



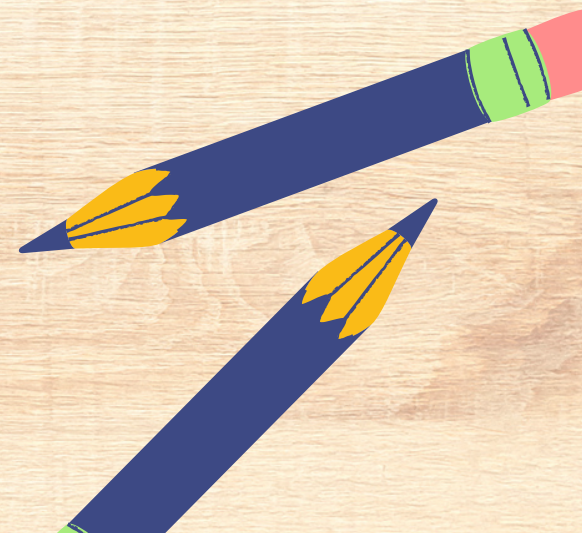
# Faith Expressions

## A Devotion-Writing Workshop

Deb Burma









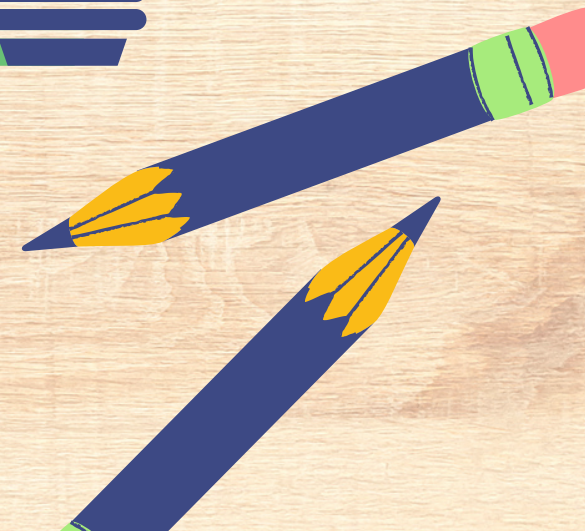
# Access Slides:





# Why do I want to write a Devotion?

-  I have a gift with words.
-  I want to share God's love in Christ.
-  I enjoy writing from personal experience.
-  I've been asked to write one for...
-  I \_\_\_\_\_
-  I \_\_\_\_\_

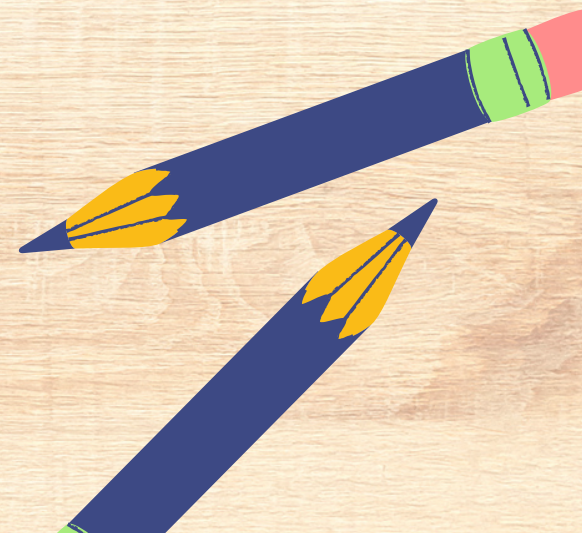
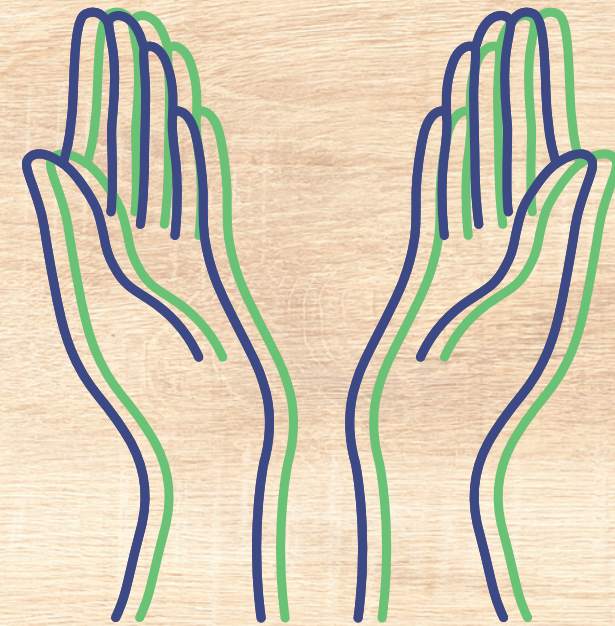




