaries to live. Our merchant ships carry books and leave them on the islands of the sea, as well as on the shores of continents, years in advance of the arrival of missionaries.”¹

The printed page never flinches, never shows cowardice; it is never tempted to compromise; it never tires, never grows disheartened; it travels cheaply, and requires no hired hall; it works while we sleep; it never loses its temper; and works long after we are dead. The printed page is a visitor which gets inside the home, and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, for it speaks to him only when he is reading it; it always sticks to what it has said, and never answers back; and it is a bait left permanently in the pool.²

Pilate summed it up when he told the chief priests who confronted him about the inscription on Jesus’ cross, “What I have written I have written” (John 19:22). Written words, even those of men, endure when spoken words have faded into time and been forgotten.

No wonder God chose the written Word to communicate His message to us. The spoken word gets twisted and revised and even forgotten. However, the written Word does not change.

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8).

The Influence of the Written Word

For fifty-five years Manasseh, the most wicked of the wicked kings of Judah, caused the people to “sin with his idols.” He was followed by his son, Amon, who “walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them.” Add Amon’s two-year reign to his father’s fifty-five year reign. For fifty-seven years, Judah forsook the law of the Lord. (See II Kings 21.)

Then eight-year-old Josiah came to the throne.

“He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (II Kings 22:2).

In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah started a building project, repairing the Temple. During the restoration, the high priest Hilkiah found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord. He gave it to the scribe, who read it to the king.

How long had it been since anyone had heard the Law? How long since anyone had even inquired about the law of the Lord? For close to seventy years, Judah had lived without the written word. The Law had been scorned, neglected, and then forgotten.

Grandfather may have said, “Son, the Law says we are to do so and so.”

The son may have told his son, “Well, your granddad said that the Law says that, but I’m not so sure. I’ve never read the Law or even heard it read.”

Did the grandson say to his children, “The Law? What Law? There is no Law.”

But there was a law. God has always had a law. Even in those long years when the law of the Lord was lost in the house of the Lord (of all places), the Law was in effect.

When Josiah heard the words of the Law, he rent his clothes. “Woe to us! We are in trouble. We have not been obeying the words of this book.”

So Josiah sent a delegation to inquire of the prophetess. She responded with a message of judgment and mercy. (See II Kings 22:15-20.)

The king gathered the people to hear the reading of “all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD” (II Kings 23:2). The king and the people made a covenant to perform the words written in the book.

The written word turned a nation around and brought revival to the land. Josiah, following the Law, turned the hearts of the people back to the one true God. They held a Passover like Judah had not seen in all the days of the judges and the kings. (Read II Kings 23.)

The written word has power to change individuals, families, and nations.

Exercise 4

Can you recall a time when a written message changed your life? It might have been the Word of God, or it could have been a letter, an article, or a lesson. Take a few minutes and write from your heart about that experience. Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure; that will be covered in future lessons. Just write. (*No more than 100 words.*)

It Is Written

Three of the most powerful words on earth and in Heaven are, “It is written.” Eighty times God’s Word, states, “It is written.” With those words, Jesus overcame the devil in the wilderness. What if nothing had been written?

CONCLUSION

God wrote; then He commanded men to write. He chose the written word to communicate His will to humankind, because the written word is unchanging. Spoken words can be twisted, misunderstood, and forgotten. The written word stands firm.

Because men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, we have the Bible. Even though God’s Word is complete, the command to “write” is still in effect. May a passion grip you to write so that individuals, families, and nations may be changed.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

What was the original message? _____

What was the revised message? _____

Exercise 2

In the table, list the message to be published.

<i>References</i>	<i>Message to be Published</i>
<i>Deuteronomy 32:3</i>	
<i>Psalms 26:7</i>	
<i>Jeremiah 50:2</i>	
<i>Mark 1:45</i>	

Exercise 3

List on this table references and reasons why the Word of God was written.

<i>References</i>	<i>Reasons</i>

Lesson in Review

1. Name some things that God wrote. _____

2. Who was the first man recorded in the Bible to write? _____

3. How did God prepare this man to be a writer, as well as a leader? _____

4. How is “the pen mightier than the sword”? _____

5. What can your writings do that you cannot do? _____

6. How did the written law bring revival to Judah during the reign of King Josiah?

7. What are three of the most powerful words on earth and in Heaven? _____

8. Do you feel God has a writing ministry for you? If so, how can you prepare for it? _____

HOMEWORK

- Rewrite the account you wrote in class (Exercise 4). Strive for emotion, clarity, and impact. Read it aloud to yourself, revising as needed.
- Read the revised article aloud to someone and ask for his input. Does he understand what you are saying? Is he moved by your words? How can you improve your writing?
- Rewrite again. Turn this in at the beginning of your next class for evaluation by the teacher.

Personal Study Notes

LESSON 2

Why Write?

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Corinthians 9:16).

Focus

What motivates the Christian writer?

Aim

Consider why we must write while examining our motives. Write a letter to the generation to come.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Two Buckets

In the 1940s I lived with my parents and younger sister on a small farm outside the little village of Tiawah, Oklahoma, USA. We had two cows, four pigs, one rooster, and ten hens. In addition, we had a cat and a hound dog.

We had two buckets in our house. One was a shiny, clean water bucket. It occupied a place of honor. The other was a “slop” bucket. It was dirty, dented, and rusty, and sat just outside the back door. We dumped the garbage for the pigs in this bucket.

No one had any trouble distinguishing between the two buckets. We never drank out of the slop bucket, and we never put garbage in the water bucket.

Both had the same beginning – new buckets shipped from the factory to a hardware store. What made the difference? The difference was not the substance, not the shape, not the color, and not the price. The contents made the difference.

Everyone is born with a clean, empty mind. A baby arrives in this world innocent, dependent, and precious – a new bucket. What will this child become? It depends upon what is put in it.

You know that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken. Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?

We cannot . . . Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts.³

Talk about It

What was put into your mind when you were a child? How has that affected your life as an adult? What is the significance of the two buckets to you as a writer?

Writers are bucket-fillers, shapers of the mind. What we write will go into the minds of the readers and help determine what they become. We can add stagnant, polluted water to the bucket, or we can pour in living water.

Exercise 1

List four or five things that must begin well (i.e., a building, a painting, a dinner, a family, a church, and so on). Make a list of ingredients needed at the beginning if the finished product is durable. Take five minutes to discuss how a proper beginning, with proper ingredients, is necessary for everything.

Moral Literacy

In *The Book of Virtues*, William J. Bennett uses the term “moral literacy.”

Exercise 2

Brainstorm with your classmates to define *moral literacy*. Use a dictionary to check your accuracy. Write the definition in the “What Have You Learned?” section (question 1) at the end of this lesson. Is it enough to be morally literate? Discuss.

Much of the printed page on the market today promotes “moral illiteracy.” Parents, teachers, and preachers are portrayed as idiots. Dreams are transformed into nightmares. Humor is twisted into satire. Morals and values are mocked. The hero is the villain. The villain is the hero. Pornography is flooding the markets, turning mental water fountains into sewers.

To the church God is saying, “Write! Turn the tide. Fill the minds of this generation with living water. Raise up a generation that is morally literate, a generation that knows and loves the truth.”

We must write.

Necessity Is Laid upon Me

“Still, I want it made clear that I’ve never gotten anything out of this for myself, and that I’m not writing now to get something. I’d rather die than give anyone ammunition to discredit me or impugn my motives. If I proclaim the Message, it’s not to get something out of it for myself. I’m compelled to do it, and doomed if I don’t. If this was my own idea of just another way to make a living, I’d expect some pay. But since it’s not my idea but something solemnly entrusted to me, why would I expect to get paid? So am I getting anything out of it? Yes, as a matter of fact: the pleasure of proclaiming the Message at no cost to you. You don’t even have to pay my expenses” (I Corinthians 9:15-18, *The Message*).

Paul did not write to make money or achieve fame. He wrote because necessity was laid upon him. He had to proclaim the message. In the pulpit, he preached the Word. In prison, he wrote the Word. For like Jeremiah, God’s Word

was in Paul as a burning fire shut up in his bones (Jeremiah 20:9). He had to deliver the message.

Talk about It

What if the apostle Paul had spent his entire ministry traveling and preaching? How would this have affected our Bibles? What if John had not been exiled on Patmos?

As Christians, we do not write to make money or achieve fame. We write because “necessity is laid upon [us].” Writing is not an option.

Moses wrote while alone with God on Mount Sinai, and he wrote surrounded by three million people. Paul wrote in a lonely prison cell, and he wrote on the mission field. John wrote in exile on Patmos, and he wrote as he pastored in Ephesus. Writers with passion write in solitude and they write in public. They write because they must.

Exercise 3

Brainstorm with your classmates to see how many writers of the Bible you can name in one minute. Out of the twelve disciples, how many were authors of New Testament books? What is this ratio?

That They Might Know

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers [Joshua and the elders of his day]: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).

Judges 2:10 is one of the saddest verses in the Bible.

When Moses died, Joshua took his place. For years Moses had prepared him for that day. Joshua was ready for the job. But when Joshua died, no one was ready to take his place. Why had Joshua not trained someone? We do not know. We only know that after Joshua and the elders died, a generation arose that “knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.” Why did the new generation not know the Lord?

As the first-known writer of the Bible, Moses recorded the Law and kept a journal of the Israelites’ wanderings. (See Numbers 33:2.) Few people in his day

could read, so perhaps his writings lay covered with dust, waiting for a scribe to read them on an annual feast day.

Even if this were so, why had no one told the new generation about the crossing of the Red Sea, the manna, the fiery serpents? Had the elders so quickly forgotten the crossing of Jordan, the fall of Jericho, the lesson learned at Ai?

Were the Israelites so taken up with the milk and honey of the land, the fruitful vineyards, and the ready-made homes that they forgot to pass on to their children the greatest heritage of all, the knowledge of the one true God? Why had no one taught the children? Why had no one introduced them to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Why?

Because the new generation knew not the Lord, we have the Book of Judges, probably the most gruesome book in the Bible—filled with violent stories of people who did what was right in their own eyes. The Book of Judges raises many questions and gives few answers. It issues a strong warning to our generation.

We face the challenge of introducing the next generation to our Savior and preparing them to take the reins of leadership. One way we can do this is through the written word.

Writing is a work of eternity. No, our written words will not stand forever like the Word of God. Our words are not infallible, but they can have a powerful influence in our world. Youths or adults reading a story or hearing a lesson can make a decision that will determine their eternal destiny.

So write that the next generation might know the Lord and the mighty works He has done. (Read Psalm 78:4-6.)

Write Excellent Things

“Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” (Proverbs 22:20-21).

The Preacher was committed to truth. He wrote to give his readers an understanding of truth. “That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth.” Why? So they could answer those who came to them with questions.

Be committed passionately to truth. Know beyond any doubt that what you are writing is true. Study, research, and pray about what you write. Resist the temptation to write what you think is true, without verifying the facts. What you write must be based on truth, not your opinions.

The Preacher also said that he had written “excellent things.” Was he bragging? No. He realized the value of his subject. He knew that his God and readers were worthy of his best. He did not have time to waste writing trivial, foolish things.

Writers cannot afford to be mentally lazy. Sloppy writing is time wasted. It is insulting to the readers. They do not have time to read inferior material. And God is certainly displeased with the writer who is too lazy to increase his talent.

- Woe unto writers who take the talent God has given them and use it to pollute the minds of men, women, and children.
- Woe unto writers who take the truth God has given them and dilutes it to sedate the conscience of lost humanity.

Do not be satisfied with substandard writing. The church is alive and well today because of the written Word. Your Teacher, the Holy Spirit, inspired the greatest book ever written. Write “excellent things.”

A Wide Pulpit

“A writer has a wide pulpit.” – Georgia Smelser

Dear Writer,

From the interior of Africa, your message can wing its way to the heartland of America. From the oil fields of the Middle East, your words can speed around the world. You have no way of knowing where your words will go or how many lives they will impact – for you have a wide pulpit. One sentence, one paragraph, one article can literally touch millions. That is humbling!

But, in the solitude of your home as you struggle to translate the message in your heart to words on paper, you write not to the world, but to one child, one lost soul, one friend. Some days you feel that your blood is ink, your soul is exposed, and your spirit is drained.

Eventually though, you must open your hands and release your work. You realize that it will probably not change the world – but it could change one life. (And, isn't that how the world is changed?) So join me in this anthem.

*Just let me live my life –
Let it be pleasing, Lord, to thee;
And if I gain any praise,
Let it go to Calvary.⁴*

From a Fellow Writer

CONCLUSION

Our world is filled with trite, filthy writing . . . garbage. The need for clean, wholesome, godly writing has never been greater. As Christian writers, we must fill the minds of this generation with excellent things – with truth. We must raise up a generation that knows God and His marvelous works – a morally literate generation.

We write to preserve our heritage, our message, and our children. Necessity is laid upon us. We must write.

This is our motivation.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Define "moral literacy." _____

2. Name three writers of the Bible who wrote both in solitude and in public.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

3. Write a paraphrase of I Corinthians 9:16. _____

4. Why do you think the generation that arose after Joshua "knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel"?

5. "Writing is a work of eternity." What does this mean?

6. What is essential to produce "excellent" writings? _____

7. "A writer has a wide pulpit." What does that say to you? _____

8. What motivates you to write? _____

HOMEWORK

- Visualize one of your descendants, yet unborn. Give him (or her) a name and age. Choose one subject: (1) describe your experience of salvation; (2) tell about a miracle you have witnessed; or (3) explain a biblical truth that you hold dear. Write a letter to that descendant.
- Ask yourself: Is the message clear? Is it powerful? Would it impact the one reading it? Have I written from my heart? Rewrite it until you can answer yes to all these questions.
- Go back over the letter. Check the spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Work on it until you are satisfied that you have done your best.
- Bring the finished letter to class.

Personal Study Notes

LESSON 3

Disciplining Yourself

“So think clearly and exercise self-control” (I Peter 1:13, *New Living Translation*).

Focus

Writing is hard work.

Aim

Understand the disciplines required to write. Practice self-discipline. Study an author’s style and start a journal.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Art or Craft?

Talk about It

Before reading any further, discuss these questions with your classmates. Is writing an art or a craft? Are writers born or made?

Some people are born with a musical ear. They can pick up an instrument and produce incredible music. For them, music is an art.

However, many musicians do not have the natural ear for music. Yet they have become outstanding musicians because they have disciplined themselves to learn. For them music was a craft that they perfected into an art.

Whether or not a musician has a natural talent, music is an art that must be crafted. The musician who succeeds is the one who studies and practices.

The same principle applies to writing. Some people have a natural ability to write. Words flow from their pens. Others struggle to translate their thoughts onto paper. All writers must continually work to succeed.

A microphone and a songbook do not make a singer. A pen and paper do not make a writer. Without self-discipline, the writer will soon abandon writing for an easier task, for writing is hard work.

Many people with a natural talent for writing never develop it because they lack self-discipline. Others with little natural ability, but a passion to write, become great writers because they are disciplined.

Exercise 1

Look up *discipline* in a dictionary (a thesaurus, if possible). Make a list of the synonyms in the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson. Circle the ones you think relate particularly to a writer.

Successful writers are self-starters. In school, a deadline may motivate students to write. But outside that setting they will write only if passion drives them to write and discipline keeps them writing and rewriting. Passion burns high and low. Passion can motivate writers to start, but the steady flame of discipline, fed by a constant flow of reading, studying, and meditating, is needed to keep them writing . . . and rewriting.

Now abideth these three, talent, passion, and discipline, but the greatest of these is discipline.

Read

Writers are readers. They read God’s Word, commentaries, books, newspapers, road signs, boxes—everywhere they go, they read. It is amazing where ideas, sermons, and stories originate.

Reading nourishes the brain and energizes it. A writer’s mind can no more function without reading than his body can operate without food.

Exercise 2

Use a concordance to find at least four incidents where Jesus asked His listeners, “Have ye not read?” Make notes on the table in “What Have You

Learned?" section at the end of this lesson to answer where, what, why, and of whom Jesus asked this question.

Talk about It

Discuss your findings with your classmates. Why do you think Jesus placed importance on reading?

What you read reflects in your writing. Reading clean, challenging material exercises and strengthens your mind. Reading trite, filthy material poisons your mind and pollutes what comes from your pen.

Talk about It

Who is your favorite author (biblical, Christian, or secular)? What do you admire about his or her writing? What have you read lately that enriched your life? How did it help you?

Because reading is so easy, readers can fall into the trap of believing that writing is easy too. The reader feels the pulse and life of the words. He does not realize the travail the author suffered to give birth to his story. The reader only experiences the flow of the story, not the struggle for logic. Yes, reading is easy, but writing is travail.

Study

Reading is surface work. Studying is in-depth labor.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

"Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won't be ashamed of, laying out the truth plain and simple. Stay clear of pious talk that is only talk. Words are not mere words, you know. If they're not backed by a godly life, they accumulate as poison in the soul" (II Timothy 2:15, *The Message*).

Successful writers are diligent students.

1. Study the fundamentals of language. This means vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph development, parts of speech, and more. This requires brainwork—study.

2. Study God's Word. As a writer, you need more than a basic knowledge of God's Word. Knowing only surface facts can get you in trouble.

Exercise 3

Test your Bible knowledge with this short true or false quiz. Circle the answer.

1. The Pharisees were rich.
True or false
2. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus called the Samaritan good.
True or false
3. The apostle Paul traveled overland from Caesarea to Philippi.
True or false
4. The publicans worked for the Roman government.
True or false
5. Abraham had only two sons.
True or false
6. On the night of the Passover, the death angel passed through Egypt.
True or false
7. Isaac died soon after Jacob tricked him into giving him Esau's blessing.
True or false
8. When the Promised Land was allotted to the twelve tribes, one tribe did not receive a portion.
True or false
9. When the Promised Land was allotted to the twelve tribes, the descendants of one of Jacob's sons received a double portion.
True or false
10. Noah took only one pair of every kind of animal into the ark.
True or false

You need to know a lot more than you write. You need a background of knowledge to keep you from error. Once you make a mistake, you lose credibility with your readers. They say, "The author didn't know that. Why should I believe this?"

Run references on key words or subjects.

Balance all God's Word has to say about a subject before making general statements. For example: Luke 14:26 says, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and

his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” How does this balance with Ephesians 6:2. “Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise”? And with Ephesians 5:28, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself”?

Rightly dividing the Word of God requires study.

Maps reveal vital information. Zorah, where Samson’s family lived, adjoined Timnah, a town occupied by the Philistines. Samson could easily walk to Timnah to check out the girls. What does this tell us about the danger of living on the border? That geographical fact gives much food for thought. But the fact had to be dug out. It was not evident in a light read-through of the Book of Judges.

Realizing that Moab was approximately twenty-four kilometers—less than fifteen miles—from Bethlehem adds insight to the story of Naomi.

Research the genealogy of people to gain insight into their character and understand their actions. Studying the genealogy of Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz reveals that King David was their great-grandson. This causes us to say, “Aha. So that is why David took his parents to Moab when he was running from King Saul. He took them to their extended family for protection.”

Study chronological sequence. On His way to Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus healed Bartimaeus. It was Jesus’ last time to pass that way. That fact is important . . . it certainly was to Bartimaeus. What if Bartimaeus had obeyed the by-standers and hushed?

