What’s the Secret About Agents?
Agents are REPRESENTATIVES.
Agents are “MIDDLE-MEN” between authors & editors.
Agents make their money by taking a % of the MONEY a publisher gives an author.

DO I NEED AN AGENT?
Many publishers won’t accept an unsolicited manuscript unless it comes from an agent.
Getting an AGENT is just like interesting an EDITOR . . .
   A. MEET IN PERSON . . .
   B. And SOLICITING them through the mail or email . . .

SELF PUBLISHING
If you self-publish . . . GO INTO IT WITH YOUR EYES OPEN
   -All the PRODUCTION & PRINTING COSTS are YOURS
   -All or MOST of the MARKETING & SELLING is YOURS

If you self-publish . . . HIRE an EDITOR so your book is it’s best.
   -Make sure the COVER IS GREAT
   -You still need to do a PROPOSAL of sorts . . .
   -You still need to write out a MARKETING PLAN.

E-BOOKS
If you get a contract from a publisher, it should address E-BOOKS as well.
It should state how you will be compensated in the case of e-books . . .
If you’re going to do your own e-book . . . be CAREFUL of HIDDEN costs . . .
   -You still NEED an EDITOR . . .
   -A great COVER is CRITICAL . . . and you need to MARKET the book . . .

Sometimes the proposal/rejection process is exactly what we need . . .

Five Essentials for True Publishing Success

1. GOD’S TIMING . . .

2. REPUTATION . . .
   “A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.” Proverbs 22:1
   -Having a good reputation means . . .
      being known to do GOOD work . . .
      being known for GETTING ALONG with OTHERS . . .
      being known for being TEACHABLE (not prima donna) . . .
   -Having a good reputation is about WHO WE ARE INSIDE . . .
   -It is something you get by . . .
      being the REAL DEAL at home and at the workplace
having a WHOLEHEARTED RELATIONSHIP with GOD 
being DEDICATED to FOLLOWING GOD’S WORD . . . not sloppy 
being careful to be a PERSON of INTEGRITY 
-DOING the RIGHT THING, whether I feel like it or not 

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. THEN you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

-WHEN is THEN? 
-When I live as a LIVING SACRIFICE—when I CHOOSE to LIVE RIGHT, with HIS HELP, to live according to God’s word . . . THEN I find His GOOD, PLEASING and PERFECT WILL. We start experiencing God’s perfect plan for us as we live in OBEDIENCE to HIM.

A. Reputation is important . . .
B. Respond graciously to criticism . . . if you respond at all.

“Thank you for your insights. I will continue to try harder.”

3. PLATFORM
Message platform...
The big message I am building on...

Marketing platform...
Any avenue you may have to reach SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS of people . . .

The publisher wants to see that YOU WILL BE ABLE TO MARKET AND SELL YOUR BOOK, and if you have some kind of platform, they’ll see that as BUILT-IN SALES.

-Often this will move you out of your COMFORT ZONE . . .
  -Chances are, God is already PREPARING YOU for SOMETHING.
  -Some way of getting the word out about your writing to more people . . . because your writing will HELP PEOPLE.
  -So ask God to show you what to do when the time comes . . . and be willing to do it even if the thought scares you.

Remember Philippians 4:13
“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

4. WORKING on the CRAFT
-We never “ARRIVE” . . .

5. KEEP the PROPER PERSPECTIVE
-Handling SUCCESS . . .
  -be careful not to get heady, but give God the glory.
  -be careful to GIVE BACK . . .

-Handling REJECTION & what WE SEE as FAILURE . . .
  -Know that it HAPPENS to ALL writers.
Understand it is PART of the PROCESS . . .
- Rejection helps KEEP US HUMBLE in a heady industry
- Rejection helps KEEP US SHARP, working on our writing
- Rejection helps KEEP US DEPENDANT on GOD
- Rejection helps KEEP US LIVING RIGHT . . .

Publishing success doesn’t always come to the most TALENTED WRITERS—
but to the most PERSISTENT.

Understand God’s DEFINITION of SUCCESS is often different from the world . . .
“A secular writer who doesn’t quite sell 20,000 copies of a book isn’t considered a success, but a Christian
writer who only sells one copy but it changed somebody’s life IS a success” Terry Burns

Five Essentials for Learning the Craft

God does gift with writing talent, but often the REAL gift is the HEART to write . . .
It ISN’T simply all NATURAL TALENT . . . and that means WE CAN ALL DO IT.
When it comes to talent . . . it isn’t just the “HAVES” and the “HAVE NOTS”.
It is more about those who “WORK” & those who “WORK NOT”.