# Where to Start?

**When staring at a  
blank sheet of paper,  
begin with prayer.**

***"What truth do You  
want me to share?"***

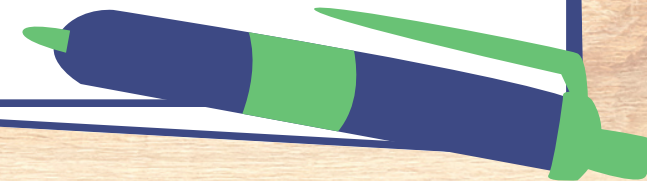




# Who is your audience?

**Write for your audience . . .**

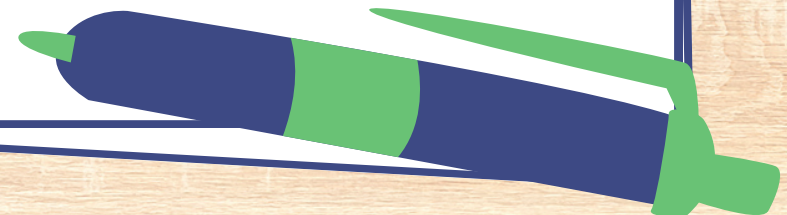
- Age
- Gender
- Maturity
- Area of interest
- Meeting a need






# What is your purpose?

- Share truth
- Comfort, encourage . . .
- Share the Gospel
- Elicit a response
  - opportunity for application
- Excite, exhort . . .






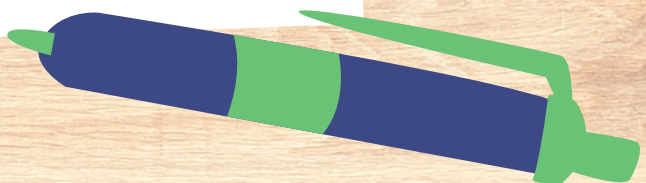
# The Power of Christ



**Point to Christ as the Source of power for change. He provides the ability to apply God's Word to life, by the Holy Spirit.**



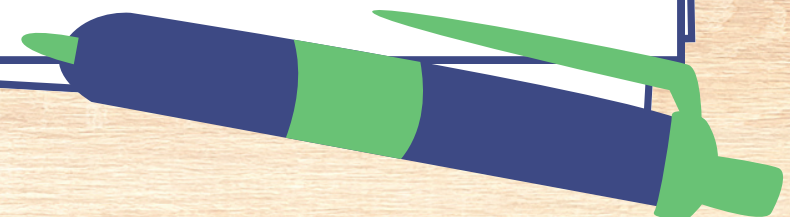
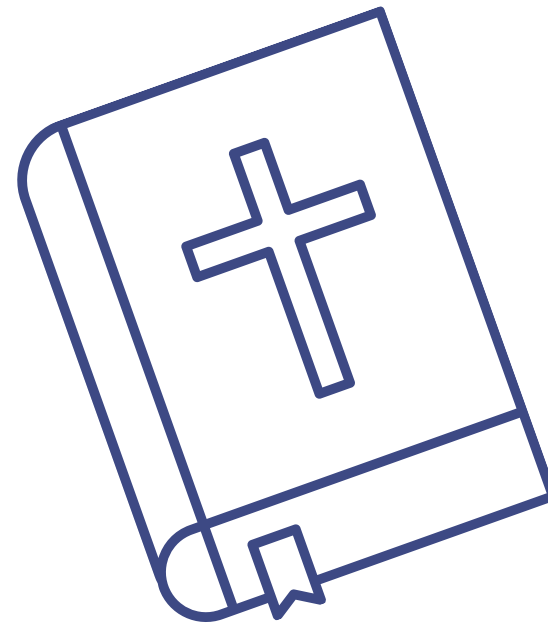
**It's not about self-motivation or trying harder, but seeking His strength, confident of His grace and His work in our lives.**