Never take it for granted that something is right simply because it is what you have always been told. When writing, check and double check the facts—even the evident ones. If you do not rightly divide the Word of God, you should be ashamed.

3. Study the meaning of words. Keep a dictionary within arm’s reach. Looking up words, even familiar words, can prove beneficial. Did the definitions of *discipline* give you a new slant on that word? A different way of looking at a word can often start a whole new train of thought about a subject.

The definitions of some names are given in the Bible. Others have to be researched. A name can reveal a lot about a person or a place. This information can add color to your writings.

4. Study the works of other authors. When reading, study authors' styles—the words, phrases, and sentence structures. Mark unusual words and watch for interesting analogies and metaphors. How do these authors make transitions, move the reader from one scene to another? What do they use to capture the reader's attention? What do you like about their writing? What is unique about their writing? What can you learn from them? Make it a habit to absorb more than the message.

5. Study people. Study includes more than reading and examining words. It involves reading and studying people. This is covered in the next lesson on sensitivity.

Always carry a small notebook. Write down attention-grabbing words and phrases. Make notes of mind-stimulating ideas. An idea not written down is an idea forgotten.

For the writer, studying is a lifestyle.

Meditate

Global Missions' Director of Education Jim Poitras likens reading and studying to dumping ingredients into a mental slow cooker. Some ideas are meat; some are vegetables; others add the salt and spices. Instructions—mix and let simmer.

"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands" (Psalm 143:5).

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Timothy 4:15).

Ideas may need to simmer for a few hours or days or even weeks. Then seemingly remote words, facts, or illustrations will blend into a nourishing, delicious food for the mind.

Caution—meditation can be a lazy writer's cop-out (excuse). There comes a time to stop meditating and start writing.

Write

“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!” (Job 19:23).

Job was like most people. He wanted to be an author, to have his words printed in a book. But what about being a “writer,” with no promise that his words would ever be printed?

If you sit waiting for inspiration, you will sit waiting until you are an old man. Writing is like any other job—like marching an army, for instance. If you sit down and wait until the weather is fine, you won’t get far with your troops. Kick yourself; irritate yourself; but write; it’s the only way. — Winston Churchill⁵

When it is time to write, sit down and write.

The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair. — Collin Brooks⁶

The first words, paragraphs, or pages you write may only be words filling the page. But keep writing. Eventually, a pattern will emerge. The message will start to come through. Later, you can go back and toss the fluff. If you say, “I’ll write when I get time,” forget it. You will never write. Not because you do not have time, but because writing is not a priority with you. Anyone who thinks that all he needs to write is a pencil, paper, and a few minutes, is only fooling himself. Writing is hard work. (Seems like you just read that?) Writing is a discipline that requires discipline.

I do not know everything there is to know about writing. But what I do know, I know well. And one thing I know well is that successful writing is a horrendous discipline. It is long hours at the anvil with the hammer. Heating. Pounding. Shaping. Smoothing. Sharpening. Then doing it again, and again, and again. For forty years I’ve been heating, pounding, shaping, smoothing, sharpening. Still learning, still struggling, still wishing I knew some easier way, but I don’t.⁷

Even if you have a passion to write and a message worth writing, you will never write unless you practice self-discipline. Form good habits.

- Make every minute count. Look at what you are doing. Where are you wasting time? Gather those minutes and invest them wisely.
- Let others know that writing is a priority with you. Limit interruptions to urgent needs. People who would not think of interrupting you if you were praying or preaching will not hesitate to interrupt when you are writing. They must be taught to respect your writing time. Be kind but firm when you tell them, "Later."
- Know yourself. When is your mind most alert? When is it easiest to write? Set that time aside for writing. Physical activities can be done when the brain is sluggish.
- Set deadlines for yourself. If you are not a professional writer or a student, you may not have an editor or teacher setting deadlines for you. Do it yourself. Deadlines (even self-imposed ones) are great motivators.

Writing is lonely work. Enter into your closet. Shut out the world and the multitude of other things you would rather be doing. Exercise self-control.

Keep Writing

Successful people owe more to their perseverance than to their natural talents. Gibbon labored twenty years on his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. George Bancroft spent twenty-six years on his *History of the United States*. When someone asked Lyman Beecher how long it took for the completion of his famous sermon, "The Government of God," he replied, "About forty years."

Not everything you write will be published or even appreciated. Some will be rejected, maybe even scorned. But keep reading, studying, meditating, and writing. That is the writer's secret of success.

Made of the Right Stuff

A little brown cork
Fell in the path of a whale
Who lashed it down
With his angry tail.
But in spite of its blows
It quickly arose,
And floated serenely
Before his nose.
Said the cork to the whale:

“You may flap and sputter and frown,
But you never, never, can keep me down;
For I’m made of the stuff
That is buoyant enough
To float instead of to drown!”
(Pameii)⁸

Certain officers approached Napoleon to recommend a young captain for promotion. Napoleon asked them: “Why do you suggest this man?” Their answer was that he through unusual courage and cleverness won a signal victory several days before. “Good,” said Napoleon, “but what did he do the next day?” That was the last that was ever heard of the young man.

There are two kinds of people in the world – (1) those who show an occasional burst of brilliancy and (2) those who can be depended upon to do their best every day in the year.⁹

More successful writers are in the second category than the first.

CONCLUSION

Writing is an art that must be crafted. Whether writers have a natural talent or a passionate desire to write (or both), they must continually read, study, and meditate to succeed. Now abideth these three, talent, passion, and discipline, but the greatest of these is discipline.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. Give at least three terms defining “discipline” that particularly relate to a writer. _____

2. Use your concordance to find at least four incidents where Jesus asked, “Have you not read?” Fill in who, where, what, and why Jesus asked this question.

Reference	Who was asked?	Where were they?	What did Jesus ask if they had read?	Why did Jesus ask this question?

3. What one book other than the Bible has had the most impact on your life?

4. Do you have a God-given talent to write, a passionate desire to write, or both? Explain your answer. _____

5. Name five things listed in this lesson that a writer should study continually. Circle the one you study the most. Underline the one you study the least. Number them in the order of their priority with you.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

6. What is in your mental slow cooker? It might be a verse of Scripture, an illustration, a word, a phrase, and/or an idea. Name at least three things. Do you see any correlation between these things? If not, do not fret. There may yet be a missing ingredient. When it is added, it could blend these things together. Until then, let it stew. _____

HOMEWORK

- Read something by your favorite author (biblical, Christian, or secular). Study his or her style. Make notes of the way he or she uses words. What have you learned from this author? Be prepared to share your findings with your classmates.
- Start a journal of your feelings and thoughts. Record ideas that come to you, words that catch your attention, illustrations that interest you, Bible verses that speak to you, feelings that you experience, anything you might be able to use in your writing. Discipline yourself to write something in your journal every day. Watch your grammar and check your spelling. Your instructor will ask if you are keeping this journal, and occasionally check notations and give a grade. Keep this journal throughout this course. Hopefully, it will become a lifelong habit.
- What was your answer to question 5? Look at the last thing on your priority list. Focus on studying this thing in the next week. Each day write in your journal something you have learned from this focused study.

Personal Study Notes

LESSON 4

Exercising Your Senses

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

Focus

Writing is sensitive work.

Aim

Understand the role of the five senses in writing. Exercise the senses by writing with sensitivity.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

The Five Senses

In the seventeenth century John Bunyan wrote *The Holy War*, an analogy (a comparison between two similar or dissimilar things). Like Jesus often did, Bunyan used the physical to explain the spiritual.

In this story, the evil Diabolus determined to take control of the town of Mansoul. But a strong wall with five gates in it surrounded Mansoul—the Eye Gate, the Ear Gate, the Nose Gate, the Touch Gate, and the Taste Gate.

The gates were locked and well guarded. Diabolus knew that to get control of the headquarters of Mansoul, he had to get inside the walls. But how?

Ah, it was very simple. Get the guards to open the gates. Diabolus simply tempted the guards with forbidden things to “see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.” As they opened their senses to temptation, the gates to Mansoul swung open.

The evil Diabolus moved in and took control of headquarters. Mansoul was his.

Talk about It

What does this analogy say to you?

Satan knows how the mind works. In the Garden of Eden, he used the senses to gain control of the mind of humankind.

Exercise 1

Study Genesis 3:1-6. How did Satan use Eve’s senses to tempt her? Which gates to the mind did Eve open?

Eve did not have knowledge of good and evil because she had never tasted evil. All she had known was good. She had no reference point for judging evil. Yet she had the ability to choose between good and evil, between obedience and disobedience. She opened her mind to the wrong influence and chose evil. We are still fighting the battle of the mind because Eve, and later Adam, yielded to temptation.

Knowledge comes into our minds (headquarters) through our senses (gates). When we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste, we learn—whether good or bad. The mind is the headquarters that controls the destiny of the soul.

As writers, our goal is to share our knowledge with our readers. How do we transfer that knowledge to them? Through the senses. To do this, we must be sensitive. This requires exercising the senses.

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

Exercising the Senses

The following exercises are designed to exercise the senses.

Sight

Have you ever been going down a familiar road when you noticed something you had never seen before? You knew it had to have been there for a long time, but you had never noticed it.

Exercise 2

The instructor will give you the rules for playing What Do You See? Enjoy this sight exercise. Be prepared to discuss with the class how this game increased your awareness of your surroundings. Think about how you can use this exercise in daily life.

Exercise 3

Look at the things on your list again. Add an adjective to describe each one. Stay away from overused words. For example—a *dirty shoe* could be better described as a *mud-spattered* shoe. Notice how the adjective enhances the picture. Warning—beware overuse of adjectives. One picturesque adjective (not more than two) per noun is usually sufficient.

Read body language, as well as words. Translate gestures and posture into words, so the reader can feel the attitude.

Exercise 4

As your instructor assumes a posture, write a brief description of his body language, making sure you clearly define his attitude without naming it. Write the description in the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson. The instructor will assume two or three different postures.

Do more than glance at people and things. Develop the habit of observing.

- Read body language.
- Look at the pieces that make up the whole.
- Practice painting mental word pictures, using fresh terms.

Hearing

In our noisy world, listening is almost a lost art. We must learn to listen, not only with our ears, but also with our hearts. Not only to the sounds, but also to the silence. Have you ever heard a silence that said far more than words? What about the silence in a cemetery? What about the silence that follows a shocking announcement? What about the silence in the awesome presence of God? Silence can be communicated by written words.

Exercise 5

The instructor will lead you in a listening exercise. After you have finished, answer these questions in a class discussion. How does your drawing differ from your classmates'? How are the drawings alike? How well were the instructions communicated? How well did you follow instructions? How did your perspective influence what you drew?

- Listen to what people say and how they say it. How does a professor's speech differ from a farmer's? What interests men? What do women discuss?
- Listen to children. Have you ever noticed that boys use a lot more sound effects than girls do?
- Pay attention to what people do not say. Their silence often speaks loudly, if you are listening.
- Exercise the sense of hearing. Refine the art of listening, and your writing will improve.

Touch

Our skin is full of nerve endings that make us sensitive to touch. We can touch with any part of our skin—or our emotions. Touch is more than what we feel with our fingers. Tears touch us. Laughter touches us. Words touch us. We feel emotions when others are angry or happy or moody.

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

God is touched by our feelings. He is moved by our words. We are touched by the feelings of others and influenced by their words. Likewise, others are touched by our feelings and our words. If we feel what we write, our readers will be touched.

Touch communicates.

Exercise 6

The instructor will demonstrate ways touch communicates. Write the messages you receive in the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson. Discuss these with the class.

Writers use words to accomplish many things:

- Touch the senses
- Challenge the mind
- Reach the heart
- Change the life

To do this effectively, we must first touch the reader’s senses with our message. We can do this only if we ourselves have been touched by the message.

To exercise your sense of touch, try the following:

- When you touch something, mentally describe how it feels.
- Watch how people touch one another.
- Observe how different people respond to touch.
- Note how the feelings of others touch you.

We cannot touch the reader’s senses if our senses have not been touched. We cannot effectively communicate what we do not feel.

Taste

Food, like words, can become *ho-hum* (a verbal yawn). Boring. That is, until you bite down on a bitter herb or a rotten piece of meat or a lip-smacking piece of fruit. Words, like shocking bites of food, can awake readers’ mental taste buds. Wonder-filled words make readers sigh, “Give me more.” Acid words make readers shudder as they slam the book shut. Words can repel the readers or appeal to them.

Exercise 7

What is your favorite food? Shh! Don’t tell. Here is the scenario. You are a judge in a food-tasting contest. You want to convince the other judges that your favorite food is the best food in the world. But there is a problem; actually, there are two problems: (1) there is no food to taste; (2) each

contestant is limited to one word to describe his favorite food. So think. Be creative. Search your vocabulary for a word (an adjective) that will tantalize the taste buds. Your word will either win or lose the contest for you. Write it in the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson.

Talk about It

What does this exercise have to do with writing?

Smell

Smell is said to be the sense most closely connected to the memory. One whiff can revive a childhood memory, awaking feelings of love or hate, fear or peace.

Suppose words had aromas.

Exercise 8

In the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson is a list of words. Beside each word write one word that describes how that word would smell if it had an aroma. Then think of a simile you could use to describe its smell. (A simile is a figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often in a phrase introduced by *like* or *as*.) For example, a descriptive word for *fear* could be “nauseating,” and a simile could be “like burned beans.” Share your answers with your classmates.

Some people are more sensitive to smell than others. As writers, we need to develop our awareness of smells, practice describing smells, and notice how certain smells affect people.

Talk about It

Which of the five senses do you think is most important to a writer?

Spiritual Sensitivity

Secular writers can touch the readers’ senses and get them to open their minds. As Christian writers, our goal is more than to transfer knowledge. We want to touch the readers’ hearts and change their lives. To do this, we must be sensitive to God’s Spirit. This spiritual sensitivity gives us insight to perceive the things of God.

The Israelites were insensitive to God and to His works.

“And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day” (Deuteronomy 29:2-4).

They saw the miracles in Egypt and the wilderness. They heard the Ten Commandments as God thundered from Mount Sinai. They tasted the manna and drank the water that flowed from the rock. At night they felt the warmth of the pillar of fire and in the day they enjoyed the cool of the cloud that covered their camp. They smelled burning flesh as the fire of God’s judgment swept through the camp. They saw, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled, but they did not perceive. Their senses were touched, but their hearts were not changed.

This problem continued to plague the Jews even in Jesus’ day.

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand [perceive]” (Matthew 13:13).

When Jesus was born, the Magi came to Jerusalem saying, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2).

Were these wise men the only ones who saw the star? No. Everyone in their day who looked into the heavens saw the star. But the wise men were the only ones who perceived that the star had special significance. They had a special sensitivity that those around them lacked.

perceive 1. To become aware of directly through any of the senses, esp. to see or hear. 2. To take notice of; observe. 3. To become aware of in one’s mind; achieve understanding of (*The American Heritage Dictionary*).

perceive 1. SEE notice, discern, make out, observe, spot, detect, recognize, apprehend, sense, distinguish. 2. UNDERSTAND comprehend, read, see, grasp, appreciate, conclude, decipher, judge (*Roget’s Super Thesaurus*).

Spiritual sensitivity gives us insight to perceive the things of God.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge enters our minds through our five natural senses. Only as we exercise our senses, do we develop the sensitivity needed to touch the senses of our readers and challenge them to open the gates to their minds. Sensitivity to God is vital if we expect our writing to touch hearts and change lives. Writing is sensitive work.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

Study Genesis 3:1-6.

A. How did Satan use Eve's senses to tempt her? _____

B. Which gates to the mind did Eve open? _____

Exercise 2

A. What do you see in this room?

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Go back and place an adjective (descriptive word) in front of each item to describe it. Strive for creativity.

Exercise 3

Briefly describe the body position and attitude portrayed by your instructor.

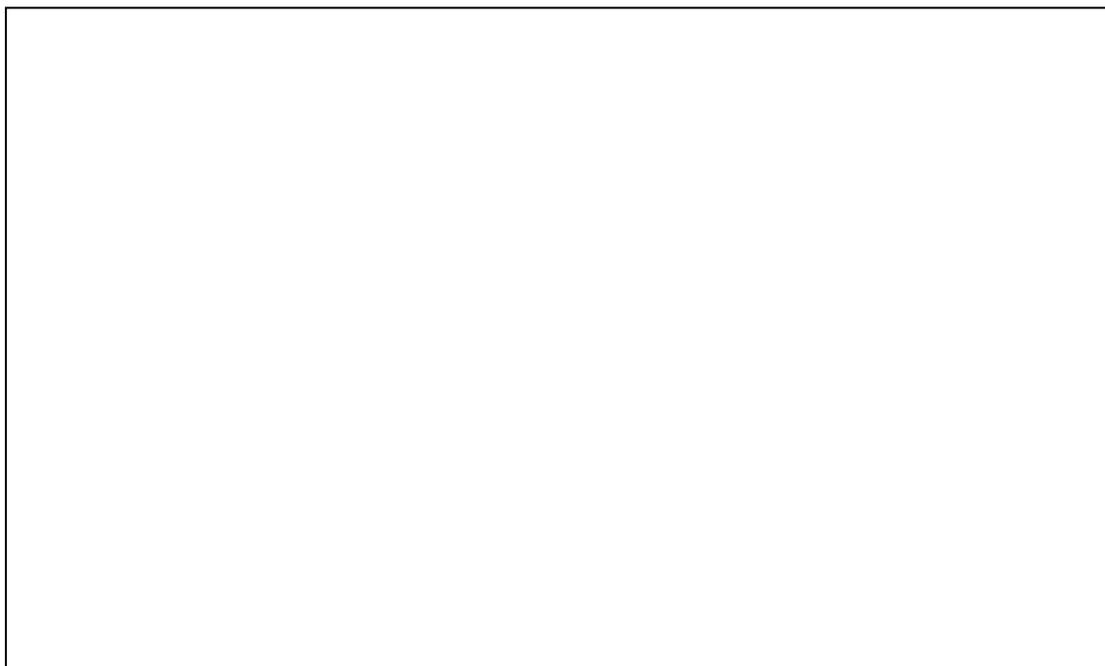
A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Exercise 4

In the box draw the object described by your classmate.



Exercise 5

In the first column describe the touch the instructor gave. In the second column write the message that touch communicated to you.

Touch Given	Message Received

Exercise 6

The word that best describes my favorite food is _____.

Exercise 7

Think of one adjective to describe how you think each of the following words would smell if it had an aroma. Then use a simile to describe it.

Word	Adjective	Simile
fear	nauseating	like burned beans
memory		
anger		
age		
life		
care		
forgiveness		

HOMEWORK

Exercise your senses. Before the next class look, listen, touch, taste, smell, and perceive. Watch for the following and describe each scene, relating how it affected you.

1. Describe something you saw that touched your heart. _____

2. Tell how something you heard touched your emotions. _____

3. Describe how someone's feelings affected you. _____

4. Describe something you ate in such a way as to create a hunger in the reader.

5. Describe a smell that stirred a memory in you. Relate the memory. _____

Lesson 5

Using Your Creativity

“And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said . . .” (Genesis 1:2-3).

Focus

Writing is painting word pictures.

