

# Devotional Writing Tips

## Xochitl E. Dixon

### *1. Remember that every unique God-given voice makes a difference in God's Kingdom.*

A. We need God and each other as we courageously point our readers to Jesus.

### *2. To help others grow spiritually, we'll need to know and grow with God personally.*

1. **Seek** God first, in Scripture and through continual prayer.
2. **Surrender** to God's plan, even if it's not the dream we expected.
3. **Serve** God and readers, *not* self.
4. **Support** others and share with the writing community.

### *3. God gives each of us a unique voice and a heart for the readers He entrusts to us.*

- A. Identify your specific Target Audience for each project.
- B. Reach out to readers through social media, support groups, Bible studies, etc.
- C. Focus on Target audience, while acknowledging secondary audience.

### *4. God uses different types of devotions to reach different audiences with different needs.*

A. Study publications and follow submission guidelines.

### *5. Devotions are an offering to God to be used as He sees fit, for His glory alone.*

A. Pursue God first, Not Publication

### *6. Split word count into three parts: Illustration, Teaching, Application*

1. Example: For a 230-word devotion
2. Illustration (100 words)
3. Solid Transition Statement: Guide readers deliberately and clearly.
4. Teaching (100 words): Interact with the text in the context in which it was given.
5. Summary/Application (30 words)
6. Prayer (1-2 Sentences, average 10-20 intentional words.)
7. Takeaway: One simple, clear statement, under 20 words, readers will remember.

### *7. Strong devotions:*

- A. Point to Christ, using Scripture in the context in which the original text was presented
- B. Avoid using Scripture as out-of-context agenda-supporting tagline
- C. Contain encouraging, authentic, universal, personal, life-applicable, and biblical messages
- D. Focus on one idea, from the title through the illustration, teaching, and takeaway
- E. Begin with a strong title and a true illustration that grab the reader's attention
- F. Contain a clear transition that connects the illustration to the biblical teaching
- G. Include active verbs and concise, purposed sentences that build to the takeaway
- H. Avoid preachiness and use a come-alongside tone and words (*we can*, not *you should* or *must*)
- I. Avoid religious jargon (cliché words or phrases used by people in church)
- J. Provide a clear and concise biblical application and takeaway
- K. Engage readers with true, concrete illustrations and sensory details
- L. Avoid absolute statements, generalizations, or stereotypes
- M. Make every word count, eliminating passive voice and unnecessary filler words
- N. Use 8<sup>th</sup> grade level language creatively and consider international audiences.
  - 1. ie. Softball example for international readers won't work.