# Go to God's Word

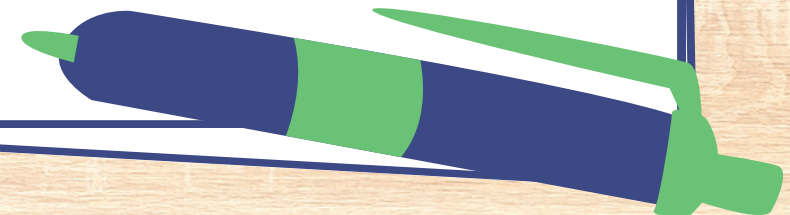
- Seek direction
- Study
- Look at context
- Unpack . . .
- A life experience, story, illustration, or observation come to mind . . .





# Life Experiences ~ Stories ~ Illustrations

- A day in your life
- Family or friends
- Everyday mishaps
- Memories
- Impactful words
- Holidays
- Unique experiences
- Mistakes/learning
- Struggles; suffering
- Milestone events
- Things observed

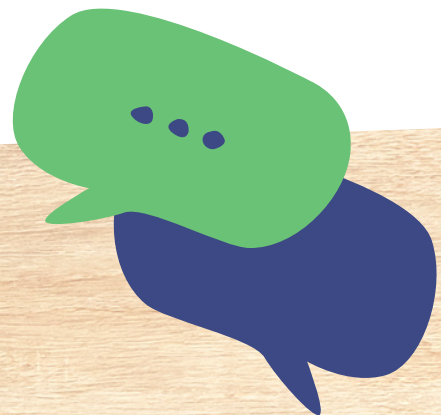




# Devotion Starters:

## Talking Starter

Create a line of dialogue that pulls the reader into the devotion's topic.



## Landscape Starter

Open with a description of a setting, important to the devotion's theme.

## Character Starter

Describe a person/circumstance important to the devotion's topic.



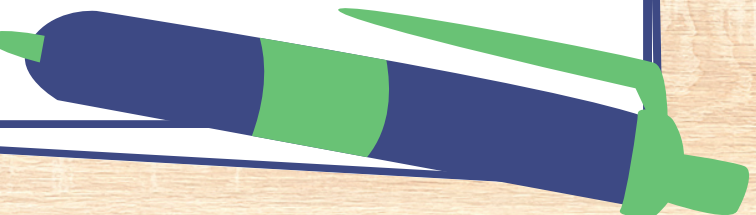


# Life Experiences ~ Stories ~ Illustrations

**The language of devotional writing uses illustrations, as Jesus did in His parables. Not separately straining attention to themselves, but shedding light on the subject at hand.**

-From "General Guidelines for All Devotional Writers"

CPH Writing for the Church Workshop

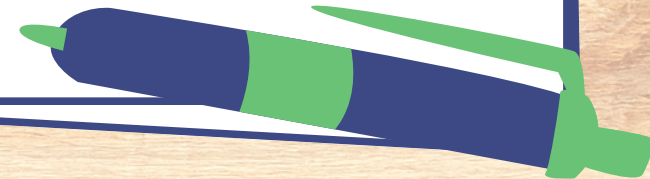




# What makes a good devotion?

## 1 - Authenticity

- Use real language
- Let the reader hear your voice
- Write what you know ...

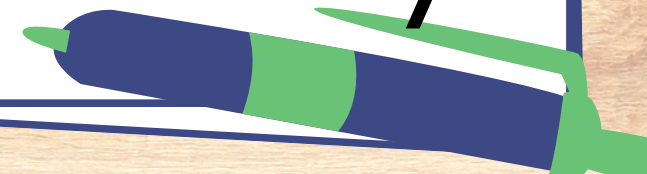




# What makes a good devotion?

## 2- Applicable Theme

- Understands it
- Engages with it
- Relates to it
- Applies it to life
- Sees something in a new way

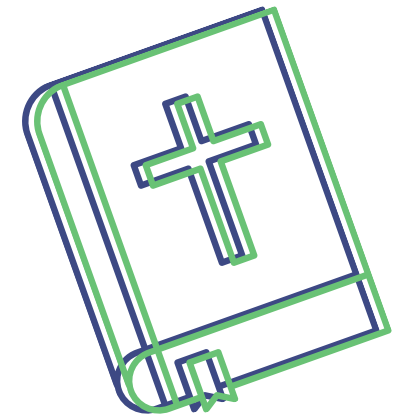




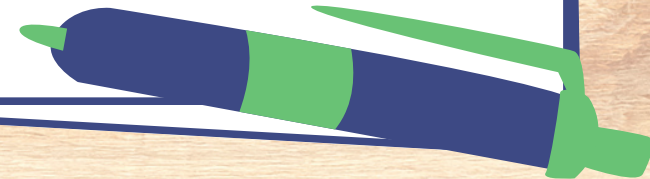
# What makes a good devotion?