Aim

Realize that creativity comes from the Creator. Experiment with thinking outside the box. Develop an idea into a word picture.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Creative Thinking

Exercise 1

In the “What Have You Learned?” section at the end of this lesson, write your name on your worksheet with your dominant hand. Now write your name with your other hand. Was it hard? Why?

Doing things differently can be challenging. Writing creatively demands that we break out of the normal mindset. It requires that we climb out of the box.

Exercise 2

Brainstorm with your classmates on what it means to “climb out of the box.” Talk about mindsets that box us in mentally. On your “What Have You Learned?” worksheet, list some things that writers can do to get out of the box of mundane thinking.

John C. Maxwell in *Thinking for a Change* quotes US Senator S. I. Hayakawa. He said, “Learning to write is learning to think. You don’t know anything clearly unless you can state it in writing.”¹⁰

Articles, letters, lessons, even books—all writing starts with a thought. The first step in writing is thinking. Good writing is based on clear, logical, creative thinking.

Can you think of a subject that has never been written about? Probably not. The subjects that Christian writers cover (e.g., love, forgiveness, faith, marriage, parenting) have been written about since Moses took quill in hand. Our challenge is to give well-worn subjects a new look, to paint a different scene using the same colors. To do this, we have to think creatively.

Exercise 3

Your instructor will lead you in an exercise, which will challenge you to think outside the box.

The Creative Word

“In the beginning God” . . . did what? God created. He took nothing and made something . . . lots of somethings. That is creativity—making something out of nothing. It is hard to imagine “nothing.” No trees. No sky. No ground. No . . . anything. Close your eyes for a few seconds and try to picture “nothing.”

Can’t do it, can you? There is always something in our minds. But God had nothing . . . except one tool. And it was a powerful tool.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said . . .” (Genesis 1:1-3).

God said! God's word was His tool. When He spoke the word, something powerful and wonderful happened. Our heavenly Father created the trees, the flowers, the ocean, the stars, and the animals with His word. "And God said, 'Let there be. . .'" And there was! Imagine how much fun God had designing and creating this universe.

God's final masterpiece was Adam. He made Adam in His image and His likeness. Every man, woman, boy, and girl has the desire and ability to create. Why do little children make mud pies and build stick houses? Because they are made in God's likeness, they have a desire to create. We can never make something from nothing like God does, but we have the God-given gift of creativity. We are made in our Creator's likeness.

God created this universe with the power of His word! And He upholds (maintains, keeps together) all things by the word of His power. Things happen when God speaks!

Talk about It

There is power in words. What can we as writers, teachers, preachers, and parents create with our words?

Exercise 4

On your "What Have You Learned?" worksheet, write a paragraph about what you want your writing to create. You may be asked to read your thoughts to the class.

The Spirit of the Creator

Creativity is a work of the Creator, the Spirit of God. Genesis 1:2 says, "And the Spirit of God moved. . ."

Creativity comes from the same root word as "breath, Spirit, wind." Creativity is the breath or Spirit of God moving upon and within us. Sometimes we call it "inspiration." Other times we call it "anointing."

On the Day of Pentecost, what did the people hear? The sound as of a rushing, mighty wind. The same Spirit of God that moved on the face of the deep in the beginning blew into the upper room. The *wind*—the *Spirit*—moved. God *breathed* on the 120 and created new lives. The same Peter who had denied Jesus

a few weeks earlier became a bold preacher of the gospel—not afraid to look the Jews in the eye and say, “You crucified the Lord of glory.”

When the Spirit of God moves on us, it inspires us. It anoints us with creativity. We get exciting, new ideas. Where do they come from? From the Creator!

Every human being is born with the natural gift of creativity. It is part of being made in God’s likeness. But we, who have the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of the Creator, have access to the source of creativity. Our creativity is multiplied beyond imagination. That is powerful!

If we want to write creatively, our first priority has to be prayer and Bible study. When our minds are full of God’s Word, the creating tool, and we allow the Spirit to move upon us, the anointing comes. We receive divine inspiration. That does not mean we will never have to rewrite. We are not writing the Word of God, so *every word* we write is not “divinely inspired.” But the thought can be . . . and should be.

Talk about It

Briefly share with the class an inspired thought that came to you while you were praying or studying God’s Word.

A Sanctified Imagination

“Imagination is the paint and creativity is the brush of our work.”¹¹

W. MacNeice Dixon, professor of English literature at the University of Glasgow, wrote that the human mind is not a debating hall but a picture gallery.¹² Writers are artists who hang pictures on the gallery of the mind. Instead of an easel, paint palette, and brushes, writers use words, paper, and pencils (typewriters or computers). Each picture starts with a thought when the writer sees something in his or her mind.

“Imagination is the paint.” As children, we enjoyed lively imaginations.

Talk about It

Can you remember something you imagined when you were a child? What was your favorite “let’s play like” game?

Then we got caught up in the nitty-gritty of life and lost touch with the world of “let’s play like.” What a shame. Good writers resurrect their imaginations. To revive your imagination, try these steps.

1. Ask questions.

Children excel at this. But as we age, we decide that asking questions is a sign of ignorance. So we climb into the box, conform to the way “adults are supposed to act,” and suffocate our imaginations.

Start asking why. Probe beneath the surface. Why did God call David “a man after my own heart”?

Ask “what if” questions. Look at things from a different perspective. What if Nathan had never confronted David with his sin?

What if love were a person? This kind of thinking led Carly Porter to write a novel, *A Child Among Us*, in which a speechless child changed a community.

2. Think.

“Learning to write is learning to think.” Find a quiet place. Reflect. Meditate. Examining words, concepts, and Bible verses takes time and concentrated effort. Write your thoughts in a journal. You will be amazed at the ideas that will evolve from your words.

3. Let yourself feel.

Open the door to your emotions. Don’t be afraid to feel. If you experience the emotions of your words, your readers will feel them too.

If you plan to write about Daniel, ask, “How would it feel to be taken captive to a foreign land?” Remember the loneliest, lowest moment of your life. Remember a time that you said good-bye to loved ones, knowing you would never see them again. Compare your feelings to Daniel’s breaking heart as he trudged in chains from Jerusalem to Babylon. Feel the heat of the desert sands on his bare feet. Let your imagination go. Get into the skin of the story.

Your writing will change the lives of the readers only if it moves their emotions. And it will move them only if it moves you.

Caution

- Keep your imagination within the boundaries of facts. When writing a Bible story or lesson, stick with what God's Word says, the historical background, and the cultural setting. Of course, this requires study, study, study. You can only write what you know.
- Keep your imagination sanctified. The Bible has a lot to say about evil imaginations. The world is caught up in lustful fantasies. An unsanctified imagination paints the canvas of life with sordid, ugly blotches. A sanctified imagination paints beautiful scenes that inspire hope and joy.

Creative Writing

"Creativity is the brush."

Exercise 5

With each point in this segment, an example is given from an idea developed by the writer of this course. Read this segment silently and be prepared to discuss it with the class.

1. Have a message.

What is your purpose for writing? Do you need to fill pages to complete an assignment, or do you have something to say? If you do not have a message, maybe you need to work in the garden or clean house. Too many writers do not have a message.

A friend fell into immorality. Homes were shattered. Hearts were broken. Could my friend be redeemed? What could I write that would convey the message of God's redeeming mercy?

2. Get started.

What Bible story, illustration, or Scripture will best paint the message on the reader's mind? Think.

The dominant biblical example of a man of God falling into immorality is King David. What did David do? How do David's actions parallel with my friend's actions? How can I get the message of mercy across without seeming self-righteous or condescending?

3. Change perspectives.

Look at it from a different perspective. What brushes can you use?

- Consider how this story, illustration, or Scripture is usually presented.
- Look for a fresh approach, a new brush.
- List every character associated with the story, even the ones on the periphery.
- Look at each scene, even behind the scenes.
- Watch for the place in the story that grabs your imagination.

Ask questions. Let yourself feel. Build on what you know and feel.

If you are writing an article or lesson that does not include a story, focus on a key word or phrase. Do a word study. Look up the definition. Do you get a new perspective of the word or phrase?

As I prayed and grieved for my friend, God brought the phrase “margin for error” to my mind. He reminded me of a time when my writing had been used for a bad example. I remembered my horror at seeing the red marks that filled the margins of my manuscript. A mental picture emerged. I saw how David’s story and my experience could paint the message of God’s redeeming love.

4. Choose the form.

How are you going to frame the message . . . an article, a Bible lesson, a fiction story, a drama, a devotion, and so on.

A short inspirational article was how I chose to frame my message. I submitted it to the Pentecostal Herald.

5. Grab the reader with a powerful lead.

Start at the high point of action. Background information can be filled in throughout the story or article. Paint beautiful, striking pictures that are worthy of wall space in the reader’s mind gallery.

The finished article, “A Margin for Error,” is listed as Appendix 2 (page 137). Take a few minutes to read it.

Talk about It

Did the lead paragraph draw you into the article? Did the article hang a picture in your mind gallery? Did it remind you of your errors or someone else's? Did it touch your emotions?

Exercise 6

The class will work together to begin developing an idea into a word picture. Use your worksheet in the "What Have You Learned" section for notes.

CONCLUSION

Everyone is born with the gift of creativity. Holy Ghost filled writers have a double portion, for they also have the Spirit of the Creator dwelling in them. When writers pray and study God's Word, fresh, exciting ideas flow into their minds. They break out of the box of mundane thinking as God-given images fill their sanctified imagination. They write creatively, for their anointing comes from the source of creativity, the Creator.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

With your dominant hand write your name. _____

With your other hand write your name. _____

Exercise 2

List things a writer can do to climb out of the box of mundane thinking. _____

Exercise 3

Write a paragraph, stating what you want to create with the words you write.

A. List the three steps to reviving your imagination. _____

B. Define "sanctified imagination." _____

Exercise 4

The message: _____

Possible Bible stories, illustrations, Bible verses: _____

(Circle the best one to paint your message.)

Characters in the story: _____

Scenes: _____

Type of writing: _____

Lead: _____

HOMEWORK

1. Continue to develop the idea chosen by the class. Use any form that you are comfortable with (e.g., devotion, drama, lesson, or article). Strive for a fresh approach. Remember you are creating a word picture. Length: 500-800 words. This is due at the beginning of the next class. Write the form you will be using on the lines provided. Also write any notes to help you get started with the idea given.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, write something in keeping with what you want to create with your words. If you want to write words that encourage, write a note of encouragement to someone. If you want to create joy, write a bouncy chorus for children and teach it to your children. Think outside the box. Be creative. At the beginning of the next class you will be asked to share, not your writing, but what you created with your words.

LESSON 6

Focusing to Aim

“I’ve got my eye on the goal . . . So let’s keep focused on that goal”
(Philippians 3:13-14, *The Message*).

Focus

Focused writing is powerful.

Aim

Realize the value of an aim while developing a subject. Write a short focused piece.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Get Focused

A laser is a focused beam of light. It can cut through diamonds and metal. It can make a tiny incision in the eye. The more focused the light is the more powerful it is. As with light, so with writing. Focused writing is powerful; it is *enlightening*.

As the writer, you must see something that the reader does not. Otherwise, why write? People read to gain knowledge. The writer must not only know something the reader does not know, he must know how to communicate that knowledge to the reader.

Writing is an *enlightening* process.

The writer is pulled by two extremes:

- One is the temptation to write even though he has nothing enlightening to say. This produces shallow, ineffective work. It wastes the time of the writer and the reader (if there is one).
- The other extreme is the tendency to shed too much light on a subject. When the subject loses its focus, the writing loses its power. Writers, like teachers, should always know more than they share. Focused writing compels the writer to sift through a reservoir of knowledge and choose only information relevant to the aim.

Define the Aim

Exercise 1

Your instructor will lead the class in a contest to determine the best sharpshooter.

The need for a *destination* (*aim*, *target*) is the subject of a discussion between Alice and the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, a popular children's story.

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"As long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

If you do not know where you are going, anywhere will do. But if you do not know where you are going, how will you know when you arrive?

Aimless writers have a problem. They do not know how to start or how to stop, because they do not know where they want to go. A *destination* is vital to travelers. Hunters need a *target*, and writers must have an *aim*.

Here are the three A's of a good aim:

1. Acquaints the reader with something to learn;
2. Applies the message to the reader's life;
3. Alters the reader's life or thinking.

These are also defined as (1) to know – opens the reader's mind; (2) to feel – touches his heart; (3) to do – changes her.

Think about It

Is one A more important than the others? If so, why? If not, why not?

An aim should be short and focused. Ask: What is my message? Then condense it to three (or less) points when writing a lesson, or to one point when writing an article or story.

When writing an aim for a lesson, ask: "What do I want the students to learn, to feel, and to do?"

An example of a three-point aim for a lesson about the prodigal son is:

- To acquaint students with the parable of the prodigal son;
- To lead them to feel the love of the father;
- To give them an opportunity to respond to God's love.

The aim of an article based on this parable could simply be to relate the father's love for his son to God's love for His children.

Note that the aim for the article is shorter than the one for the lesson. However, the aim for the article also leads the reader to know, to feel, and to do.

Whether you are writing a book, a lesson, or an article, you need a short, focused aim. Everything you write should revolve around that focal point. If your writing strays from the aim, bring it back into focus. Remember – the more focused your writing, the more powerful it is.

Exercise 2

Work with your classmates to develop a simple aim based on the story of Joseph. Make it generic enough to fit readers/students of any age. Ask:

What do we want them to know, to feel, and to do? Write the aim in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Exercise 3

Work with your classmates to do a quick study of I John 1-2 to find (1) to whom the apostle John was writing; (2) why he was writing. Write the answers on your worksheet in the “What Have You Learned?” section. Based on these findings, write a one-sentence aim for I John in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Develop the Subject

Exercise 4

To demonstrate how to develop a subject, your instructor will give you an example. For your homework, follow the instructions on your worksheet in the “What Have You Learned?” section to develop a subject of your choosing.

After filling out the chart, you will be well on the way to developing the heart of an outline. You can add sub-points by placing circles around the main points. Your instructor will give you an example.

Let’s convert the chart into an outline.

The Power of the Blood

Aim: To compare natural and spiritual blood.

- I. [Introduction of the Subject – more about this in lesson 7]
- II. [Heart of the Subject] There’s power in the blood
 - A. Carries nourishment to the body
 - B. Fights infection
 - C. Gives immunity to disease
 - D. Transmits family traits
 1. Contains DNA
 2. Linked to family name
 - E. Carries oxygen to the brain
 - F. Warms the body
- III. [Summary of subject – to be covered in lesson 9]

Note that the points were not listed on the outline in the same order as given on the chart, but according to their importance (from the writer's perspective). For illustration, sub-points were added to point E. When expanding the outline into an article, the writer would add sub-points to each segment.

Two or three points under each main heading (I, II, III) are sufficient, although the example gives six.

Know the Reader

The aim depends upon the readers. Are you writing for adults? For children? For teens? For believers? For nonbelievers? For parents? For singles? The list goes on and on.

If you are writing for preschoolers, pay attention to preschoolers. Are any preschool children in your life? Listen to them. Watch them. Check out their vocabulary. What are their interests? If you are writing for preschool teachers, give them material they can communicate to preschoolers. Write the parts of a lesson designed for the teacher on the teacher's level. Write the parts that the teacher will share with the students on the students' level.

How you approach the subject depends upon the needs of the readers, their intelligence, their culture, and other issues. Everything revolves around the readers.

Talk about It

Consider the aim that your class developed for the story of Joseph. How would it change if you were writing for children? Teens? Parents? Singles?

Choose the Medium

What is your purpose for writing—to educate, to evangelize, to entertain, to inspire, or to motivate?

How you fulfill your purpose depends upon the readers' needs and ability to receive the message. It is not what medium (i.e., story, article, lesson) appeals to you, but what will most effectively reach the readers.

Lessons and expository articles are not the only ways to educate the readers. A short story, a fiction book, or even a poem can be educational.

Talk about It

Consider again the story of Joseph and the aim developed for each group. If you were writing Joseph's story for children/teens/ adults, what medium would you use?

More to Talk About

Should a Christian writer ever write for entertainment alone?

CONCLUSION

Stay focused. In one Scripture passage or subject, there may be many, many texts and wonderful thoughts, but you cannot cover all of them in one piece.

Look at your aim. What do you want to get across to the readers? Stick with points that focus on the aim. If you start spreading the subject over too wide an area, refocus. Focused writing is powerful.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

1. What are the two extremes that tempt a writer? _____

2. What are the three A's of a good aim? _____

Exercise 2

Write an aim for teaching the story of Joseph. _____

Exercise 3

To whom was the apostle John writing when he wrote I John? _____

Why was he writing? _____

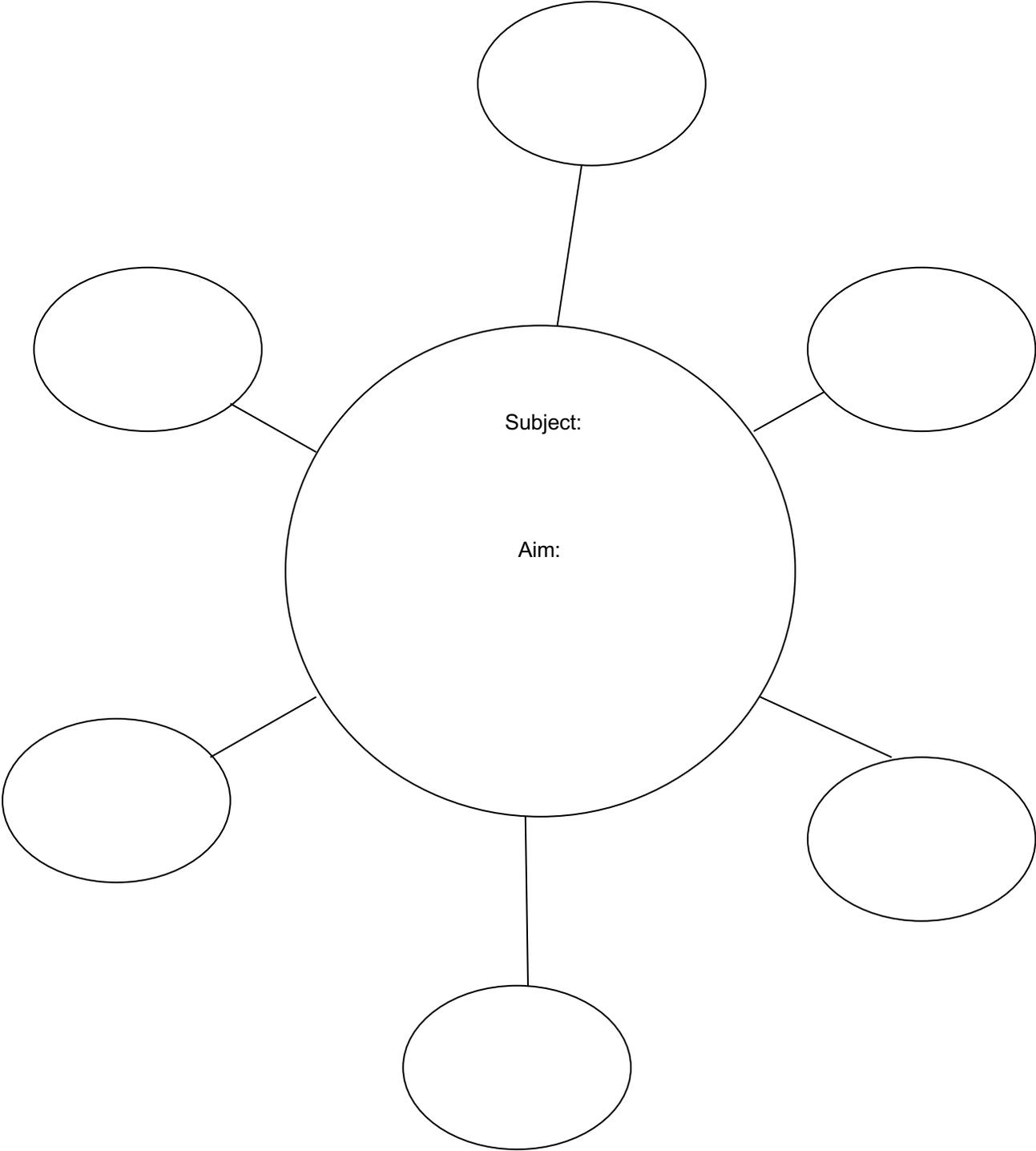
The aim of I John is _____

HOMEWORK

Exercise 4

- In the center circle, write a subject you want to write about (i.e., a biblical subject, a local custom, a holiday, a family member or tradition).
- Under the subject, write your aim. (To determine your aim, consider why you are writing about this subject.)
- In the call-out circles, write points related to the subject. You may not need all six circles. In this case, three or four are better than six. If you have more than six points that you wish to cover, evaluate them. Probably some are sub-points. Too many points will spread the focus and lessen the impact.
- Letter (A, B, C, etc.) the call-out circles according to their importance.
- Translate the chart into the heart of an outline.

