

Hook 'Em from the Get-Go; Hold 'Em to the End

Create

- Pray! (Rainey, WHA)
- Focus/sharpen your idea. Condense to one sentence with strong title.
- Focus on your audience
 - What are their needs?
 - What do you hope they will take away?
 - Apply the BERT principle.
- Focus on your market. Study writers' guidelines.
- Use the best hook to create a strong lead.
 - Anecdotal, startling statement, quote, question
- Create reader identification
- Arrive at your focus statement quickly with an economy of words.
- Make your points (but not too many) smoothly and logically.
- Nail your ending with a strong conclusion that ties back to beginning.

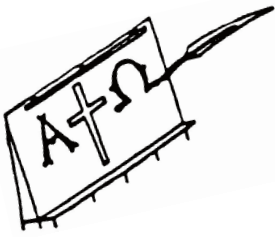
Rewrite

- Prayerfully evaluate what you've written.
- Bring your manuscript to a critique group. "Iron sharpens iron" (Prov. 27:17).
- Strengthen your points with anecdotes/illustrations.
- Smooth your transition between points.
 - Use headings, sub-headings, bullets, numbers.
- Show don't tell; teach don't preach
 - Avoid pat answers

Edit

- Resist temptation to submit it too soon. Let it cool!
- Tighten - cut away the clutter.
Wordiness, redundancy, qualifiers
- Eliminate long, confusing sentences and incomplete sentences.
- Paragraph length varied. Create valuable white space.
- Check sentence structure, especially beginnings & endings.
- Look for inconsistencies in punctuation.
- Replace passive voice with active wherever possible
- Avoid repetition except for emphasis.
- Use a variety of words, but don't tiptoe through the thesaurus.
- Don't write about the heads of your readers or down to them.
- Replace adverbs with strong verbs.
- Use concrete, colorful words.
- Avoid cliches - like the plague!
- Double-check quotes, statistics, and facts.
Reference properly.
Obtain permission when needed.
- Scripture accurately quoted and referenced.
Note translation. Is it periodical's preferred translation?
Do NOT proof-text. "Correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15 NIV).
"Twelve Rules for Use of Scripture"
- Do NOT depend on spell-checkers
- Read aloud - even backwards!

Prayerfully submit.



Twelve Rules for the Use of Scripture

1. Know your intended market. You need to know what translation they prefer, the method they use for referencing Scripture, and how much Scripture they normally include in their articles.
2. Use printed Scripture sparingly. Unfortunately if you use more than several quotes, you eliminate about 90% of your markets. Also avoid long quotations. Quote only that part of a verse that is necessary. When most readers come to a long quotation, they skip or skim over it. If your quote will run more than 3-4 lines, it's best to put it in your own words with a note in parenthesis (see reference).
3. Be very careful not to proof-text or take Scripture out of context. "Know what his Word says and means" (2 Tim. 2:15 TLB). Be a workman who "correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15 NIV).
4. Quote accurately—never from memory. Be especially careful with punctuation. Do not follow capitalization in Scripture that is in poetic form unless you type it in poetic form in your manuscript. Do not change capitalization of pronouns referring to God. Leave it as it is in the version you are quoting from unless you are writing a book and note change on credits page. (Most publishers prefer using lower case for pronouns referring to God.)
5. Reference properly. Although the style varies some among the different houses, the most accepted practice is to include the reference in parenthesis after the printed Scripture followed by your period (see example in #3). Very few magazines put the reference in a footnote. Generally titles of books of the Bible are abbreviated in references in parenthesis but written out in text. Use semi-colons to separate multiple references (Gen. 2:16; Jer. 29:11), commas or hyphens to separate verses (Rom. 8:31-32, 34-39), and an e/m dash for a block of Scripture between chapters (Rom. 9:30—10:4). Use Arabic not Roman numerals for multiple books (1 Chron. 28:20 not I Chron. 28:20).
6. Choose your translation or paraphrase carefully. Be aware of the preferences (or requirements) of your intended market. Don't be hesitant to use other than your favorite version. Look up your reference in several Bibles and choose the one that will be clearest to your readers.
7. ALWAYS identify the translation or paraphrase you are using. In most cases you will use an abbreviation (see the example in #3).
8. If you quote only from one translation/paraphrase, at the end of your manuscript say: "All Scripture is from the _____."
9. Normally your quotation is introduced with a comma unless it flows into your sentence. Examples: I recalled the familiar words, "For God so loved the world" (Jn. 3:16 TLB). I can experience "the power of the life-giving Spirit" (Rom. 8:20 TLB).
10. When the Scripture you are using is already in quotation marks, use double quotes. Example: "I am the true Vine" (Jn. 15:1 TLB) unless your quotation is more than eight lines and is set off from the text in a block quotation.
11. Use ellipses (3 periods . . .) with a space before and after each dot for anything you leave out in the middle of a quote. House rules may vary, but in most cases you do not need to use ellipses if you omit the beginning or end of a Scripture verse. Use brackets around any of your own words that you include in a quotation.
12. Endeavor to follow the advice Discipleship Journal gives to their writers: "Encourage personal application of Scripture."

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