1. Go to WRITERS CONFERENCES
   - ATTEND CLASSES and take notes . . .
   - Make an APPOINTMENT and talk to an editor or writer . . .
   - Get a CRITIQUE—you’ll see some things you never considered before . . .
   - Make NEW WRITING FRIENDS and acquaintances & exchange work . . .

2. BUY BOOKS on WRITING . . . and read them
   - You’ll learn what others have learned over YEARS of work . . .

3. READ GOOD BOOKS
   - The BEST of the TYPE & STYLE you want to write . . .

4. WRITE—set weekly or daily QUOATAS
   - We can have the right tools, but we to be a real writer, we must practice . . .

5. SHOW SOMEBODY YOUR WRITING

5 Essential Areas to Improve Your Writing Skills

1. The START

The first line, first paragraph of your story or article needs to be STRONG . . .
- DRAW the reader in. It needs to have a HOOK.
- A slow start will kill your story . . .

EXAMPLES . . .

Intrigue them. Hint at danger. Ask a question that isn’t answered . . .
2. BACKSTORY or BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Often we try to insert all kinds of DETAILS IN THE FIRST PAGES . . .

- Generally it is a MISTAKE.
- Give readers that information in small doses and spread it out.

3. POINT of VIEW (fiction)

POV is the perspective from which a scene or story is written . . . it is WHO IS TELLING the STORY, or through whose eyes or PERSPECTIVE we are seeing the story.

FIRST person-“I did, I said, I felt, I thought, I heard.”
THIRD person- “He did, he said, he felt, he thought, he heard.”

What gets writers in trouble with POV is generally two things.

A. Head hopping- jumping from one character’s POV, one character’s head or perspective, to another’s in the same scene without a clear distinction.

B. Sorta-psychic- relaying info the POV character couldn’t possibly have seen, heard, or known unless they’re psychic, a time traveler, or having “out-of-body” experiences.

EXAMPLE . . .

POV isn’t just a mistake to avoid . . . it is a tool to strengthen your writing . . .

EXAMPLE . . .

Not only do we want to avoid obvious POV mistakes, like head-hopping . . .
But we want to stay so deeply entrenched in the POV character’s head and perspective that it comes out in every scene.

4. SHOW DON’T TELL, or SDT . . .

There are times in a manuscript where you need to “tell” . . .
What gets us in trouble are the times we should be showing, but we keep on telling.

5. DIALOGUE

Dialogue has to have the appearance, the ILLUSION of being real . . .
Dialogue on the page needs to have all the BORING PARTS TAKEN OUT . . .
The dialogue needs to sound NATURAL & REALISTIC,
BUILD YOUR CHARACTERS, & MOVE your STORY FORWARD.

BUT DON’T STOP with these five areas . . .
- Look at your CHARACTER development, CONFLICT, PACING, & STYLE . . .

CLOSING
Tim Shoemaker FamilyDevotionsWorkshop@gmail.com
Five Recommended Books for Improving Fiction Writing Skills

Techniques of the Selling Writer
By Dwight Swain ISBN 0-8061-1191-7

The First Five Pages

Plot & Structure
By James Scott Bell ISBN 1-58297-294-X

The Art & Craft of Writing Christian Fiction
By Jeff Gerke ISBN 978-0-9821049-6-5

The Fire in Fiction
By Donald Maass ISBN 978-1-58297-506-1

Five Recommended Books for Submitting Proposals

Give ’Em What They Want

A Writers Survival Guide to Getting Published
By Terry Burns ISBN 978-1-935600-03-9

The Writers Digest Guide to Manuscript Formats

Christian Writers’ Market Guide
Some kind of book on GRAMMAR and STYLE—there are many on the book table.

Recommended for Non-fiction

Writing the Christian Non-Fiction Book
Concept to Contract
By David E. Fessenden ISBN 978-0-9825773-3-2

Effective Magazine Writing
By Roger C. Palms ISBN 0-87788-211-8

How to Write What You Love
And Make a Living at it

On Writing Well
By William Zinnser ISBN 0-06-089154-8