Diagram for Exercise 4



LESSON 7

Starting Smart

“When I begin, I will also make an end” (I Samuel 3:12).

Focus

Hook the reader by starting smart.

Aim

Consider the importance of a good lead to introduce the subject in an interesting way. Develop an effective lead.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

For your lesson 6 homework, you developed the heart (point II) of an outline. For this lesson’s homework, you will develop the introduction to the outline (point I) and write a lead for it.

Start Smart

How long should a lead be? About ten seconds. Readers must be hooked immediately, or they will move on to something more interesting. So how does a writer capture the reader’s attention and hold it?

Catch the Reader's Eye

Before readers digest one sentence, they scan the page. If the design does not capture their attention, flip! They turn the page.

"But the appearance of the page is the designer's job," the writer protests. Not altogether. The writer has more control over the page layout than most realize.

Long, rambling paragraphs that fill the page discourage readers. Paragraph breaks are restful. They give a fresh, concise, moving appearance. In best-seller books, some paragraphs are one sentence long, and that sentence may have only two words. On the other hand, a page full of one-sentence paragraphs would be boring. Variety is the key to catching the reader's eye.

Keep sentence and paragraph lengths varied, but short and clean. A good rule—but not an unbreakable one—is to vary paragraphs from one to six or eight sentences long. Keep sentences from one to fifteen words long. None longer. Later lessons will deal with writing tight and determining when to break a paragraph. (Count the words in the sentences in this paragraph. Note the variation. Also note that the rule was broken.)

Large blocks of type tire the eye and discourage the reader. "I have to read that? It's not worth it." The writer does not want that to happen.

Another way to add eye appeal to a page is to insert quotations. Quotation marks draw the eye like a moth to the light.

Exercise 1

Open any book. Notice the page layout. Does it appeal to your eyes? Why or why not? Are there quotation marks on the page? Did they command your attention? On your worksheet in the "What Have You Learned?" section, write a paragraph summarizing what this tells you about eye appeal.

Snag the Reader's Interest

When telling a story, start where the action is. When writing an article, start where the interest is.

Readers look for action, life, excitement, something that interests them. Even lessons, nonfiction articles, or poems have to snag the readers' interest.

immediately. The first sentence or paragraph has got to grab them, or they will move on, looking for tastier bait.

When writing the first draft, start at the beginning. Write as the thoughts come to you. Then read what you have written, asking these questions:

- What is the high point? Where does the action start or where is the greatest interest? That is your lead. Start there.
- How much of the information preceding the high point can be deleted? You may be surprised to find that a lot of the details are not needed. In fact, they may slow the flow of the article/story.
- How can the important details be inserted into the article/story after the lead? Often one or two words can replace a sentence or more.

Finally, rewrite and rewrite until the lead is compelling and the necessary details are given throughout the story/article.

Confused? Study this example from the best-selling book in the world.

If you are going to write the story of a great missionary, do you start with his birth, naming his parents, telling where he was born? Is that how the Book of Acts introduced the apostle Paul?

“Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him [Stephen] with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul” (Acts 7:57-58).

Paul’s (Saul’s) story began when the action was high. The scene was tense. Rocks were flying. Stephen was dying. In the midst of this scene, Luke introduced a young man named Saul.

Talk about It

What did Luke tell us about Saul in this passage? Name some things about Saul’s background that are not revealed in Acts 7:57-58. Write your answers in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

As Luke told the apostle Paul’s story, he dropped in background facts little by little. Let’s look at how he revealed Paul’s birthplace.

“And the Lord said unto him [Ananias], Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).

As Luke told the dramatic story of Saul’s conversion, he simply dropped the name of Saul’s birthplace into the story. Later Luke wrote more about it, because it became an important factor in the story.

“And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him” (Acts 22:25-29).

Tarsus was a Roman colony. People born in Tarsus were Roman citizens by birth. A Roman citizen could not be imprisoned or beaten without a trial. The chief captain had purchased his citizenship. Paul was “free born.” Thus, where Paul was born was an important factor in this scene.

The birthplace of many Bible characters is not known. Why? Because their birthplace is not relevant to their story. For other Bible characters knowing where they were born is important.

Talk about It

Name Bible characters whose birthplaces are given. Talk about why their birthplaces were important. List these on your worksheet in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Exercise 2

Your instructor will divide the class into teams. Work with your teammates to find in the Book of Acts at least two things about the apostle Paul’s background (in addition to his birthplace) that Luke revealed as he told Paul’s story. Write the facts and references on the table in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

The lead may not emerge with the first draft. You may have to write and rewrite and rewrite before the lead becomes evident. Read each draft aloud, making editorial changes as you go. Watch for the high point. It may be several paragraphs or pages into the story.

Move the lead to the beginning by deleting all that was written before it. (This may mean tossing paragraphs or even pages of material.) Consider the information you deleted. How much of it is needed? Condense and refine the needed information. Insert it in the remaining material through dialogue, memory flashes, and short narration.

Note how in the article “Jehovah-Jireh, My Provider,” *Pentecostal Herald*, May 2004, author Karen Myers starts where the tension is the highest. Then she goes back and fills in the details leading again to the point of crisis and beyond. (Due to space limitation, only clips from the article are given here.)

[This lead uses one-side dialogue.] The phone rang. It was 3:30 A.M. on Saturday, October 12, 2002. “Karen, this is Mary Ellen at the Barnes transplant office. We need you to come to the hospital right away. We may have a kidney for you. Don’t speed, but get here as soon as you can.”

Immediately, I called a friend who had agreed to take me when the call came. Shortly after 5:30 A.M., I was admitted to the hospital. Several vials of blood were drawn, an EKG was done, and I was taken for a chest X-ray. The final donor match was approved, and by 10 A.M. I was in surgery.

Because of polycystic kidney disease, I had begun dialysis in March 2000. This hereditary disease is caused by a *[medical data given here]*.
...

About sixteen years ago, my brother was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease. He suggested that I be tested so that if I did have the disease, it could be monitored. . . .

[Karen continues telling about her struggle with the disease and her prayers for healing. We pick up the story just a few days before her transplant.]

October 7-9, 2002, was designated as a special time of prayer and fasting at the World Evangelism Center. On Tuesday, October 8, the noon prayer session ended with a prayer walk throughout the building. When a group reached my desk, the group leader looked at me and said, "You need healing." The group prayed a focused prayer for me. During the prayer, someone, whose voice I did not recognize, came over, laid hands on me, and prayed. As the group moved down the hall, T. M. Jackson and the Carroll McGruders, who were leading the prayer sessions, came around the corner. Not knowing that others had just prayed for me, they prayed again. Four days later, I was in surgery receiving a kidney transplant. *[See how the story has built back to the lead?]*

I was dismissed from the hospital four days after surgery. . . . *[Conclusion]* It has now been more than a year and a half since the transplant. As I review the past four years, I marvel at all the ways God has provided for my needs. He is indeed Jehovah-Jireh, my provider.¹³

Talk about It

Join your class in a discussion of how the lead hooked you. What did you learn about Karen from the lead? How did she fill in the details later in the article?

A good lead catches the reader's eye and snags his interest. But it does a lot more.

Types of Leads

A good lead catches a reader in various ways.

- It baits the reader's curiosity.
- It fits the mood and style of the article.
- It paves the way for the conclusion.
- It is as unique as the article.
- It starts where the action is highest or the interest is the greatest.

Bait the reader's curiosity by dangling enough information in front of him to make him want to know more.

Anglers use a variety of bait. So writers use a variety of leads. Let's study examples of different types of leads.

Striking Statement

The atmosphere was electric with the presence of God.¹⁴

It was in Mr. Sellers' ninth grade science class that I encountered one of the most awkward situations of my life.¹⁵

After about twenty minutes when the acid started to take effect, I knew I was in trouble. The cramps started and my head was on fire—the beginning of a bad trip.¹⁶

Factual

Two million women are beaten by their husbands every year. Forty percent of all women murdered were killed by their husbands. Eighty percent of couples who verbally abuse each other end up in physical combat.¹⁷

The population of Wood River is 11,300. There are at least three other sectors around Wood River that we service with our bus ministry.¹⁸

Quotes/Dialogue

"Test tomorrow." Mr. Morgan's final words filled Trevor with dread. "Brother!" he muttered. "Mr. Morgan's mind runs on one track, a test track."¹⁹

"Brother Freeman, my old rent house next door to the church property is not fit for tenants anymore, but there's good wood in it. You're welcome to tear it down and use whatever is suitable for the parsonage, O.K.?"²⁰

Quotation

Expository articles often begin with a quotation from God's Word or other sources.

Jesus answered Pilate in John 18:37: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."²¹

Lee Iacocca once said, "Even a master craftsman would be hard pressed to produce great results with broken, rusted, or non-existent tools."²²

A line in an old hymn says, "What He takes or what He gives us, shows the Father's love so precious."²³

Questions

What do you think those who survive you will write as your epitaph? What will your obituary say? What words will be used in the eulogy to sum up your life?²⁴

Simple Statement

The Bible never flatters its heroes.²⁵

Narrative

The narrative lead is sometimes called the "anecdotal" lead. It employs the storytelling arts of fiction writing to lure the reader into reading nonfiction.

In the later years of the reign of King George V, he had a custom of broadcasting an annual message to the empire. During one of his broadcasts, when the ears of the world were waiting to hear the voice of the king, an alert engineer in the radio station noticed that an important wire was broken. America was cut off!²⁶

He arose again from a short sleep but a long night.²⁷

It was midnight and most of the men had fallen asleep. Then from deep within the prison, came a noise. It was singing, and of all things, two men were singing about God.²⁸

Combined Leads

Many leads combine two or more types. The following lead is an excellent example of an imaginary quote. Notice how the quotation marks add eye appeal.

On the surface, there seemed to be nothing about David that would have impressed God. Nothing caused Him to say, "Wow! That's my man!"²⁹

The following narrative lead also includes a humorous, imaginary quote.

I saw the spark in Wild Thing's eyes the day she was born. She looked at me as if to say, "Thanks for the ride, Mom. I'll take it from here." She is our strong-willed child.³⁰

This lead weaves quotes and questions.

Do you ever think about your thinking? Have you ever just laid your mind on the altar and said, "God, I need help with this mind of mine"?³¹

This lead combines a simple statement with a question.

One of life's great surprises is that life is full of surprises. Should we be surprised?³²

Exercise 3

Using any book or magazine you have, search for different types of leads. As you find different styles, make notes in the "What Have You Learned?" section of where they are. When time is up, your instructor will ask the class for examples for discussion. Be prepared to read one or two to the class. You will work together to rate the leads: excellent, good, fair, or bad.

Once you are comfortable with the types of leads studied in this lesson, you will find yourself writing good leads that may not fit a certain style. That is fine. Creativity does not always fit a mold.

The important thing is to start smart.

CONCLUSION

The lead often determines whether readers continue reading, or turn the page. A good lead is short and focused. It starts where the action is the highest or the interest the greatest. It catches the readers' eye, snags their interest, and baits their curiosity.

Leads are as varied as fishing bait. Variety keeps the reader coming back for more.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

Write a paragraph summarizing what you have learned about eye appeal. _____

Talk about It

In Acts 7:57-58 Luke gave these facts about Saul: _____

He did not give these facts: _____

Talk about It

Bible Character	Why his/her birthplace is important

Exercise 2

Facts about Paul's background revealed in the Book of Acts.

Facts	References

Exercise 3

Type of Lead	Source	Rating (excellent, good, fair, poor)
Striking Statement		
Factual		
Quote/Dialogue		
Quotation		
Question		
Simple Statement		
Narrative		
Combined		
Other		

HOMWORK

- In lesson 6 we developed the heart of an outline on “The Power of the Blood.” (See page 66.) Below is the introduction of this outline. Choose one of the types of leads studied in this lesson. Using either points A, B, or both, write a lead for an article about the blood.

The Power of the Blood

- I. Why the blood?
 - A. Songs about the blood
 - B. Sayings about the blood

- In lesson 6 you developed a call-out chart into the heart of an outline. How would you introduce the subject?
- Write an introduction for your outline.
- Write a short lead for a lesson on this subject.
- What type of lead did you write?

LESSON 8

Using Imagery

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15).

Focus

Imagery adds impact to writing.

Aim

Understand the importance of figurative language in writing, and study several figures of speech. Write an analogy.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Imagery

In *The Human Situation*, W. MacNeile Dixon wrote: “The human mind is not, as philosophers would have you think, a debating hall, but a picture gallery. Around it hang our similes, our concepts . . . Metaphor is the essence of religion and poetry.”³³

Writing that impacts the reader is based on imagery, which creates images on the walls of the mind. We create images with our imaginations.

Think about It

Compare the words: *image*, *imagery*, *imagination*. Underline the part that is similar.

God did not give you an imagination just so you could create make-believe stories. The best nonfiction books and articles were written by writers who employed their imaginations. The imagination is one of the greatest learning tools God has given humanity.

To help their readers get the message, writers use *imagery* or figurative language to paint word pictures. This kind of writing activates the reader's imagination.

Imagery, also called *metaphorical language*, fills the pages of God's Word. The prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, and Zechariah—were masters at using imagery. Jesus used this language when He taught.

The use of figurative language can spell the difference between the rejection and the acceptance of a manuscript. A dissertation on wayward children can die on an editor's desk, but a story about a prodigal son will live for generations. The difference? Imagery, painting a picture on the wall of the reader's mind.

We can learn much about imagery from the Holy Spirit, author of the best-selling nonfiction book of the ages. Let's study God's Word for content and for style.

Warren Wiersbe based the first chapter of *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination* on II Samuel 17. He titled it, "The Tale of Two Preachers."³⁴

Here's the story—a nonfiction story. King David was fleeing from his son Absalom when word came to him, "Ahithophel has joined with Absalom." This was bad news, because the word of Ahithophel, grandfather of Bathsheba and counselor to David, was so esteemed in Israel that when he spoke, it "was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God" (II Samuel 16:23).

As King David swallowed dust and trudged up the mountain trail, fleeing Jerusalem, he prayed that God would turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness.

When David's friend Hushai asked to join David's party, the king sent him back to Jerusalem. David admonished Hushai to "defeat the counsel of

Ahithophel.” This was no small assignment, considering the high regard everyone had for Ahithophel’s counsel. Hushai returned to Jerusalem and managed to persuade Absalom that he was now on Absalom’s side.

Then Absalom called for Ahithophel to give him counsel. Notice carefully Ahithophel’s reply from II Samuel 17:1-3.

“Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only: and I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace” (II Samuel 17:1-3).

Very good advice, Absalom thought. But wait. He might as well get a second opinion. After all, this was life and death business. So he called for Hushai.

Listen to Hushai’s response. Notice the imagery he created with his words.

“The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time. For . . . thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men. Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there” (II Samuel 17:7-13).

Did you see the bear crashing through the woods, roaring in rage, seeking her young? Did you see the lion hearts of Absalom's followers melting?

Hushai's advice impacted Absalom and changed his thinking. God used Hushai's words to turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness. And God can use our words to defeat the counsel of the enemy. But we must write wise things that do not attack the reader, but impact him. Hushai used imagery, and according to Wiersbe, he "suppressed a rebellion and saved the life of a king."

Right Brain, Left Brain?

The left side of the brain is analytical. The right side is creative. In his book Wiersbe brought out an interesting point. Ahithophel used a "left-brain" approach, which is logical. Hushai used a "right-brain" approach, which is creative. Absalom heard Ahithophel's advice. He heard, saw, and felt Hushai's counsel. (Notice how Hushai's imagery touched Absalom's senses.)

Hushai's creative words pictured Absalom leading a mighty army that numbered as the sands of the sea. He painted David roaring through the forest like an angry bear. (No doubt, Absalom had seen his father like this.) Hushai described the hearts of David's men melting.

Surely God gave Hushai the words he spoke, and God will give us the words we need to write. People think in pictures and respond with their hearts, as well as their heads. It is doubtful that Hushai knew that, but God did.

Jean Hagar, in her workshop at the Oklahoma Federation of Writers Convention, told her class, "You can't be creative and critical at the same time."³⁵ She explained that either we use the left side of our brain to analyze and criticize or we use the right side to create. One at a time . . . not both at the same time.

What does this say to writers? Use the right side of your brain first to write whatever comes to you. Do not worry about grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and so on. Just write. Let the words flow. Then, preferably a few hours or days later, mentally switch to the left side of your brain. Become the editor. Analyze, criticize, and edit your work.

"You can't be creative and critical at the same time." This statement has a deeper meaning than simply "write, then edit." When you have a critical spirit, you block the creativity (inspiration, anointing) you need to write. A critical

spirit stops the flow of the Spirit of the Creator, the Holy Spirit. So when you have a case of writer's block, check your spirit. Do you have a critical spirit? (And that includes a spirit critical of anything or anyone, even things not necessarily related to writing. It can even include "critical of yourself.") Do you need God to create in you a right spirit?

Think about It

You are in this class because you want to write excellent things, anointed words that will change lives. This can happen only if you have a "clean heart and a right spirit." Read Isaiah 59:1-3; Matthew 5:23-25; and Psalm 19:12-14. Ask God to search your heart and cleanse you from any seeds of criticism.

Figures of Speech

Exercise 1

Study these definitions. What common phrase is found in each definition?

imagery: mental pictures or images; the use of figures of speech or vivid descriptions in writing or speaking to produce mental images; a metaphoric representation, as in music or art.

figurative: based on or making use of figures of speech: metaphorical: *figurative language*; containing many figures of speech; ornate.

metaphor: a figure of speech in which a term is transferred from the object it ordinarily designates to an object it may designate only by implicit comparison or analogy.

Talk about It

Think about a sermon you have heard that used imagery. How did it impact you? Use the "What Have You Learned?" section for notes. Be prepared to share briefly this message with your class.