## 3 - Above All . . .

- Christ-centered
- Anchored in Scripture
- Relevant to Life



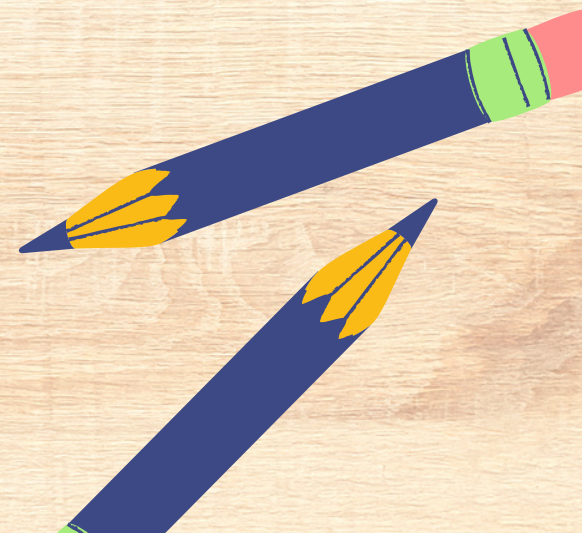
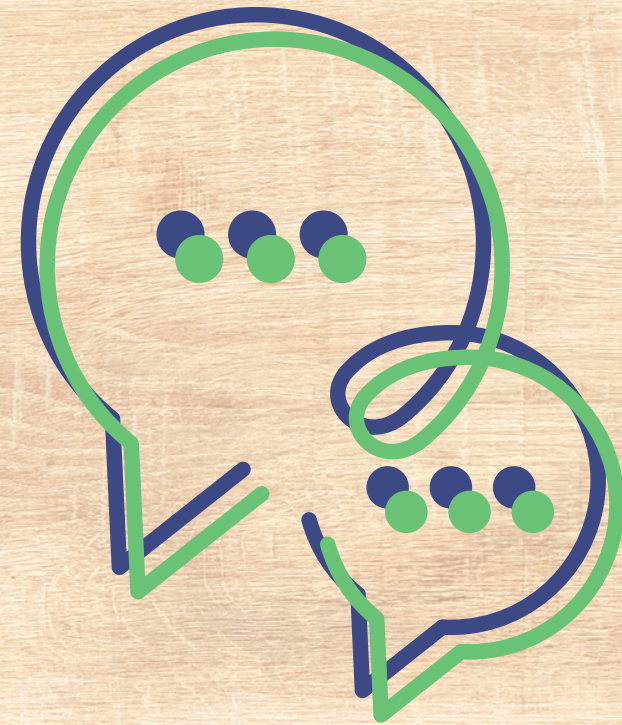
From Jane Fryar, editor/writers' school instructor





