

# KEYS TO WRITING A GREAT DEVOTIONAL

## ▪ **What is a devotional?**

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:8, NKJ)

Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4, NKJ)

A devotional is a simple, concise, word of encouragement. Devotionals foster intimacy with God. They meet people where they are by connecting Scripture to real life experiences and needs. Devotionals are not sermons and generally have one point.

## ▪ **What a good devotional might look like**

For this project, a devotional should be around 500 words and include the following:

1. Main Scripture
2. An illustration
3. Application/Act (call to action; one action step!)
4. A Power Point (key takeaway)
5. Thought(s) for the day (1 or 2 quotes)
6. Reflection (3-4 questions)
7. Supporting Scripture (2-3)
8. Prayer (25-30 words)

## ▪ **How to engage the reader**

INSPIRE the reader!

Identify EVERY BELIEVER (every man) and tell their/his story!

A personal touch makes it personal.

Each devotional needs a story – Make the story the reader's story. Invite, engage and inspire the reader! [Deeply explore the mental, emotional, and spiritual elements of THE story!]

How does the Gospel of Jesus Christ speak to the story? Resurrect Jesus Christ in the narrative!

Cite a biblical directive in the narrative i.e. an example, command, principle, exhortation, promise, etc.

Each unit needs an invitation to relate, immerse, reflect, or connect [provide the ramp for onboarding].

Clarify the win! How does the "READER/BELIEVER" win? Bring delight out of dismay! Celebrate the "overcomer!"

Provide a CLEAR, SIMPLE path from vulnerability to value and victory.

Paint a picture of the person that the reader is called to become and pave the road to progress – direct their path! Point the reader to the next step! (It is the only one that matter right now.)

Speak life and only life to the whole person – heart (emotional), mind (mental/intellectual), soul (spiritual), and strength (volitional).

▪ **Turning your thoughts into a devotional**

1. Identify the point and get to it!  
**The first line is the most important line!**
2. Explain the Scripture/story in a concise, succinct yet compelling manner.
3. Offer a “fresh”, unique way of connecting the Scripture to a human need or experience. [Make the story the reader’s story!]
4. Provide a hook!

**A profound lead or persuasive anecdote to grab and hold the attention of the reader**

5. Tell the reader what they NEED to know in a dynamic way.
6. Paint the “picture” – turn ears into eyes!
7. Avoid blind spots.  
Inferences or thoughts that create unnecessary tension or may distort the message (i.e. racial, political, social, rational assumptions)
8. Point out the next step (issue a call to action).

**Hide the key takeaways “in plain sight”!**

*An attitude to change*

*A perspective to adopt*

*A sin to confess*

*A conflict to resolve*

*An example to follow*

*An act to perform*

*A mistake to prevent*

*A command to obey*

*A truth to embrace*

*A promise to claim*

*A challenge to face*

*A behavior to correct*

*A virtue to model*

*A view to consider*

*An opinion to rethink*

9. Write tight!

Don't count words; make words count!

The strength of the devotional should be greater than the length of the devotional.

Editors continually tell us writers that we need to learn how to 'write tight.' What exactly does that phrase mean? How can authors like ourselves learn the craft of tight writing?<sup>1</sup>

10. K.I.S.S. – Keep it simple Sisters!

**Simple is the new sophisticated.**

▪ **A good rule regarding transparency**

Be transparent! How transparent? The mirror, not the window. The goal is NOT for her to see through you but to see her experience IN your experience. She can better relate when she knows that your struggles are much like hers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.inspirewriters.com/how-to-write-tight/>

# LET'S WRITE!

- What is your main Scripture?

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Explain the Scripture/story in a concise, succinct yet compelling manner.

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Why was this Scripture chosen? How does this Scripture connect to the needs or experiences of your targeted reader?

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- What is your Power Point?

The Power Point is the hook or the key takeaway expressed in a dynamic manner.

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Craft the first line.

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- Do you have an illustration?

How will you make the reader “see” the message?

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- How will you make the story the reader's story?

Cite mental, emotional, spiritual or social elements that create value for the reader.

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- How does the Gospel of Jesus Christ speak to the story?

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- What problem, issue, tension, or area of vulnerability does the devotional address?

Clarify the win! How does the “READER/BELIEVER” win? Bring delight out of dismay!  
Celebrate the “overcomer!”

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▪ How will this story/devotional speak to the whole person?

1. Heart (emotional) – Give the reader something to feel.

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2. Mind (mental/intellectual) – Give the reader something to think.

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3. Soul (spiritual) - Give the reader a new vision of self. What should they become and how?

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4. Strength (volitional) – Give the reason something to do (call to action).

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▪ Point out the next step (issue a call to action).

Hide the key takeaways "in plain sight!"

- An attitude to change*
- A perspective to adopt*
- A sin to confess*
- A conflict to resolve*
- An example to follow*
- An act to perform*
- A mistake to prevent*
- A command to obey*
- A truth to embrace*
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- A view to consider*
- An opinion to rethink*

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