Figures of speech (not to be confused with parts of speech) place a common subject in a unique frame. They display the subject in a creative way and hang it in the picture galleries of our minds. In this lesson we study five figures of speech: simile, metaphor, personification, analogy, and allegory.

Talk about It

Figurative language uses images to draw a picture that clearly communicates a concept or idea. Jesus used metaphorical language—imagery, images, imagination, mental pictures. What were some of the images Jesus used? List these in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Simile

Similes associate the qualities of one thing with the qualities of another, by using the words *like* or *as*. “As a thief in the night” “He was led like lamb to the slaughter.” “Spirit descending . . . like a dove.”

Exercise 2a

Write two other similes from the Bible in the “What Have You Learned?” section. Be prepared to share these with the class.

Work with the class to examine Hushai and Ahithophel’s counsel and fill in the blanks in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

When reaching for a simile, think outside the box. (Remember lesson 5?) What is this subject like? Stretch your mind to find something usually not associated with the subject. Give the reader a fresh look at an old subject simply by adding a simile.

When using similes, remember these checkmarks:

- “Similes coming in rapid fire, one right on top of another, are more distracting than illuminating” (Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, USA: Longman Publishers, 2000, 80).
- Similes do not work when the things compared are too much alike such as lizards and snakes. What simile would you use for a lizard? A snake? Think of objects not usually associated with snakes or lizards.
- Avoid clichés (overused expressions and ideas). Be creative.

Exercise 2b

Brainstorm with your classmates to create similes for the phrases in the “What Have You Learned?” section. Strive for fresh, creative similes. Avoid clichés.

Metaphor

Metaphors equate or identify one thing with another, without the use of *like* or *as*. “The tongue is a fire.” “The seed is the word of God.” “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.”

Exercise 3a

In the “What Have You Learned?” section, write two other metaphors from God’s Word.

When using metaphors, remember this checkmark:

- Do not mix metaphors. Example: The classroom was a zoo with students and teacher locked in combat. (Was it a zoo or a battlefield?)

Exercise 3b

In the “What Have You Learned?” section, rewrite this sentence so the classroom was either a zoo or a battlefield, but not both.

Create *new* metaphors for the things listed on the worksheet in the “What Have You Learned?” section. The key word is *new*.

Personification

Personification assigns human qualities or abilities to animals, objects, qualities, or ideas. “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets” (Proverbs 1:20).

Abstract qualities or virtues such as temperance, persistence, and humility are often hard to grasp until they are fleshed out. Personification gives qualities a body and a personality. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” God literally personified His Word, His plan . . . in the flesh of Jesus Christ. Psalm 23:6 is another example. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.”

Exercise 4a

In the “What Have You Learned?” section, write two examples of personification from God’s Word.

When personifying a quality or thing, ask, “What do people do?” (Answers could include sing, laugh, walk, climb, warn, eat, follow, lead, pout, and so forth.) What does this thing you are describing do that people might do?

Consider this sentence. “Humility wears work clothes.” What do you see? What does that tell you about humility? Instead of writing a detailed description

of humility, the writer gives you a clear picture of humility by clothing it in work clothes.

Exercise 4b

On your worksheet in the “What Have You Learned” section is a list of traits. Put clothes on each trait to describe it. Be prepared to share these with the class.

When using personification, remember this checkmark.

- Assign attributes compatible with the object. A fence would not have wings, but it could wrap its arms around a child or it could stand firm.

Exercise 4c

Find a partner and work together to personify the things listed in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Analogy

An analogy is an extended comparison (metaphor or simile) between two things that are usually considered dissimilar, yet they share some common features. The Holy Ghost is like water: (1) it gives life; (2) it refreshes; (3) it is a source of power; (4) it cleanses.

An analogy is an extended metaphor. Jesus compared the Holy Ghost (main topic) to water (comparison subject). There should be at least three similarities between the two.

Parables are analogies. The kingdom of God is a pearl: (1) hidden; (2) valuable; (3) worth selling all to purchase. Faith is a mustard seed: (1) small; (2) planted; (3) growing. The heart of man is soil: (1) beaten down; (2) rocky and barren; (3) filled with thorns; (4) good and productive. God used an analogy to teach Jeremiah and Israel a lesson at the potter’s house. (See Jeremiah 18.)

Exercise 5a

Your instructor will help your class develop an analogy.

Exercise 5b

Use the chart in the “What Have You Learned?” section to develop an analogy for one of the following:

1. Death is like . . .

2. An empty stomach is like . . .
3. A three-year-old is like . . .
4. Bible school is like . . .

Or if you created an excellent metaphor that you want to expand into an analogy, do so. (Work with a partner if you want.) The second subject can be anything you choose, just so it is unrelated to the subject. List the characteristics of each. Then match the ones that are similar. Remember you need at least three similarities. (Notice the word *simile* in *similarities*.)

Allegory

An allegory is a form of fiction in which specific characters, elements of plot, and setting represent more universal aspects of life. *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis, *Hinds' Feet on High Places* by Hannah Hurnard, and *Psalms 23* by David are allegories.

If you have something important to write, but you don't know how to approach it to get the message across, consider writing an allegory. It is an excellent way to write about controversial subjects in a non-threatening way. You will have to pay close attention to detail, but the results will be worth the effort. If you do not have enough material for a book, write an article.

Before you try this rather complicated figure of speech, study authors who have mastered it such as John Bunyan, C. S. Lewis, and Hannah Hurnard.

"When you're generating figurative language, try to visualize what your words mean. Sometimes it helps to draw pictures."³⁶

CONCLUSION

Imagery (figurative language, metaphorical writing) hangs pictures in the galleries of the readers' minds. Use figurative language (figures of speech) to help the reader to see, hear, and feel the message. This impacts the readers and changes lives.

When writing, allow the right side of your brain to work first. Create. Then using the left side of the brain, analyze, edit, and proof. When you try to create and edit in one step, you hinder the flow of creativity. You cannot be creative and critical at the same time. If the flow of the Spirit of the Creator has dwindled down to a drip, check your spirit.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

What is the common phrase found in the definitions of *imagery*, *figurative*, and *metaphor*? _____

Talk about It

A sermon I heard that used imagery was _____
preached by _____.

Talk about It

Some images Jesus used when He taught:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Exercise 2a

Two similes from the Bible:

1. _____
2. _____

How many similes did Ahithophel use in his counsel to Absalom? _____

How many similes did Hushai use? _____

Write the similes here. _____

Exercise 2b

Brainstorm with your classmates to create fresh similes for the following:

1. An inspired writer is like a _____.
2. The little boy was as hungry as a _____.
3. The weary mother sounded like a _____.

4. An aged preacher stood like a _____.

Exercise 3a

Two metaphors from the Bible:

1. _____
2. _____

Exercise 3b

Rewrite this sentence so the metaphors are not mixed: The classroom was a zoo with students and teacher locked in combat.

Create *new* metaphors for the following:

1. The Word of God is _____.
2. The Holy Spirit is _____.
3. The church is _____.
4. My brain is _____.
5. This class is _____.

Exercise 4a

Two examples of personification from God's Word:

1. _____
2. _____

Exercise 4b

Personify these character traits by clothing them.

1. Joy wears _____.
2. Bitterness wears _____.
3. Anger wears _____.
4. Gentleness wears _____.
5. Meekness wears _____.
6. Truth wears _____.

Exercise 4c

Personify the following:

1. Freedom _____.
2. My new shoes _____.
3. His cluttered desk _____.
4. The window _____.

Exercise 5

Create an analogy. Choose one of the subjects from the lesson text for the main topic and a subject of your choosing for the comparison.

Main Topic from Text	Comparison Subject of Your Choosing

HOMEWORK

Using the analogy that you created in Exercise 5, write an inspirational article. You might even choose to write a poem. Use at least three similarities between the two subjects. After you have written the article, set it aside for a few hours or a day, then edit and rewrite.

LESSON 9

Transmitting the Message

“(Whoso readeth, let him understand:)” (Matthew 24:15).

Focus

Get the message across.

Aim

Make an impact on the reader’s mind (to know), heart (to feel), and life (to do).

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

(You will need your homework from lesson 8 for this class.)

The Power of a Story

There are two ways of telling the truth. You can state a fact. Or, you can tell a story.³⁷

Story is the language of the human heart.³⁸

Facts can fill the mind, but never touch the heart. A story has the power to engrave its message on the heart. The Master Teacher used the power of stories to challenge His students’ minds, touch their hearts, and change their lives.

Parables start off like *pictures*, then become *mirrors*, and then become *windows*. First there's *sight* as we see a slice of life in the *picture*; then there's *insight* as we see ourselves in the *mirror*; and then there's *vision* as we look through the *window* of revelation and see the Lor.³⁹

Talk about It

Are parables fiction or nonfiction? Be prepared to defend your position.

The Picture

Let's examine a story using figurative language that changed David's life.

Review Question: What is figurative language?

"The Lord sent Nathan unto David" (II Samuel 12:1).

God gave Nathan an unpleasant message to deliver. He was to confront King David with his sins—plural. (If you are not acquainted with the story of David's sins, read II Samuel 11.)

What kind of mood would the king be in? Nathan could not call ahead and ask the secretary of state to clue him in. Was this a good time for a sermon or not? How Nathan delivered that message could literally mean life or death . . . for Nathan. He may have lost a night's sleep over that sermon.

What was the take-away—the aim? Any way that Nathan looked at it, the take-away stayed the same—repent. How many ways can you say "repent" to a king? Maybe he could send David an email and avoid a face-to-face confrontation.

Nathan was smart . . . smart enough to listen to God. Had he burst into the throne room pointing his finger at David and pronouncing judgment, most likely he would have been carried out. Surely God inspired Nathan's message.

The message started with a story. Right in the middle of this nonfiction, real-life, nitty-gritty sermon, is a parable. Over and over in God's Word parables are dropped into the middle of real life, even confrontational situations, to give sight, insight, and vision, to turn ears into eyes.

“There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter” (II Samuel 12:1-3).

What would David relate to more than a lamb? How many lambs had David “bought and nourished up”? How many had lain in his bosom? With the story of a lamb, Nathan immediately caught David’s attention. He knew his audience. He knew what would interest him.

“And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him” (II Samuel 12:4).

That’s the picture. And David got it.

“And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity” (II Samuel 12:5-6).

Picture = Sight = To Know . . . the Mind

Talk about It

Your instructor will lead the class in a discussion of the figurative language that Nathan used.

The Mirror

Now for the sticky part . . . turning the picture into a mirror.

“And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou

despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon" (II Samuel 12:7-9).

Mirror = Insight = To Feel . . . the Heart

Nathan's message was not a pleasant one. So he wisely prepared the king's heart for the message.

Talk about It

What do you think King David felt when the analogy became reality and he saw his reflection in the story? Why was it important that the story touch David's heart?

The Window

"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" (II Samuel 12:10-12).

With this message of judgment, Nathan pulled back the curtain and showed David the harvest his seeds of sin would produce.

Window = Vision = To Do . . . the Life

Talk about It

What if Nathan had presented a thesis on the evil of adultery and the sin of murder to the king? Would the king's spirit have been humbled and his heart broken?

Nathan touched David's shepherd's heart with a story. He painted a picture that King David understood. Before Nathan turned the picture into a mirror, David was feeling grief and anger over an injustice. What King David felt

when he looked in the mirror and what he saw when he looked out the window, moved him to repent.

“And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD” (II Samuel 12:13).

Is there a controversial subject that you feel led to address? Or maybe sin that needs to be confronted . . . in someone’s life . . . in society . . . in the church? Consider writing a parable or an allegory – a story.

Sight, Insight, Vision

As you write, ask yourself three questions:

1. What is my message? How can I show it to the reader – give him sight? What picture do I want to hang in the gallery of his mind? What do I want him to know?
2. How can I turn this picture into a mirror to give the reader insight? What do I want him to feel?
3. What vision do I want the reader to catch? How can I pull back the curtain to reveal the larger picture? What do I want the reader to do?

Whether you are writing fiction or nonfiction, a story can give the reader sight, insight, and vision. Until you give him all three, your work is not complete.

Exercise 1

The Old Testament prophets were masters at using imagery to give sight, insight, and vision. In Scripture, find an example where a prophet did this. Use the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Exercise 2

Join your classmates in analyzing the homework from lesson 8, either as a class activity or in a small group.

Rules for Critiquing

1. Be positive. Point out what the writer did right.
2. Be gentle. Make suggestions as to how the writing can be improved.
3. Remember the Golden Rule.

As each article is read aloud by the writer, listen for the message and watch for a picture (sight), a mirror (insight), and a window (vision). Does the message come through loud and clear? Point out what the writer did right and give suggestions on how his article can be improved.

As your article is critiqued, make notes of suggestions you feel are valid and want to remember in the "What Have You Learned?" section.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. In what three areas does good writing impact the reader?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

2. What three basic questions should you ask as you write?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

Exercise 1

Examine a time when an Old Testament prophet's message brought sight, insight, and vision.

Prophet: _____

Scripture reference: _____

The Picture (sight): _____

The Mirror (insight): _____

The Window (vision): _____

3. What are the rules for critiquing?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

Exercise 2

Suggestions from my critiquing group on how to improve my inspirational article.

HOMEWORK

Using the valid suggestions from your critiquing group, rewrite your inspirational article. This will be due at the beginning of the next class.

LESSON 10

Searching and Researching

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17).

Focus

Use proper ethics in writing.

Aim

Learn the basics of research, and understand the importance of giving credit where credit is due. Always write with integrity.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Why Research?

Talk about It

What kind of a foundation do you need for a tent? A house? A skyscraper? What makes the difference? How does this compare to writing? Are you writing to fill a page and make a passing grade or are you writing to make a difference?

One should compare doing research with building the foundation for a house. If the footings aren't deep enough or the concrete isn't allowed sufficient time to dry properly, the home itself will suffer irreparable damage.⁴⁰

Research takes digging. It requires hard work and time. It is searching and re-searching. It is digging and more digging.

Research involves reading books, magazines, and papers, marking things of interest, making notes, and listening to lectures, sermons, and conversations.

All categories of writing require facts and information. A fiction story can require a surprising amount of knowledge—about geography, culture, history, and a multitude of other issues. A novel may require extensive research, interviewing, and travel. To write a Bible lesson, the writer needs to be familiar with biblical history, geography, customs, word definitions, even the personality traits of Bible characters. All this takes digging.

Scholarly papers require more research than writing from personal experience and opinions. Examining and evaluating the ideas of others requires diligence and time. Being ethical and giving proper credit demands careful note-taking.

Taking shortcuts in research produces weak, shoddy writing.

Doing Research

The Professional Writers Guide lists four kinds of research.

1. Interviewing

Before the interview do your homework well. Read everything you can about the subject and/or interviewee. Take a list of questions with you, but be flexible. When you get into the interview, you may find that some questions are not needed and new ones may surface. Take charge of the conversation, but allow the interviewee space to express his or her thoughts. Listen for new leads. He or she may lead you into surprising new territory.

If you plan to record the interview, be sure to get the interviewee's permission. If you are taking notes, transcribe them as soon as possible. (Cold handwriting is often difficult to read.) Let the interviewee read a draft of the article. He or she might catch some mistakes that could be embarrassing if published.

2. Reading

Writers are avid readers. Read everything you can get your hands on . . . newspapers, magazines, labels, signs, memos. Ideas and information can be found in the most unusual places.

When you hear something that you think might be of value in future writings, immediately write down both the idea or quote and the source. If this is not possible at the time, use your memory. Repeat it several times to yourself and aloud to others. This will store it in your memory until you can record it on paper.

3. Observing

Watch people. Read body language. Listen. You can learn a lot by simply opening your eyes and ears. Nature, animals, even inanimate objects teach surprising lessons to the observant. Take notes.

4. Reasoning

After you collect facts from interviewing, reading, and observing, spread out your notes on a table. Look for thoughts, facts, and/or quotes that connect. Rearrange the notes, placing linking ones together. Often pieces from unrelated sources will fit together like a puzzle.

Taking Notes

Once you have chosen your subject, read everything you can find about it –even things that are not particularly related to the aspect you plan to cover. You may discover that some of your concepts are misdirected. You may decide to take a different approach.

Build a folder for each subject by placing notes, articles, and/or quotes in it. This folder becomes the slow cooker.

When you find a promising source of information (e.g., book, newspaper, magazine), make a bibliography card for it. Make a separate card for each source. Include the author, title, city of publication, publisher, copyright date, and any other information you might need for identification. Number the cards. You will use these numbers on your note cards. (If you do not have note cards, cut sheets of paper into 3" x 5" pieces.)

Bibliography Card for a Reference Resource

1

Unger, Merrill F.
Unger's Bible Dictionary
Moody Press; Chicago, IL
© 1985 Third Edition

Bibliography Card for a Book

2

Towns, Elmer
History Makers of the Old Testament
Victor Books; Wheaton, IL
© 1989

Bibliography Card for a Magazine Article

3

Schechter, I. J.
"Secrets of Great Storytelling"
Writer's Digest
May 2004, pp. 56-58

Bibliography Card for Newspaper Article

4

Kirkpatrick, James J.
"Of shades, tints and draperies"
Tulsa Daily World
20 April 2004, p. A-14

Bibliography Card for Internet

5

http://www.intouch.org/myintouch/mighty/ezekiel_37650170.html
Rosania, Jennifer
"Life in the Valley"
© 2004

The *Writer's Choice Grammar and Composition* (p. 320) lists three ways to take notes: paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting directly.

Paraphrase Note Card

3

Storytelling

Good storytellers and writers paint a picture showing the background without using mundane adjectives and clichés.

Paraphrase, p. 58

Summary Note Card

1

Ezekiel's Life and Writing

- Name and Family
- Personal History
- Character

Summary, pp. 336-337

Direct Quotation Note Card

2

Ezekiel's Life and Writing

"He saw visions and communicated them descriptively with colors, movement, and imagery. None of the Old Testament prophets used as much symbolic imagery as did Ezekiel."

Quote, p. 473

Direct Quotation Note Card

4

Writing – Adding Color to

"We paint from a palette of almost infinite tints and shades. Our special vocabularies number in the hundreds."

Quote

Direct Quotation Note Card

5

Ezekiel

"In this valley of death, the Lord brought life, and through this miracle of the Lord's power, Ezekiel understood that the Lord had great plans for the nation of Judah."

Quote

The number in the upper right corner of the note card refers back to the bibliography card from which the reference was taken. The use of bibliography cards saves time when writing a research paper, as you only need to record data source once.

Exercise 1

Your instructor will give you a copy of the note cards. Spread out these cards. Look for thoughts, facts, and/or quotes that connect. Rearrange the notes, placing linking ones together. How many of the notes could you link together in an article? What would be the subject of the article?

Finding Resources

Libraries

The first library to come to mind is the public library. Have you considered academic libraries (Bible schools, universities), and/or special libraries (museums, hospitals, churches, corporations)? Some libraries owned by individuals may even be opened to you, if you ask.

Internet

Information can be accessed quickly on the Internet. Since technology changes much faster than this manual can be published, instructions given here are basic, relating only to making a bibliography card. If you need to learn how to access the Internet, ask a friend who is computer literate, take a class, or study an up-to-date manual.