# What about . . . ?

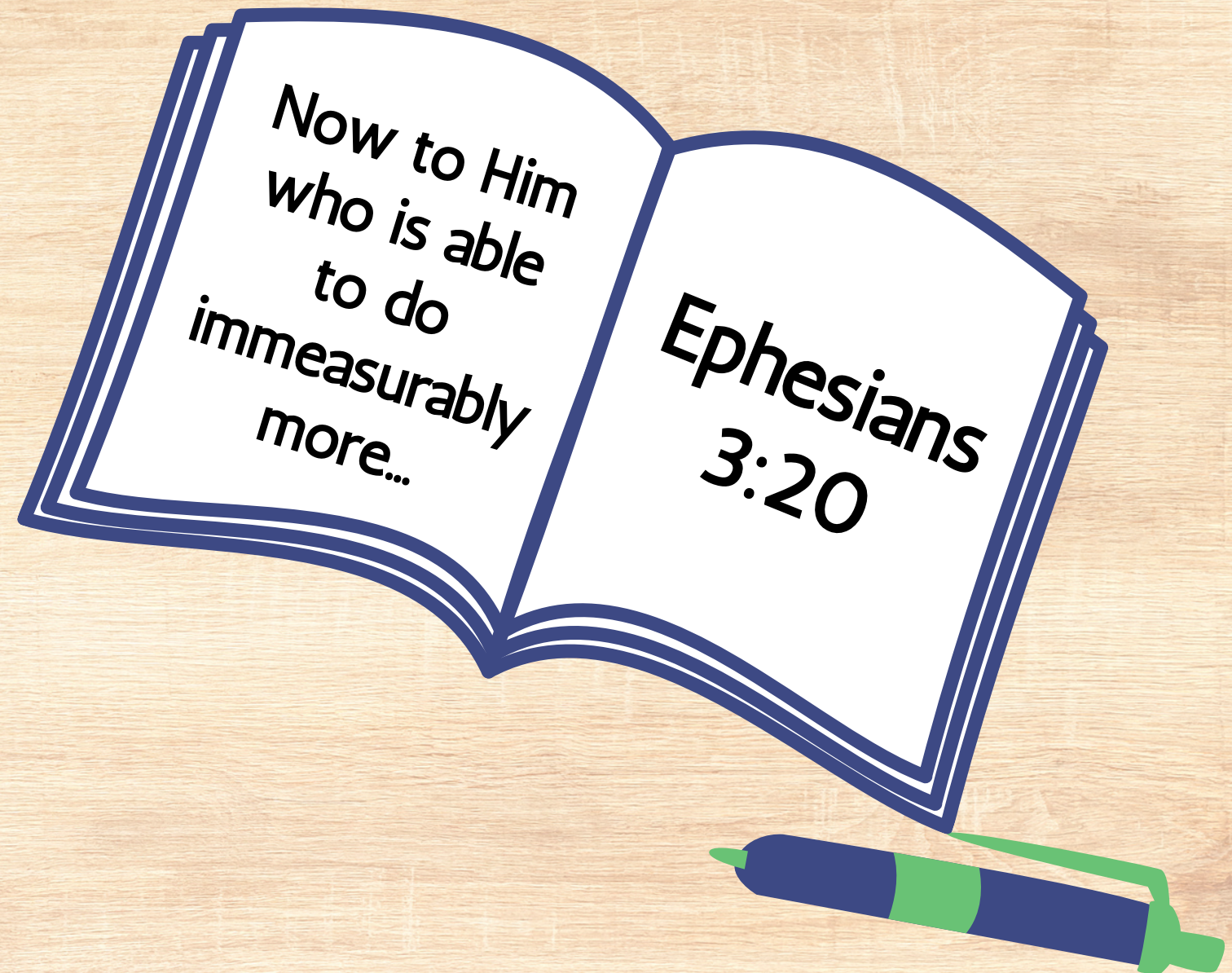
- Title
- Prayer
- Optional Question
- Opt. Journal Prompt
- Word Count





# The Power of Christ

It's both heartening and humbling to share of yourself through your devotion; trust that God will take your simple words and use them to touch another life for Christ.

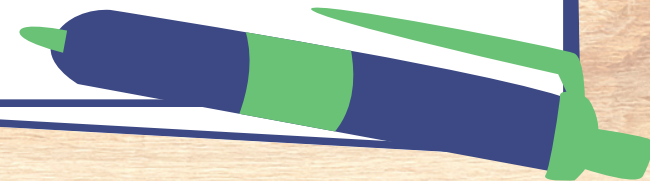




# FREE WRITING

**Writing freely  
without focus**

**Free writing is an  
exercise that helps  
you set your  
writer's voice FREE**





# FREE WRITING

Writing freely  
**WITH** focus

- Write about what you know
- What are your sources of inspiration?
- "Fabulous Realities"





# FREE WRITING

## Keeping a Journal

- To record prayers
- To preserve memories, experiences ...
- Because "writers write" -Jane Fryar

**\*Try journal prompts**

*Google: Journal writing prompts*

*Christian journal writing prompts*





# What is GOOD Writing?

**1. Write as you would talk, using your voice.**



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2. **Avoid use of flowery "impressive" words.**



# What is GOOD Writing?

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3. **Focus on finding strong verbs.**
  - a. **a fitting verb for the context**
  - b. **active over passive verbs**



# What is GOOD Writing?

1. Write as you would talk, using your voice.
2. Avoid use of flowery "impressive" words.
3. Focus on finding strong verbs.
  - a. a fitting verb for the context
  - b. active over passive verbs
4. **Choose precise nouns.**



# STRONG VERBS

Instead of "walk" –



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Instead of "walk" –

**shuffle, stride, float, saunter, stroll, amble, march, pace, hike, toddle. . .**



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## ACTIVE versus PASSIVE VERBS/VOICE

**While we could be inspired by them, . . .**



## STRONG VERBS

Instead of "walk" –

shuffle, stride, float, saunter, stroll, amble, march, pace, hike, toddle. . .

