

Developing A Devotional

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There are lots of Bible Studies out there for women's groups and from time to time you may want to work your way through some of those in your ladies groups, but I've found that when it comes to speaking for ladies meetings and activities that most ladies enjoy what the Lord has given specifically to you. Women enjoy hearing personal experiences that they can relate to in their own lives.

Share your blessings and testimonies or what special Scriptures and life lessons that the Lord has put on your heart and touched you with. That's all a devotional is. It is some special Scripture and personal meaning that someone shares.

I have questions all the time about how to write a devotional. Just write down the things that the Lord has blessed you with or shown to you through your own devotional or quiet time or through your daily life. The Lord may show something to you not only when you are having your own quiet time but at any time during your day. Just look for the Lord in things around you and you'll be amazed at the spiritual lessons that God is teaching us through the little things and sometimes the big things in our lives.

Here are some practical things you can do to help you.

Keep On Hand:

- Your Bible
- Spiral Notebook. You may feel more comfortable typing at your computer, but there's nothing like sitting down and just writing out your thoughts with no distractions. It's too easy to stop and check your email or stop to surf when you work at the computer.
- Bible Concordance. If you don't have one, there are Bible

study tools that you can use online.

- Bible Dictionary. If you don't know what something is, look it up.
- Thesaurus. A thesaurus can keep you from overusing the same word or to find just the right word you need to express something a little clearer.

What You Can Do:

- Pray as you work on a devotional and allow for the Holy Spirit's leading.
- Use Scripture correctly. Use a concordance and look up other bible verses that relate to what you want to use. Make sure you don't use anything out of context. Read the passages preceding and after the text you've chosen to help you put things into perspective.
- Decide why you want to write a devotional. Is it for yourself? Is it to inspire? Is it to teach a Bible truth? Is it to inspire and encourage? Is it to comfort? Is it to a specific group such as moms, divorcees, young teens, etc. Figuring out these questions will help you pull your thoughts together as you get started.

Writing From Personal Bible Study:

- Write down the Scripture references that you've been reading in your own quiet time or choose a topic that you'd like to learn more about and do some Bible study on that before you begin writing.
- Make a list of the things that you've learned from those Scriptures you've read, studied, and meditated on.
- Make a list of how you want to apply it to your life.

Writing From Life Experiences:

- Has anything special happened in your life lately?
- Went on a trip?
- Have a trial hit you unexpectedly?
- Has a major event affected you?
- Did someone say something in passing that struck a chord in you?
- Has anything happened in your family that's affected you such as children leaving for college, children getting married, have a new baby or grandbaby on the scene, etc.
- How did God work in those circumstances?
- Did he teach you anything from what you went through or from what someone else went or is going through?

Writing From Everyday Happenings:

- Keep a notebook on hand or keep a pad on your fridge to jot yourself notes of things that inspire you throughout the day.
- Have your kids said anything lately that struck you funny or made you think of a biblical principle or truth?
- Have you had any interaction with friends or family that made you think of a biblical principle or truth?
- How is God working in your everyday life from the time you get up until you go to bed?
- How did God encourage you through the day?
- Were you discouraged throughout your day? Sometimes for me that is always a perfect time to pick up my Bible and search for something that gets me out of a rut. God's Word can change your outlook.
- Were you reminded of any Scriptures or biblical principles throughout your day?
- Did you see an unexpected blessing?
- Did you see God working in some way?

Make A Format:

- Begin writing by organizing what you've learned through your study and the things that have inspired you.
- When you first begin writing you may find yourself writing in long paragraphs. If you are going to share your devotion, break those up into points.
- A good rule to follow is a beginning or introduction, your middle or your general points, and an ending, which is a summary with some note to leave your audience with.
 - *Your Beginning* – State what your topic is or the main idea of what you want to share in an introduction. It may just be a verse you'd like to refer to.
 - *Your Middle* – State your general points. If you are sharing a story or lesson you learned, stick to the main points and not too many details.
 - *Your Ending* – Your conclusion is a summary of your lesson and that final note that you'd like to leave with your audience.

On A Personal Note:

My devotionals began as writing on my own and not for an audience. My questions at the end of my devotionals began as my final note to myself of basically, "What have I learned or how can I put this lesson into practice". That's how I personally began with the questions at the end of most of my devotionals and they are of course still questions for myself first before I share them with others.

You will have your own way of ending your devotionals. It may just be a condensed summary of what you've already shared, a final statement of what you learned, or what life lesson you want to put into place into your own life.

Stick To Your Audience:

The information on this page is basically for those who want to share their devotionals at local church women's groups or even just to write on their own as kind of a journal for themselves. For those wanting to write devotionals for publications, most publishers have a whole set of different guidelines and rules. Most Christian publishers are now conforming to the idea that you don't mention anything relating to Christianity or any key Christian catch phrases in devotionals. They want to sell and publish to the world in general and that's not my audience. I write my devotionals and articles geared for Christian Women. I want to relate to them, not the world audience in general.

I know I have those who come through the website who know nothing of Christianity but writing geared toward them is not the ministry that God has laid on my heart. My heart is concerned for Christian women who want a good meaty devotional now and then and want to grow in God's Word. I need a little more than fluff and a poem and a saying so I just imagine that other Christian women do too.