Be aware that good and bad, fact and fable, can be found on the Internet. Not everything you find on the Web is accurate. Make sure that the information you take from the Internet can be validated by other reliable sources.

Bookstores

Browse in bookstores, even if you cannot afford to buy. Watch for used book sales. Read newspapers, magazines, and periodicals, even old ones. Borrow from friends. After you establish a reputation of returning them quickly and in good shape, borrowing books and magazines will get easier.

People

Brainstorm with friends and acquaintances whose education and experience make them experts in the subject you are researching. Get brave and request appointments with name-brand experts. They may be happy to share their knowledge with you. Be sure you have an up-front understanding about cost. Some professionals charge for their time.

Experts do not necessarily have college diplomas, although they certainly might have. An expert on gardening could be a grandmother in a remote village. An expert on parenting might be a mother who cannot read. An expert on church growth could be a pastor who has never attended Bible school. When gathering information, look for people who are successful in the field you are researching.

Evaluate your source to be sure it is authentic. Modern technology makes it easier than ever to get and spread information, but not everything published is accurate. Double check your information. Make sure the facts you assemble can be proved by several reliable sources.

Ask yourself a few questions when evaluating the validity of your information source:

- “Does this information come from a reputable organization?”
- “Has the information been reviewed by editors, scholars, or other experts in the field?”
- “Is the individual providing the information a true expert, well qualified to comment on a particular subject?”⁴¹

Talk about It

What resources are available in your area? You may know of some resources that are unknown to your instructor and classmates.

Giving Credit

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:7).

You do not have to give credit for generally available facts, or for information that is readily available to the general public such as important dates

or events in history. However, if you quote someone's opinion about that event, you should give credit.

"Ethics, as well as the laws of copyright, requires authors to identify their sources, particularly when quoting directly from them."⁴²

It is necessary to footnote the following:

- An opinion of someone else
- An original idea or observation of someone else
- A line of thought that has been suggested or inspired by someone else
- Specialized facts—facts that have been obtained from one particular source
- The words of someone else, regardless of whether those words have been used verbatim or have merely been paraphrased.⁴³

Failure to give proper credit is plagiarism, an ethical and legal offense.

The word *plagiarism* comes from the Latin word *plagiarius*, which means "kidnapper." Plagiarism is theft, even when it is unintentional."⁴⁴

Knowing when to give credit can be a problem. When in doubt, give credit.

Using Quotes

If the quote you want to use is fairly short, incorporate it into the text.

Ethical writers do not plagiarize. *Writer's Choice Grammar and Composition* warns, "Professional journalists and writers have lost their jobs, and certainly their credibility, because they plagiarized."⁴⁵ Writing is hard work, and I often do not feel like working. When I feel this way, I remember what Alistair Cooke said: "A professional is a person who can do his best work when he doesn't feel like it."⁴⁶

If the quote is over three lines long, put it in block quotes. To do this hit the enter key twice, instead of once. This is called "the double-jump" (the use of four spaces rather than the usual double space). Use single spacing, left-hand justification on the paragraph indentation line, and a reference note.

If the material to be quoted is relatively long—four lines or more—then put that material in block quotes. When you put material in block quotes, quotation marks are not used—unless, of course, someone is speaking within that block quote or unless the quotation is itself quoting some other source.⁴⁷

When using an indirect quotation, give credit, but a footnote is not necessary.

Professor Nelson stressed to the students that summarizing a source's ideas without giving credit is plagiarism.

Listing References

Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page. Endnotes are printed at the end of the article or at the end of a chapter if in a book, or in the back of the book. In books where each chapter is written by a different author, endnotes should be at the end of each chapter. Otherwise, the preference is for endnotes to be in the back of the book.

These notes give credit where credit is due. They may also contain miscellaneous information or comments that would otherwise break the flow of the writing.

Most publishers prefer endnotes rather than footnotes. Placing footnotes at the end of a page complicates the layout of the page. Since there is more space at the end of the chapter or book, endnotes can contain explanatory material such as lists, poems, and supplementary comments. However, the author should remember that *endnotes* are *notes* and keep them brief. Some instructors limit the reference notes to sources only.

Place the number noting a footnote or endnote following the punctuation mark (except the dash, which it precedes). Preferably, the number comes at the end of a sentence, or at least, the end of a clause. Numbers inserted between subjects and verbs are distracting.

Notes for references taken from books should contain the following information:

- Author's full name, followed by a comma. If there is more than one author, connect the names with *and*. The comma follows the last name.

- Title of the book in *italics* followed by a comma and the edition number (check the title page to see if there is one). If you are using a typewriter and do not have access to *italics*, underline the title.
- City of publication (colon), name of publisher (comma), and year of publication – all in parenthesis, followed by a comma.
- Volume and page number(s).

¹Donald E. Bower and James Lee Young, *The Professional Writers Guide* (Aurora, CO: The National Writers Club, 1990), 17.

²Ellen Metter, *Facts in a Flash* (Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1999), 58-61.

³John Martin, *Hitting the Mark* (New York, NY: Leadership Books, 1998), III, 134.

Notes for references taken from articles vary somewhat in that they contain the name of the article, as well as the publication and publication information.

¹Joanna Morgan, "Writing to Sell," *The Writer's Guide*, 26 Aug. 1998, 82, col. 2-3.

For other examples of reference notes, check the endnotes in this manual.

When several successive references are from the same work, use *ibid.* (*ibidem*, "in the same place") for an abbreviated reference. If the quote is taken from the same work, but a different page, that is noted as follows:

²*Ibid.*, 145.

If a note repeats a source that has been cited earlier but it is not a consecutive listing, write the author's last name and an abbreviated version of the title, followed by the page number.

⁵Morgan, "Writing to Sell," 212.

If you are using two sources by the same author and repeating one of the sources, list the author's last name and the first key word of the title, followed by the page number.

⁸Metter, *Research*, 86.

These styles for notes are standard and contain the needed information. Some publishers may use somewhat different styles. The unwavering rule for reference notes is “be consistent.”

Being Honest

“Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right, and God will save you and those who hear you” (I Timothy 4:15-16, NLT).

Integrity = honesty, honor, soundness, wholeness.

Integrity demands:

- **Honesty.** Do not bend or stretch facts to strengthen your viewpoint.
- **Honor.** If you are quoting someone else or taking advantage of their research, be honest. Do not claim their words or the results of their research as your work.
- **Soundness.** Get it right. Do not guess or suppose. Is it sound doctrine? Are the facts straight? Inaccurate information undermines your credibility with the readers.
- **Wholeness.** Tell the whole truth. If the whole picture does not support your opinion, do not twist bits and pieces to validate your writing. Keep scriptures in context.

The following is a reminder from lesson 2.

“Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?” (Proverbs 22:20-21).

Be committed passionately to truth. Know beyond any doubt that what you are writing is true. Study, research, and pray about what you write. Resist the temptation to write what you *think* is true, without verifying the facts. What you write must be based on truth, not your opinions.

CONCLUSION

Checking the Foundation

To build a skyscraper, contractors spend weeks digging down, down, down to bedrock. A lot of work goes on before the building rises above ground level. A tent can be staked out in a few minutes, but it can also be blown down as quickly because it does not have a foundation.

Before you write, dig to discover the facts—search and research. Make your writing credible. Write to make a long-lasting impact on your world, not simply to fill a page.

Always be ethical. Give credit where credit is due.

HOMEWORK

Use the bibliography and note cards to develop an article or lesson. You do not have to use all the cards unless you want, but you must use at least two. Include endnotes listing the references used. Be sure to follow the instructions given in this lesson for giving credit where credit is due. The article or lesson can be any length. Your grade will be based on the content of the material and the formatting of the reference notes.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

1. List and briefly explain the four (4) types of research as described in *The Professional Writers Guide*. _____

2. List and briefly explain four (4) resources for information. _____

3. What three (3) questions should you ask when evaluating the validity of your information source? _____

4. Write in full (and give Scripture reference) for the New Testament verse that commands us to give proper credit to everyone. _____

5. What five (5) things must be footnoted or endnoted? _____

6. Give a brief definition of *plagiarism*. _____

7. What are three (3) major points to remember when using quotes? _____

LESSON 11

Making It Simple

“And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly” (Deuteronomy 27:8).

Focus

Keep it simple.

Aim

Recognize verbosity and eliminate flab to write simply.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Recognizing Verbosity

Exercise 1

What is your definition of *verbosity*? Look it up in a dictionary. Was your definition right? Paraphrase the dictionary’s definition into a concise one and write it in the “What Have You Learned?” section. Keep it simple.

Exercise 2

Work with your teammates to translate the following into simple English. Clue: several words can often be translated into one word. Write the answers in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

1. (a saying) Freedom from incrustations of grime is contiguous to religiosity.

2. (a proverb) Eschew the implement of correction and vitiate the scion.
3. (a saying) Male cadavers are incapable of yielding any testimony.
4. (a Christmas carol) Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief.

Exercise 3

Patricia Lorenz's uncle Ralph told her that when he was a young military cadet he was expected to salute his superior officer at the end of each meal and say, "Sir, my gastronomical satiety admonishes me that I have reached that state of deglutition consistent with dietetic integrity."⁴⁸ Compete with your classmates to see who can reduce this quote to the fewest words.

Keep It Simple

"For we write you nothing else but simply what you can read and understand [there is no double meaning to what we say]" (II Corinthians 1:13, *Amplified Bible*).

The apostle Paul was an educated man and a prolific writer, but he wrote simply what the reader could comprehend. A person may seem ever so intelligent, but is he, if he cannot communicate his knowledge so others understand him?

William Barclay called himself a "pipeline" or a "theological middleman." He felt he could take the large bills of theology and philosophy and break them down into small change so average persons could understand.⁴⁹

In writing, *simple* does not mean ordinary and dull. It means straightforward, clear, concise. No double-talk. No beating around the bush. Jesus taught profound truths with simple illustrations. Simple, profound messages can change lives: "Stop." "Danger. Bridge out." "I love you."

If a little red wagon will carry your message, why build a space shuttle? Readers will not wander through a maze of four-syllable words, trying to translate a spaced-out message. They want simplicity.

Eleven words account for 25 percent of all spoken English, and all 11 are monosyllabic. In order of frequency they are *I, you, the, a, to,*

is, it, that, of, and, and in. Other studies tell us that the 50 most common words in English are each one syllable.⁵⁰

Exercise 4

Check it out. How many multi-syllable words do you find in these famous sayings?

- “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good” (Genesis 1:3-4).
- “It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us” (Prime Minister Winston Churchill).
- “Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in” (Robert Frost).
- “If it is to be, it is up to me” (William H. Johnsen).

Eliminate Flab

“To eliminate flab, join Word Watchers” – Rev. Jim Poitras

Writers love words. Beginning writers tend to think that the longer the word, the better. But not so. Good writers are word economists. Less is usually more.

“The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone?” (Ecclesiastes 6:11, NIV).

Talk about It

Relate this verse to everyday life situations. How does it apply to correcting a child? To giving instructions to a helper? To writing?

Exercise 5

Read the letter on your worksheet in the “What Have You Learned?” section. Then strike through the unnecessary words. How does Ecclesiastes 6:11 relate to this letter? What did the writer’s verbosity do to the meaning? Read the revised letter aloud.

Exercise 6

In the “What Have You Learned?” section is a sentence taken from a devotional in a small-town newspaper. Reduce it to the fewest words

without losing the meaning (whatever that is). Be prepared to share your work with the class.

1. Indicators of flabby writing include weak verbs (hanging from forms of *to be* such as *am, are, is, was, were, being, been*), ponderous nouns (with endings like *tion, ment, ence*), and strings of prepositional phrases. Watch for these when editing your work. (Yes, writers should be their first, but not last, editor.)

Exercise 7

Study this sentence, looking for flabby writing, then rewrite it on in the “What Have You Learned?” section

- *As the curtain of time is preparing to fall over the stage of life, the anticipation of the saints is evident as the importance of the role of the church in this age cannot be overemphasized.*

2. Do not insult the reader with the obvious. Some things do not need to be said. (The obvious is underlined, or is that obvious?)

- *In this lesson we are going to study David.*
- *Turn to Mark 16:15 in your Bible.*
- *Sing the song, “I’ve Got the Joy.”*
- *In the little town which bore the name of Bethlehem, Jesus was born.*

3. Watch for redundancy.

- *We are still preaching the gospel today.*
- *Quote Acts 2:38 from memory.*
- *Sister Betty was a lady who loved the Lord with all her heart.*
- *Elijah asked the widow woman for a drink.*

4. Beware of overused words such as *all*.

- *Let’s all stand and pray.*

5. Sentences beginning with “it is/was/will be,” and “there is/was/were/can be” usually need tightening.

- ✓ *It was late when we got home from church. (We got home from church late.)*
- ✓ *There are several children in my class who have no parents. (Several orphans are in my class.)*

In *If I Can Write, You Can Write*, Charlie Shedd calls these “threadbare word combinations.” To the list he adds, “due to,” “they had,” “a little,” “and finally,” “so good,” “you know,” and “of course.”⁵¹

6. In writing curriculum do not use “I believe,” “I think,” “in my opinion.” These phrases weaken your writing. Write the truth and state it as truth, not your opinion. If a lesson requires some instruction in subjects that are less than conclusive, then make good use of qualifying statements, such as “possibly,” “it appears,” “some believe,” and similar constructions – but not “I believe.”

7. Delete these intensive adverbs – *so, very, really, truly, actually, and just*. These are “no-no” words.

In *The 28 Biggest Writing Blunders* by William Noble words like *very, just, rather, really* are called “smoke rings,” indicating they do not add anything to the meaning.⁵²

“I’d rather not have really
And I really don’t want rather,
For no matter how I use them
I’d really rather lose them.”

Consider these substitutions:

- *very large* = huge
- *truly loveable* = adorable
- *so smart* = intelligent
- *just right* = perfect

Write Tight

1. Use small words.

- parameters = limits
- sufficient = enough
- equivalent = equal
- consequently = so
- enumerate = count
- expeditious = fast

2. Use specific nouns to replace phrases.
 - absence of light = dark
 - early morning light = dawn

3. Use active verbs.
 - made a decision = decided
 - wrote his name on = signed
 - got to his feet = stood

4. Avoid wordy phrases.
 - it is often the case that = frequently
 - in the event that = if
 - in spite of the fact that = although
 - take into consideration = consider
 - in the city of Jerusalem = Jerusalem
 - at the present time = now
 - until such a time as = until

Exercise 8

Replace the long words and wordy phrases in the “What Have You Learned?” section with short, simple words.

CONCLUSION

As far back as the Old Testament, God was concerned about verbosity. He instructed Moses, “And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly” (Deuteronomy 27:8). He told Habakkuk, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

God is not interested in His messenger impressing people with an extensive vocabulary. He simply wants people to get the message.

If a long word says what you want, use it. But be careful that your love for words does not overload your message. We can carry God’s message to the world through the written word if we keep it simple. Bring out the little red wagon.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

Write a concise definition of *verbosity*. Keep it simple. _____

Exercise 2

Work with your teammates to translate the following into simple words. Clue: several words can often be translated into one word.

1. (a saying) Freedom from incrustations of grime is contiguous to religiosity. ____

2. (a proverb from the Bible) Eschew the implement of correction and vitiate the scion. _____

3. (a saying) Male cadavers are incapable of yielding any testimony. _____

4. (a Christmas carol) Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief. _____

Exercise 3

Patricia Lorenz's Uncle Ralph told her that when he was a young military cadet he was expected to salute his superior officer at the end of each meal and say, "Sir, my gastronomical satiety admonishes me that I have reached that state of deglutition consistent with dietetic integrity." Compete with your classmates to see who can reduce this quote to the fewest words.

Exercise 4

Read the following letter. Strike out the unnecessary words. Then read it again.

Dear Sir or Madame,

To Whom It May Concern,

I am an evangelist preacher of the gospel of our most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I do really like to live very, very righteous and very holy and I have been filled with the most precious Holy Spirit and full of the most precious Holy Ghost in the world and I am very, very clean and am very, very nice and easy to get along with people. I am very, very much intelligent and I am just a godly, fearful person and I am very, very good at helping other people, and you and I, as good Christians, will really like helping each other grow very, very strong in the most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You and I really like serving the most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and you and I really like praying for everybody every day to the most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I would like to know more about the Bible and you and I can exchange ideas with each other and I would like to get into full time ministry for the Lord because I can make a very, very good preacher because this is what God wants me to do.

I want to know if you can write out some preaching sermon on the Bible and write about 2,000 to 3,000 words per sermon and take about 30 to 45 minutes per sermon. I want to know how much money I will have to pay you to write me out

some preaching sermons about the Bible and I will pay you very, very good for just doing this special favor for me so I can better answer the people's questions. I do study the Bible very, very good and when you write out the sermon put the Bible verses in it so I can look them up in the Bible and you and I can really serve the most precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am praying very, very much for your help and I will thank you very, very much for doing this special for me and I am going to pay you very, very well for doing this special for me.

Sincerely, from your very, very good and true Christian to my very, very good and true Christian.

Signed,

Exercise 5

Reduce this sentence to the fewest possible words without losing the meaning.

"Having the condition of heart which is in fellowship with the Lord and fully devoted to the doing of His will, the Lord's people not only implore His blessings at the beginning of each day, and present their thanks at the close of each day, but in all of life's affairs they seek to remember that they have consecrated their all to the Lord, and by faith look up to Him in all the affairs of life; and in proportion to the importance of their undertakings, they, by faith, realize the association of God's providence with all of life and give thanks accordingly."

Exercise 6

Rewrite this sentence, eliminating the flab.

As the curtain of time is preparing to fall over the stage of life, the anticipation of the saints is evident as the importance of the role of the church in this age cannot be over-emphasized. _____

Exercise 7

Replace these words and phrases with short, simple words.

altercation _____	insubordination _____
unprejudiced _____	emancipate _____
exhilarated _____	excruciating _____
instantaneous _____	metamorphosis _____
at this point in time _____	the Book of Nehemiah _____
the city of London _____	is capable of _____
is of interest _____	is a benefit to _____

HOMEWORK

Choose one of your writings from a past homework assignment. Rewrite it, using the rules studied in this lesson. At the beginning of the next class turn in both the original writing and revised one.

LESSON 12

Checking the View

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him” (II Chronicles 16:9).

Focus

Viewpoint has two aspects: (1) the writer and reader’s perspectives; (2) the story’s point of view.

Aim

Explore how the writer’s perspective influences his writing. Explore how the reader’s perspective influences his response. Learn how to use different points of view in writing. Rewrite a familiar Bible story from a different viewpoint.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Part I: The Writer and Reader’s Perspectives

How Does the Writer See It?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each wrote a biography of Jesus Christ. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses. Mark and Luke wrote Jesus’ story as it was related to them by eyewitnesses. Each man’s writing reflected Jesus’ life as he viewed it from his point of view. Although every word of the four Gospels is divinely inspired by the Holy Ghost, each book reflects the writer’s culture,

education, beliefs, and personality. (The information for this table is from *Halley's Bible Handbook*.)

Author	Focus
Matthew, the publican	Jesus as the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.
Mark, the disciple of Peter	Jesus' supernatural power, what Jesus did more than what He said.
Luke, the physician	Jesus as a servant, ministering to the weak, suffering, and outcast.
John, the beloved	Jesus as God in human form, what He said more than what He did.