## ACTIVE versus PASSIVE VERBS/VOICE

While we could be inspired by them, . . .

**While they could inspire us, . . .**



## STRONG VERBS

Instead of "walk" –

shuffle, stride, float, saunter, stroll, amble, march, pace, hike, toddle. . .

## ACTIVE versus PASSIVE VERBS/VOICE

While we could be inspired by them, . . .

While they could inspire us, . . .

## PRECISE NOUNS

More precise than "book" –



## STRONG VERBS

Instead of "walk" –

shuffle, stride, float, saunter, stroll, amble, march, pace, hike, toddle. . .

## ACTIVE versus PASSIVE VERBS/VOICE

While we could be inspired by them, . . .

While they could inspire us, . . .

## PRECISE NOUNS

More precise than "book" –

Novel, manuscript, paperback, volume, hardcover, fiction, biography



# What is GOOD Writing?

**5. Avoid excessive adjectives and adverbs.**



# What is GOOD Writing?

5. Avoid excessive adjectives and adverbs.

## **6. Write Tight.**

- The single most effective way to improve writing
- Strong verbs and precise nouns help





**WRITE  
TIGHT**

**Compress to one word:**

**A small amount of...**

**At the present time...**

**...went on to say...**

**...turned in his resignation**





**WRITE  
TIGHT**

Compress to one word:

A small amount of...

At the present time...

...went on to say...

...turned in his resignation

Remove redundancy:

Shiny in appearance

Past memories

Cooperate together

During the course of the day



# TIGHTENING

**Before:** In a cautious manner the car went around the corner.

**After:** The car negotiated the corner.

**Before:** Does any of this sound familiar to you?

**After:** Sound familiar?

**Before:** Develop a regularly-scheduled Family Night – a night set aside just for the family.

**After:** Develop a regularly-scheduled Family Night.



# What is GOOD Writing?

## 7. Logical progression from idea to idea.

- Progression of story
- Storytelling - take the reader there
- Flow into the "A-Ha" of God's truth, the heart of the devotion



# What is GOOD Writing?

7. Logical progression from idea to idea.

- Progression of story
- Storytelling - take the reader there . . .
- Flow into the "A-Ha" of God's truth, the heart of the devotion

**8. Avoid "churchy" words or explain them.**



# What is GOOD Writing?

**9. Stay consistent with tense and person.**



# What is GOOD Writing?

9. Stay consistent with tense and person.
10. **Basics: spelling, punctuation, grammar.**



# What is GOOD Writing?

9. Stay consistent with tense and person.
10. Basics: spelling, punctuation, grammar.
11. **STOP when it's complete. Let the point make the point.**




# What is GOOD Writing?

9. Stay consistent with tense and person.
10. Basics: spelling, punctuation, grammar.
11. STOP when it's complete. Let the point make the point.
- 12. Revisit. Review. Refine.**

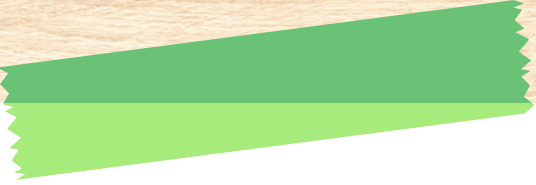


# Writing Resources



## Telling Writing (4th ed.)

by Ken Macrorie  
ISBN-13: 978-  
0867091533



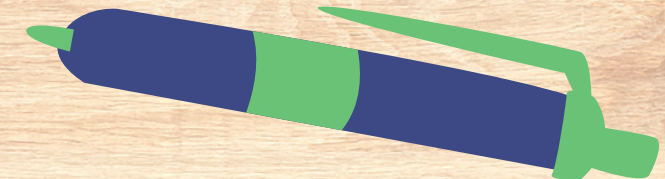
## Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process (2nd ed.)

