

What Readers Need from Christian Writers

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Frederick Beckner said, “Ministry is when your heart’s greatest joy meets the world’s deepest need.” Does your heart yearn to write? Do you enjoy the process of writing? Do you have a desire to touch others’ lives for Christ?

Prov. 18:4 amplified “The words of a wise man’s mouth are as deep waters: the fountain of skillful and godly wisdom is a gushing stream; sparkling, fresh, pure, life-giving.” Zondervan’s commentary tells us this verse refers to the words of the wise as “an inexhaustible supply of blessing,” and the flowing water describes the speech of the wise “as a continuous source of refreshing and beneficial ideas. This verse recognizes the importance of what we say—and write.

As Christians, we know our best writing comes as a natural outgrowth of our active relationship with God. So, draw from the drawers and cabinets of your personal experiences, Bible study, & prayer life. From that vantage point, we learn to see our readers as God sees them – and offer them L.I.F.E. Picture a variety of people you know, or characters from television. What can you write to reach out to them?

L. Laughter and Joy in Christian living, regardless of circumstances. Prov. 17:22a – “A cheerful heart does good like a medicine.” Consider the effect of this story. “A little boy sent a ‘get well quick’ card to his grandfather in the hospital. Inside the card he wrote, ‘Dear Grandpa, Mom says that you went to the hospital for some tests. I hope you get all “A’s!” Love, Billy.’” As Christian writers, we can help people laugh.

I. Instruction in Christian topics. 2 Tim. 2:15 – “Study to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” It’s easy for us to view instruction and advice as did the man whose wife sent him to the doctor for his annual physical exam. “What did the doctor say?” she asked. He replied in a huff, “He told me that if I want to stay healthy, I have to eat what I don’t want, drink what I don’t like, and do what I’d rather not!” As Christian writers, we can offer instruction that illustrate truths in palatable and memorable ways.

F. Filling people with Hope during Hurting times. Jer. 17:5-8 – “Cursed is the one who trusts in man...he will dwell in the parched places...” “But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes...It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

E. Encouragement, to live better, do better, accomplish more with God. My favorite promise that encourages me most is Jer. 29:11-13 – “ ‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.’”

Consider, which of these four outlooks will help your imaginary readers with your topic? Will *laughter* help them relax and find joy in their daily Christian life? Can *instructional* writing provide the tools they need? Do hurting readers need you to *fill* them with renewed hope in the face of adversity? Perhaps bored, sidetracked, or overly busy Christians need *encouragement*? Before you submit your writing, seal the L.I.F.E. into the reader’s memory with good stories, illustrations, and images!