Talk about It

How did Matthew's background influence how he saw Jesus? Do you see the apostle Peter's influence in Mark's perception of Jesus? How did Luke's profession affect his writings? What does John's perception of Jesus tell us about John?

All individuals are unique; therefore, their writings are unique. Writers' perspectives color their writing and determine their style. One of writers' greatest challenges is to present their message in such a way that it even appeals to those who do not agree with it. Writers are vulnerable. They open their minds and expose their souls. Readers can accept or reject, criticize or praise them. How they present their message determines how readers respond.

How Does the Reader See It?

Many scholars suggest that the writers of the Gospels reached for specific readers. Each had the reader in mind as he wrote.

Author	Focus	Readers	Perspective
Matthew, the publican	Jesus as the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.	Jews	Required a sign. Thinking based on Old Testament Scriptures.
Mark, the disciple of Peter	Jesus' supernatural power, what Jesus did more than what He said.	Romans	Focused on government and power.

Luke, the physician	Jesus as a servant, ministering to the weak, suffering, and outcast.	Greeks	Interested in culture, philosophy, education. Looked for wisdom.
John, the beloved	Jesus as God in human form, what He said more than what He did.	Unknown	

Although John did not name his target audience, his aim (purpose) gives us a strong clue. “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). Apparently, he was writing to unbelievers, whatever their race, hoping to persuade them to become believers.

Reaching readers at their point of view and leading them to your point of view is a challenging task. You have to stretch yourself and be willing to explore the readers’ mindset. How do you do this?

1. Pray. Ask God to open your understanding of the readers and their viewpoint. You cannot reach someone until you know where he or she is.
2. Study. Read extensively. Remember that only the Word of God is infallible. Other books were written by humans and can contain errors. This is why it is important to read extensively. Do your research well.
3. Interview people. Ask about their culture, their beliefs, their experiences.
4. Listen.

Case study 1

You are writing your family history. Think of a particular incident where your parents’ viewpoint differed from yours. How would your perspective color your writing? Would you be willing to incorporate your parents’ point of view into your writing? How could you do this without compromising your beliefs or hurting your parents’ feelings?

Case study 2

You are writing a poem giving your testimony. If you were writing to unbelievers rather than believers, how would the poem differ? If you were writing to children rather than adults, how would it differ?

Case study 3

You are writing a Bible study based on Acts 2. How would writing a home Bible study differ compared to a Sunday school lesson?

If your viewpoint as the writer opposes your readers' viewpoint, how do you persuade them to read and evaluate your point of view? For example—if you are writing about the oneness of God for Trinitarians, how can you present your message in an appealing and convincing manner?

Follow these guidelines.

1. Start on common ground. On what do you and the reader agree?
2. Present the facts in an interesting way. Start with a story. Stories are great reader hooks.
3. Support your statements with Scripture (or fact). Avoid "I believe," "I think," "In my opinion."
4. Do not attack the reader's belief.
5. Use thought-provoking words like *consider*, *think about*, *examine*.

As you write, consider the reader's perspective or you may not have a reader to consider.

Use your homework to answer the questions on the worksheet in the "What Have You Learned?" section.

Part II: The Viewpoint of the Story

Scenic Overlook

Caution! The story's viewpoint is slippery ground. At this point many stories have slipped from the writer's grasp and tumbled to a quick death.

When writing a fiction story, the writer enters unexplored territory. He creates the scenes and chooses the viewpoint. The ground can remain rock solid or crumble. In nonfiction the viewpoint is not as treacherous, as the ground has been laid out for the writer.

Talk about It

With your classmates discuss the view from a scenic overlook in your area. Or talk about the view from a tall tree. What happens when you move to a different point? If two people were standing at the same point, would they see the same thing? Would they describe it in the same way?

Point of view: the eyes through which the story is told.

Narrator: the character (usually not the writer) through whose eyes the story is told.

As a valley can be viewed from several scenic overlooks, so a story can be told from several points of view. The sooner the writer chooses the viewpoint, the easier the writing process.

The four most common viewpoints are: (1) major character viewpoint; (2) minor character viewpoint; (3) omniscient viewpoint; (4) dual or multiple viewpoint.

Major Character Viewpoint

When deciding which viewpoint to use, ask, “Whose story is this?” Usually, the story belongs to the main character, so it is easiest told from his viewpoint. At this overlook the writer gets inside the main character’s skin and stays there. He looks through the character’s eyes, uses his senses, thinks with his mind, feels with his emotions. The writer is limited to what the main character can see, hear, touch, taste, smell, and experience. The writer can reveal only what the main character knows.

Jesus used the main character viewpoint for the story of the prodigal son (with the exception of the last scene between the father and elder son). He told His listeners what the prodigal thought, felt, and experienced. He gave no indication what the father thought or felt as he divided his goods between his boys or as he waited for the prodigal’s return.

When the prodigal said, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,” Jesus’ listeners had no more idea how the father would respond, than the prodigal did. Only when the son saw the father come running toward him, could the prodigal and Jesus’ listeners relax and know that all would be well.

The main character viewpoint may be written in third person, which is how Jesus told it. “And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.”

Or it may be written in first person. “I was flat broke, and the price of a loaf of bread tripled overnight. I was desperate—desperate enough to look for a job.” Be sure that the tone and vocabulary fit the narrator.

Exercise 2

Divide the class into teams. Assign each team one of the following Bible stories: (1) I Samuel 3:1-18; (2) Judges 6:11-24; (3) Ruth 1. The students examine the story and answer the questions in the “What Have You Learned?” section.

Minor Character Viewpoint

Now, a minor character steps forward to tell the story. This requires planning. The character has to be present or at least acquainted with the story from beginning to end.

The story of the prodigal son could be told from the viewpoint of the man who hired him to feed his pigs. But that would present a problem—actually several problems. How could this man find out about the prodigal’s past? Perhaps in a job interview? But what about the rest of the story? After the prodigal left the man’s employ, the employer dropped out of the story. Could the prodigal write a letter to his former employer? At this point, this overlook gets slippery, so let’s try another character.

What about the elder son? He could narrate the first scene. He was there. What a different flavor that would give the story. But what would the elder son know about life in the city? Maybe the prodigal could occasionally send his big brother a “Wish you were here” postcard. Then the mail could stop (no money for postage), but, of course, the elder son could not know this. Only when the prodigal came trudging down the road, smelling of slop, could the elder son and the reader learn about life in the pigpen. This approach has possibilities.

Talk about It

Are there other minor characters who could narrate the story of the prodigal son? What if the prodigal son’s conscience narrated the story?

The minor character viewpoint challenges the writer's creativity, but it can add a new dimension to familiar stories.

The minor character viewpoint may be written in third person. "As sweat dripped off his chin, pictures of his little brother living it up in the city tormented him. He growled and spit on the tender plants sprouting at his feet."

Or it may be written in first person. "Bitterness ate at my soul as the plow in my hand chewed at the hard ground. Little brother was living it up while I was grinding out a living."

Talk about It

Consider other Bible stories with minor character viewpoint possibilities. Could the donkey tell Balaam's story? Could Mrs. Noah narrate her husband's story? Name a Bible story that could be told by a minor character. Consider the pros and cons. A minor character that seems a likely narrator often runs into blank spots where he has no way of knowing what is happening in the story.

Omniscient Viewpoint

The scenic overlook for the omniscient viewpoint is like standing on the peak of Mount Everest. The writer stands triumphantly with powerful binoculars in hand. He sees and knows everything.

The Book of Job was written from the omniscient viewpoint. The reader knows what is happening in Heaven and on earth, in Job's life, and in the minds of his comforters. Sorting through the views of so many characters is often confusing. It takes a skilled writer to handle this viewpoint and a determined reader to get through it.

All the possibilities offered by this viewpoint can overwhelm the writer. He is challenged to know what to trash and what to use. He can easily get bogged down in bits and pieces of trivia. Today's reader demands focused, fast-paced stories. He is not interested in clutter. Beginning writers should stay away from the omniscient viewpoint.

Dual or Multiple Viewpoint

Another point of view that requires skill is the dual or multiple viewpoint. The writer can easily lose his footing at this overlook. It is usually reserved for

long stories or novels. With this approach, the point of view shifts from one character to another. Usually the points of view shift from chapter to chapter. In the story of David's relationships with King Saul the first chapter could be Saul's point of view, the second David's; then back to Saul's for chapter three and David's for chapter four, and so on. In each chapter only what the viewpoint character knows and experiences can be revealed.

This is different from the omniscient viewpoint where we can know and experience anything at anytime, and are not limited by one character's knowledge.

In dual or multiple viewpoints when the point of view shifts from one character to another, a "double-jump" (the use of four spaces rather than the usual double space) is often used to give the reader a visual indication of a mental transition.

Whether expanding a non-fiction story or writing a fiction one, the thought process for determining the story's point of view is the same. The writer may move from overlook to overlook several times before deciding which view will work. It is a mental process and often as exhilarating and exhausting as stopping at every scenic point on a trip. But the view makes the trip worthwhile.

CONCLUSION

Point of view has two aspects: (1) the perspectives of the writer and the reader; (2) the viewpoint of the story.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Exercise 1

List two ways that the article you brought to class reflects your perspective (culture, education, beliefs, and personality). _____

As you wrote, did you consider the reader's perspective? Yes _____ No _____

To whom were you writing? Describe your typical reader. Give race, sex, age, and education (e.g., a twenty-year-old male Bible school student). _____

How would this reader relate to your writing? _____

Focusing on the reader, would you change your writing? If so, how? _____

Exercise 2

Scripture text: _____

Who is the main character? _____

What does the main character feel? _____

What does the main character see or hear? _____

Appendix 1

A Margin for Error

By Barbara Westberg

The teacher of the writers workshop held up an example, a manuscript with red marks in the margin. My manuscript! My perfect, spell- and grammar-checked manuscript was being used as an example—a bad example! An example of what not to do.

I consoled myself. That article had been accepted, and I had been paid for it. It had been published, and perhaps it had helped someone somewhere.

But in that workshop, the marks in the margin, not the inspirational message, stood out.

Sadly, this is true in life.

The man had failed. He had really blown it. He had sinned, and not just once, but again and again. Then he had covered his sin and gone merrily on his way. Life as usual in the palace. Oh, there was a new queen, but otherwise everything was normal.

Then the man of God blew his cover.

The black and white law said, “Sorry. No margin here. You sinned. You die.”

But even in the dispensation of the Law, God said, “Get out the red pen. Make some marks in the margin. (Yes, there was a margin.) I am going to use this man as an example—an example of sin and forgiveness, truth (the hard, cold facts) and mercy (soft and warm).”

So we read the story of David, and we see the red marks. The child of his sin died. His transgression planted seeds of rebellion and violence in his family. Innocent people suffered from the fallout. But God did not wipe David from the book. He did not throw the manuscript away. He simply used him as an example to teach us what not to do.

Then God wiped David's tears and wrapped His arms around him. He called him "a man after my own heart."

How many marks are allowed in the margin before a manuscript is tossed in file 13? That's up to the editor. He decides the value of the message, how much time he will invest in it. For no matter how perfect the writer thinks his article, the editor can always find an error.

Let's not make too much of the red marks in the margin. For while they do signify "an error was made here," they also say, "this is redeemable."

Thank You, Lord, for the margin around my life, and for the red marks of mercy.

"Mercy and truth are met together" (Psalm 85:10).

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Appendix 2

As It Is Written

A Play by Barbara Westberg

CHARACTERS:

- Habakkuk
- Mrs. Habakkuk
- Apostle Paul
- Phebe
- Tertius (Paul's secretary/scribe)
- Martin Luther (59 years old)
- Katharine Luther (Martin's wife, 43 years old)
- Margarethe (8-year-old daughter of Martin and Katharine Luther)
- Martin Luther (34 years old, should look somewhat like the older Martin Luther)
- Sound Engineer
- Light Engineer

PROPS:

- 2 scrolls (Hezekiah's & Paul's)
- Quill
- Tray
- Dishes
- Bread to slice

SETTING:

- Center stage: simple table (card table will work), table covering, 3 chairs, lamp or candle, paper, quill, and a few simple items on the table.
- Stage left rear: another simple table and chair. Should be part of the stage décor. This will be used for Scene III only, but needs to be in place from the beginning.
- (The setting is the same for all three scenes.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Copies of the scripts can be hidden in the scrolls/books, or placed on the table for use as needed.

- Actors should feel free to ad lib as they get into their parts. However, they should be careful not to lose the important lines, or say or do anything disrespectful.
- This skit is intended to be humorous, yet respectful, remembering that while people are funny, God's Word is not to be taken lightly.

SCENE I

At Habakkuk's House—Around 610 BC

HABAKKUK ENTERS. *He sits at a table, writing furiously on a scroll. He pauses a time or two, scratches his head, nods, then resumes writing. After a few seconds of this, he smiles broadly, rolls up the scroll, jumps up, and dances around waving the scroll over his head.*

HABAKKUK

It's finished! It's finished! Hallelujah! It is finished! *(Continues rejoicing loudly.)*

MRS. HABAKKUK ENTERS.

MRS. HABAKKUK

Habbie! Habbie! *(He continues dancing and rejoicing.)* Habakkuk! Mr. Habakkuk, man of God!

HABAKKUK

(Stops dancing.) Are you talking to me, dear wife?

MRS. HABAKKUK

I certainly am! Whatever is the matter with you, Habakkuk? You are acting like a crazy man.

HABAKKUK

I am wild with joy! I am ecstatic! I am overcome with . . . with . . . *(thrusts the scroll at her; she takes it)* this! It's finished! My book is finished! *(Drops into his chair and slumps.)* I am exhausted!

MRS. HABAKKUK

Well, thank God!

HABAKKUK

That I'm exhausted?

MRS. HABAKKUK

Of course not. Thank God that this book is written. Now you can take care of some things around here.

HABAKKUK

(Whines.) But I'm exhausted.

MRS. HABAKKUK

It's just your brain that's tired. I have some jobs for you that don't require brains.

HABAKKUK

I was afraid of that. But first, I want you to read my book and give me your honest opinion.

MRS. HABAKKUK

If I give you an opinion, it will be honest. *(Sits down at the table, opposite Habakkuk, facing the audience. Unrolls the scroll.)*

HABAKKUK

Well, what do you think? *(Leans forward eagerly.)* What do think? What do you think?

MRS. HABAKKUK

I think you need to be quiet so I can think. *(He leans back in his chair meekly. As she reads, Habakkuk leans forward again.)* "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat . . ." *(Looks up.)* Sounds pretty depressing.

HABAKKUK

Keep reading. Keep reading.

MRS. HABAKKUK

(Reads from the scroll.) "The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." *(Looks up.)* That's sounding better.

HABAKKUK

(Nods and smiles proudly.) Keep reading! It gets better.

MRS. HABAKKUK

(Reads.) “The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” *(Nods.)* That’s not too bad.

HABAKKUK

Not too bad? Is that the best you can say? *(Jumps up and glares at her.)* It’s not too bad? God gave me every word of that book!

MRS. HABAKKUK

That’s what they all say. Sit down and let me finish. *(Habakkuk sits down.)* That’s a pretty good ending, but what’s the beginning like? *(Unrolls the scroll to the left; holds up the unrolled scroll; frowns.)* Is this all there is?

(Hebrew was written from right to left. When reading from or writing on the scroll, remember to move right to left.)

HABAKKUK

All there is? *(Jumps up and paces; expounds.)* My life’s blood is in that book. I’ve poured my soul into that book. Every word has cost me mental anguish. I’ve . . .

MRS. HABAKKUK

Cut out the dramatics and sit down. *(Scans the scroll.)* One . . . two . . . three . . . three little-bitty chapters?

HABAKKUK

(Sits down, deflated.) It’s three total, complete chapters . . . three sweat-drenched chapters!

MRS. HABAKKUK

I see. Isaiah’s book has sixty-six chapters. Jeremiah’s secretary told me the other day he is working on chapter 38, and there’s a lot more to come. That’s major work. Your book has three chapters.

HABAKKUK

(Emotionless.) The Lord told me to make it plain and keep it short, so people in a hurry could read it.

MRS. HABAKKUK

The Lord told you that? *(Habakkuk nods.)* Oh . . . *(looks at the scroll again; then looks at Habakkuk.)* I guess that’s why you wrote in such a large hand and

have so much white space? (*Habakkuk nods.*) Hmmm . . . You might have something there.

HABAKKUK

Not me. God. He told me to write tight. People are in a hurry. They don't want to waste their time on a lot of unnecessary words.

MRS. HABAKKUK

Okay. Okay. Let me see how you started. You know the lead is very important.

"The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!" . . . (*Frowns and mumbles, as she continues reading for a few seconds; looks up.*) This is depressing! No wonder you've been moping around for the last month!

HABAKKUK

These are depressing times. Keep reading. It gets worse.

MRS. HABAKKUK

(*Mumbles as she reads for a few more seconds.*) What? God is going to send the Chaldeans to punish us . . . His people? God's going to help those heathen punish us! (*Throws the scroll down on the table.*) Habakkuk, people don't want to hear this. It doesn't even make sense. Do you want this book to make the best-seller list or not?

HABAKKUK

Not.

MRS. HABAKKUK

Not?

HABAKKUK

Not!

MRS. HABAKKUK

Did you say, "Not"?

HABAKKUK

I said, Not! I don't care if it makes the bestseller list or not. (*Jumps up; speaks from the heart; uses dramatic preaching gestures.*) I just want it to reach

someone! I want someone to hear what God is saying! This world is in trouble! We're in trouble!

MRS. HABAKKUK

(Jumps up; on the verge of crying.) But, Habakkuk, I want you to be a best-selling author. Think of what we could do with the royalties. I want you to be famous, like . . . like Isaiah and . . . Jeremiah. Well . . . maybe not like Jeremiah.

HABAKKUK

I just want us to be saved! *(Slumps down in chair.)* Oh, God, help us.

MRS. HABAKKUK

(Sits down and picks up the scroll; shakes her head.) It just doesn't make sense, Habakkuk. You should title this book *When God Doesn't Make Sense*.

HABAKKUK

I think someone beat me to it.

MRS. HABAKKUK

What are you going to call it?

HABAKKUK

Does it matter? No one is going to read it, much less remember the title. *(Puts his head in hands.)*

MRS. HABAKKUK

(Reads.) "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak . . . wait for it; because it will surely come. . . ." *(Scans the scroll and mumbles; reads aloud.)* "But the just shall live by his faith." *(Looks up, perplexed.)* "The just shall live by his faith"? I don't get it. I just don't get it.

HABAKKUK

(Stands; takes the scroll, rolls it up, and leaves it on the table.) Oh, God, have I written in vain? *(Starts for the exit.)* If only something in this book would reach someone . . . If only someone would pay attention. If only . . .

HABAKKUK EXITS, followed by MRS. HABAKKUK.
TRANSITION MUSIC

SCENE II

Paul in Corinth – Winter AD 57-58

ENTER PAUL AND PHEBE, talking.

PHEBE

I came by to let you know that I am planning to go to Rome soon, Brother Paul.

PAUL

To Rome? From Corinth to Rome is quite a journey for a woman, Sister Phebe. Is it safe?

PHEBE

(Laughs gently.) I will be fine, Brother Paul. Several of my most trusted servants will accompany me.

As they talk, they take seats at the table.