by Peter Elbow  
ISBN: 978-0-19512018-9



## Elements of Style (4th ed.)

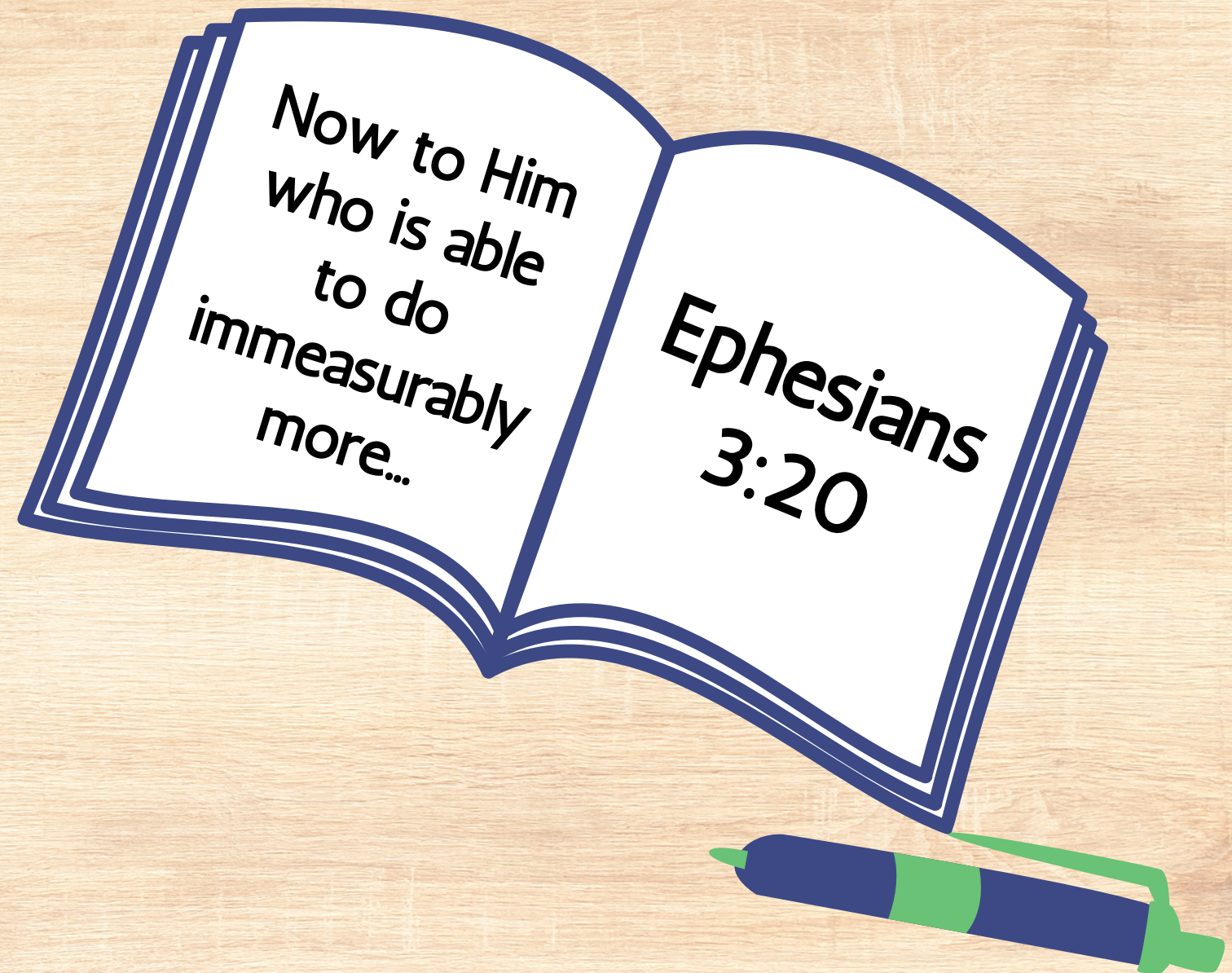
by Strunk & White  
ISBN-13: 978-  
0205309023





# The Power of Christ

It's both heartening and humbling to share of yourself through your devotion; trust that God will take your simple words and use them to touch another life for Christ.





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**www.debburma.com**







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