PAUL

I have such a longing to go to Rome. But every time I plan to go, something interferes.

PHEBE

I understand that Aquila and Priscilla are back in Rome.

PAUL

Yes, they are having church in their house. Everywhere I go I hear glowing reports about the church in Rome. I would love to worship with the saints there.

PHEBE

It is amazing to think that there are Christians in Caesar's household.

PAUL

Yes. On one hand, it is amazing. On the other hand, it is not surprising. The gospel will be preached in every nation, to every creature, in every household . . . even Caesar's. Sister Phebe, would you be so kind as to carry a letter from me to the Christians in Rome?

PHEBE

That is why I am here, Brother Paul, to ask if you have any messages I can deliver for you.

PAUL

How long do I have to write a letter?

PHEBE

It will be a few weeks before I leave.

BOTH stand. PAUL walks with PHEBE to the door.

PAUL

I can't tell you how much this means to me, Sister Phebe. There are so many important things I need to tell the Christians in Rome.

PHEBE

I will send for your letter when I am ready to depart. May God bless you, Brother Paul.

PAUL

Blessings on you, Sister Phebe.

PHEBE EXITS.

PAUL

(Calls.) Tertius. Tertius! Come, please. Bring your parchment. We have a letter to write. (Takes a seat at the table.)

ENTER TERTIUS, carrying a scroll. PAUL motions for him to be seated. TERTIUS is a klutz. He drops the scroll, turns over the chair, and generally creates a scene. PAUL watches patiently until Tertius is seated.

PAUL

Are you settled? (Tertius nods and picks up the quill that is on the table.) Sister Phebe is going to Rome, and she has offered to carry a letter for me.

TERTIUS

(Quill in hand, looks up.) How do you spell Phebe?

PAUL

P-h-e-b . . . why do you need to know that?

TERTIUS

So I can write, "Sister Phebe is going to Rome."

PAUL

(Shakes his head.) That information was for you, not for the letter. Start writing now. *(Stands. Dictates slowly and distinctly, as he paces.)* "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the. . ."

TERTIUS

Brother Paul, do you spell separated with three e's or two?

PAUL

(Whispers as he counts the e's on his fingers.) S-e-p-a-r-a-t-e-d. *(Aloud)* Two.

TERTIUS

How many a's?

PAUL

(Trying to be patient.) Listen carefully. S-e-p-a-r-a-t-e-d. Two e's. Two a's.

TERTIUS

(Writes as Paul spells.) Thank you. *(Looks up.)* I'm ready when you are.

PAUL

(Takes a deep breath.) Now where was I?

TERTIUS

(Reads.) "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated. . ."

PAUL

"Separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised . . . *(Fades out.)*

MUSIC FADES IN AND UP, THEN DOWN AND OUT. *Paul and Tertius mime as if continuing the letter.*

PAUL

(Fades in.) That's the salutation. Let's take a breather. *(Tertius takes a big gulping breath.)* I'm sure your hand needs to rest and so does my brain.

TERTIUS

(Lays down his pen, stands and stretches, hitting Paul.) Oops! Sorry about that. I would love to go to Rome. I would love to go anywhere. Can I join your evangelistic team, Brother Paul? Please? I'd pray an hour every day and fast every night . . . and I wouldn't be a bit of trouble.

PAUL

Uh . . . Well . . . Uh . . . Brother Tertius, I'll have to . . . uh . . . I'll have to pray about that.

TERTIUS

Could we pray about it right now, Brother Paul?

PAUL

Later, Tertius. Later.

TERTIUS

I'd love to go to Rome. Why do you want to go to Rome, Brother Paul?

PAUL

(Gets up and walks about.) I have a drawing in my soul, a yearning to preach the gospel in Rome. Also, the saints in Rome need grounding in the truth. The Jewish Christians lean too heavily on the law. They have trouble understanding that we are saved by faith. *(Sighs heavily.)* Until I can go in person, I will send a paper preacher.

TERTIUS

(Astounded; comical look of amazement.) Paper preacher? I never heard of a paper preacher. I've heard of hard preachers and soft ones; I've seen battered and torn ones, but a paper preacher? Never.

PAUL

(Smiles.) A paper preacher is a message on paper. A paper preacher can go where a man cannot go. It can reach people who will not enter a church house or listen to a sermon. It can cross borders, speak to one or to a multitude, preach at any hour of the day or night. A paper preacher never gets sick, tired, or offended.

(Thoughtfully.) Yes, I want to go to Rome, but could it be that this paper preacher will go places where I could never go? Could it be that what I write will outlive me?

Let us proceed. *(Both sit down; Paul dictates; Tertius writes.)* “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: *(gets to his feet and paces; his dictation becomes preaching; Tertius’ writing picks up speed as Paul’s words tumble from him.)* for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” *(Stops.)* Are you keeping up?

(Tertius gulps and nods; Paul resumes pacing as he dictates.) “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written . . . as it is written . . .” *(Stops and ponders.)*

TERTIUS

How many times do you want me to write, “as it is written”?

PAUL

What? Oh, just once. Now where is that verse?

TERTIUS

I-I-I don’t know. D-d-did you l-l-leave it here? I didn’t s-s-see it.

PAUL

(Takes a deep breath.) Tertius, who recommended you for this job? Never mind. Never mind. It doesn’t matter.

(Puts his hand on Tertius’ shoulder.) Son, I am thinking about a verse of Scripture that talks about faith.

TERTIUS

Faith? I-I-I don’t know her.

PAUL

I am talking about the faith we have in God.

TERTIUS

(Blinks.) Oh. Faith? . . . Yeah, faith.

PAUL

(Frowns and scratches his head.) The verse I am thinking of speaks of living by faith. The best I can remember, one of the prophets wrote it . . . one of the minor prophets. *(Tertius shrugs. Paul ponders a few seconds; picks up Habakkuk’s*

scroll. Unrolls the scroll and scans it.) It is important for the Jewish Christians to understand that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, not by the Law. Amos . . . Nahum . . . Habakkuk? Habakkuk 2:4. That's it. Ah . . . here it is. *(Reads.)* "The just shall live by his faith." Write that down. *(Tertius writes.)*

(Paul rolls up Habakkuk's scroll; he paces and talks to himself.) Contrary to popular belief, no man is justified by the Law.

TERTIUS

(Repeats quietly and slowly as he writes; Paul has his back to Tertius and is lost in thought.) "Contrary to popular belief . . . no man is justified . . ." *(looks up)* Sir, how do you spell "justified"?

PAUL

(Startled) Spell *justified*? Oh, no, no! Erase that last sentence. I was thinking aloud.

TERTIUS

(Looks at the end of the quill.) How am I supposed to erase? This quill does not have an eraser, and White-Out and delete buttons haven't been invented yet.

PAUL

You are a creative young man. You figure it out. Read back to me what you have written, please. Start with "for therein is the righteousness . . ."

TERTIUS

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

PAUL

Very good. "As it is written, The just shall live by faith." What a simple but profound message. Well written, Habakkuk, well written.

Tertius, let's take a break. We'll finish this letter later . . . with God's help.

PAUL EXITS. TERTIUS picks up his quill and scroll. He follows Paul, stumbling and dropping things.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

SCENE III

Martin Luther— AD 1517

ENTER KATHARINE, bearing a tray of dishes, including a pitcher of water, glasses, a knife, bread and butter.

KATHARINE

Just as I thought. Martin has been working at the dining table again. (Calls) Margarethe, come and clear the table.

ENTER MARGARETHE. She is a happy child, humming or singing, "Jesus Loves Me." With her mother's help she removes everything from the table except the lamp or candle. They ad lib as they work, if needed. Margarethe exits to take the stuff from the table out of the room.

KATHARINE

(Calls.) Remind your father that it is time to eat. (Sets the table.)

ENTER MARGARETHE AND MARTIN. They take their places at the table.

MARTIN

(Looks around.) What, no guests?

KATHARINE

No guests. Thank the Lord.

MARTIN

Where are the boys?

KATHARINE

Johannes is at Mark's house. Martin and Paul are visiting their tutor.

MARTIN

Very well. Bow your heads, please. (prays) Dear heavenly Father, thank You for the manifold blessings that Thou hast bestowed upon us this day. Bless the food we are about to partake of. May it nourish and sustain us. In Jesus name. Amen."

Katharine, shall we continue our Table Talk without the boys?

KATHARINE slices the bread and passes it. She also pours water into the glasses.

KATHARINE

Martin, since for a change we do not have guests at our table, this is a good time for us to talk about our family Table Talks.

MARTIN

Yes, my dear? What do you wish to say?

KATHARINE

I understand that your friend Conrad Cordatus and some others who often sit at our table are planning to record our Table Talks.

MARTIN

Yes, I believe they did mention that to me.

KATHARINA

Well, I am opposed to our private discussions being published!

MARTIN

But, my dear wife, they feel that the subjects we discuss are important to the movement.

KATHARINE

And the privacy of our family is important to me.

MARTIN

(Sighs heavily.) Little did I know when I wrote "Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences" what it would do to my life, to the church, to the world.

MARGARETHE

(Takes a big bite of bread.) Father, what is a pro-test-ant?

KATHARINE

Margarethe, how many times must I tell you not to talk with your mouth full?

MARGARETHE

Sorry, Mother. Father, what is a pro-test-ant? My teacher said you are a pro-test-ant.

MARTIN

(Puzzled.) What?

KATHARINE

I believe she means “a Protestant.”

MARTIN

Oh, a Protestant. *(Clears his throat; expounds.)* A Protestant is one who, by reason of divine revelation, has elected to align his convictions to conform with the unaltering, irrevocable Word of God, protesting against the unbiblical traditions and dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, even if it leads to excommunication.

MARGARETHE

What?

KATHARINA

He said that a Protestant is one who obeys God’s Word, even when it means leaving the Roman Catholic Church.

MARGARETHE

Oh. Father, who is Ray-for-may-shun?

MARTIN

Ray-for-may-shun? I don’t know anyone named Ray-for-may-shun.

KATHARINE

She is talking about the Reformation.

MARTIN

Oh, the Reformation. *(Clears his throat; expounds.)* The Reformation is the movement that began in 1517 when God in His infinite mercy revealed to me that salvation comes only to the living through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus and our sins cannot be remitted by man nor atoned for after death.

MARGARETHE

What?

KATHARINE

Your father said that the Reformation began when people realized that only Jesus can forgive sins.

MARGARETHE

Oh. My teacher said that Martin Luther is the father of the Ray-for-may-shun. I told her that you are just the father of Johannes, Martin, Paul, and me. Well, of course, Elisabeth and Magdalena, but they're in heaven now.

KATHARINE

Your teacher meant that your Father was the one who started the Reformation movement.

MARGARETHE

(Looks at her father.) How did you do that?

MARTIN

(Looks at his wife.) Is she ready for this?

KATHARINE

She is eight years old. The question is – are you ready for this?

MARTIN

(Sighs heavily; rubs his beard with both hands.) You see, Margarethe, it was like this. Long before you were born; even before I met your mother, I was the professor of Theology at Wittenberg University. One night I was studying in the tower at Wittenberg, preparing a series of lectures, when. . . . *(fades out; family freezes)*

SOUND: CLOCK STRIKING THREE TIMES

(YOUNGER MARTIN LUTHER ENTERS, wearing a bathrobe and night cap, carrying a candle, worn Bible, paper and pencil; goes to the table left rear and takes a seat.)

YOUNG MARTIN

Three o'clock. *(Yawns.)* I wonder if I will ever be able to sleep the night through. Those years as a monk in Erfurt certainly disrupted my natural sleep pattern. Well, if I can't sleep, I might as well worry.

(Paces.) Requiring people to pay for forgiveness has never stuck me as quite right. Now the archbishop has given the priesthood the power to sell indulgences . . . allowing people to prepay for forgiveness. It's a great fundraiser, but oh, so dangerous. It seems that urging people to escape from divine punishment through indulgences will lead them away from true repentance and give them a false sense of security. I have a good mind to write a paper . . . No, I'd better not do that.

(Sits down and opens his Bible.) Might as well study for my lectures on the Book of Romans. Let's see. Where was I? Chapter 1, verse 17: *(Reads)* "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." What? "The just shall live by faith." By faith?

Didn't Paul write something like that to the Galatians? *(Flips to Galatians 3:11.)* Ah, here it is. Galatians 3:11: "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

(Turns in Bible to Hebrews.) And somewhere else . . . where was it? . . . Hebrews? Ah, yes, Hebrews 10:38: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Paul, why did you quote this verse from the Prophet Habakkuk three times—assuming that you wrote Hebrews as well as Romans and Galatians? It must be important.

(Looks up in prayer.) What are you saying to me, Lord? What . . . ?

FLASH OF LIGHT, as if light explodes in his head. (The flash of light could be produced by a flash from a digital camera. The operator would need to be hidden somewhere close to the table where Luther is seated. If a strong flash of light is not possible, it can be eliminated.)

(Grabs the Bible and jumps up; begins pacing.) "The just shall live by faith!" That's it. That's it! How do we find favor with God? By confessing to the priest? By buying indulgences? By our works? No! No, a thousand times, no! We are *justified* by faith. The *just* shall live by faith. I see it! I see it!

I must write it! *(sits down and begins to write. Freezes.)*

MARTIN

So, Margarethe, that was my “tower experience.” I wrote what God revealed to me, and I posted it on the college bulletin board, the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. That was the beginning of the Reformation Movement. I have been attacked, criticized, mocked, persecuted, excommunicated, even lauded ever since. *(To Margarethe)* What does all this say to you, Little One?

MARGARETHE

That you never know when you write something where it will go or what it will do. So if you write it, you’d better believe it.

MUSIC: FINALE

Appendix 3

Why Write?

I Must Write

By James G. Poitras

- I must write. Necessity is laid on me. Woe to me, if I write not.

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Corinthians 9:16).

“Search for the reason that bids you write; find out whether it is spreading out its roots in the deepest places of your heart, acknowledge to yourself whether you would have to die if you were denied to write. This above all – ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: must I write?”

Letters to a Young Poet – Ranier Maria Rilke

- It has been said, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” I want to change the world, so I pick up my pen to impact the world.
 - Build the model church.
 - Preach to preachers.
 - Write.
- I write because God’s Word changes lives.

- God's Word is sharper than any sword (Hebrews 4:12).
- Thank God for faithful men who wrote as the Holy Ghost moved them. (See Hebrews 1:1; II Peter 1:21.)
- The Bible was written by both the learned (Moses, Solomon) and unlearned (Peter, Amos); by men from many different walks of life.
- The writers did not have fancy computers and publishing programs (software). They didn't even have typewriters or printing presses. They wrote in the wilderness, in captivity in Babylon, on the Island of Patmos, and even from a prison cell.

It is true that God has not called us to continue writing the Bible. It is complete. However, we can write tracts, books, and gospel messages in various languages for the people to understand. Each one of us can write and distribute the paper preachers.

- Writing goes to places I will never go. It speaks languages I will never learn. It stays longer than I can ever stay.

"I am a missionary and a very good one too! They say that missionary means 'sent one' and I am really that in every sense of the word . . . I travel the world and need no visa. A stamp will take me anywhere I wish to go, even into the so-called closed lands. I turn up in the most unexpected places. Once I found myself in the wastepaper basket in a Brazilian prison and was used in the conversion of many of the prisoners. I reach both high and low with the good news of the gospel. My readers may be anything from peasants to presidents, students to seminary professors. Do I get results? Certainly. Thousands have been brought to Christ through the testimonies I contain" (Taken from *Access Without Visa*)

They are moving throughout the world by the billions and they are realizing millions of converts. It is sad that most of them are working for the Communists and various cults. They are able to get access into countries without even a visa. They speak hundreds of different languages. They are able to go further than most missionaries, and able to stay much longer. They are able to take up residence in nations around the world without the high cost of living and housing. They do not require a passport and travel very economically. They bypass language barriers and racial prejudices. They have no problem entering into mansions, palaces, or mud huts in villages. They preach the same message to both the rich and poor. They can preach in large cities or small villages. They can

give their message in public or in private. They never lose their temper or get into an argument. They do not react when people mock or ridicule them. They speak without a foreign accent and get a person's attention right when the person is interested in hearing the message. They speak to one, or can speak to a multitude. They work at any hour of day or night. They never compromise nor do they ever change their message. They can work for hours without getting tired. They never get sick and do not have to worry about taking care of their families. Who are they? They are the paper preachers; tracts, literature, books, bumper stickers, letters; publishing the Word of Life.

- Written words carry more weight than spoken ones.
- Kirk Polking says, "Your writing is forever." We write for eternity.

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever" (Isaiah 30:8).

- I write to transfer the truth I've received to faithful men, who shall be able to reach others.

"Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?" (Proverbs 22:20-21).

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

"And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Habakkuk 2:2).

- The written word is not easily changed.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning

were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1-4).

- I write because I have something to say.
- Writing preserves our heritage and message for future generations.
 - "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD" (Psalm 102:18).
 - "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14).
 - "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:9).
 - "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe" (Philippians 3:1).
- I write to spread the gospel message.

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Oswald J. Smith was a pastor greatly concerned with the task of world evangelism. He wrote:

For more than 30 years I have prayerfully considered the problem: How can we evangelize the world in the space of one generation? Long ago I was convinced that we could never send out enough missionaries. For a while I gave up hope. After travel and study in nearly one hundred countries, I have come to this conclusion—the only way we are going to carry out the Great Commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," will be the means of the printed page. By the systematic use of the printed page we shall be able to enter into every home and reach every individual with the gospel message."

- I write to open the eyes of the lost.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:4).

- To explain the hope we have.
 - “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Peter 3:15).
 - “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).
- I write to obey the Lord.
 - “All we have ever said, all we could ever say comes down to this final question, Who really is writing what I write? Am I or am I not an instrument in the hand of the Divine?” (Charles Shedd, *If I Can Write, You Can Write*).
 - “And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Revelation 21:5).
 - “Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen” (Isaiah 8:1).
 - “And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region” (Acts 13:49).
 - “And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).
 - “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11).

Wrong Motives for Writing

We do not write:

1. Make money (as the major motivator).
2. Make a name for ourselves.
3. Attack others.

Missionary Spotlight: Glen and Iris Bogue



From 1953 to 1970, Glen and Iris Bogue were pioneer missionaries to Australia. Prior to their appointment, Brother Bogue pastored in Gary, Indiana. Through this anointed servant of the Lord, many valuable contacts were made. In fact, the people who came to this beautiful truth at that early time include some of the leaders of the United Pentecostal Church of Australia today.

Brother and Sister Glen Bogue faced great hardship and considerable opposition as they proclaimed the Jesus Name message in Australia. In spite of the many who tried their utmost to keep the Apostolic message from being established in Australia, God gave the Bogues outstanding victory. This truth was planted, and the church which had its early beginning through the ministry of these dedicated servants is today a strong and growing church with many assemblies in Australia.

Global Missions, UPCI, and the church in Australia cannot forget the outstanding leadership this dedicated couple gave to that field. Their zeal and enthusiasm, as well as his wisdom and understanding, made a tremendous contribution to the establishing of this glorious truth.

After returning to the United States, the Bogues pastored the United Pentecostal Assembly of Bloomington, Indiana, from October 1970 to his death on Sunday, December 17, 1989. He was seventy-six years of age. His wife, Iris, preceded him in death on May 26, 1986.

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