

A Biblical Approach to Endless Inspiration

20+ Practical Ways to Overcome Writer's Block Once & For All



By Jana Carlson

20+ Practical Ways to Overcome Writer's Block Once & For All:
A Biblical Approach to Endless Inspiration
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Welcome!

You're probably reading this because you're a Christian writer familiar with the struggle of writer's block (a.k.a. creative stagnancy or lack of inspiration).

You're not alone and I'm here to help!

This resource will give you a biblical understanding of the struggle common to all writers, and the encouragement and inspiration you need to develop an infinite well of ideas from which you can write.



Hi! I'm Jana.

I'm a writer, Bible teacher, and mentor with a unique problem—I'm overwhelmed by writing inspiration. But this hasn't always been my experience.

Since I learned the alphabet as a preschooler, I've loved to write. As a child, I wrote stories and poetry for fun. I relished my high school English assignments. And when blogs were born in the

early 2000s, I started one as a hobby and posted daily. Writer's block wasn't an issue for me back then.

But when my roles as wife, mom of three, and ministry leader became more demanding, I took a 10-year break from writing. I slowly eased back into the writing life in 2017, starting a new blog and my career as a freelance writer. And for the first while, writer's block was a daily obstacle I had to overcome.

I turned to the Bible for answers, and God's Word did not disappoint!

I'm excited to share with you what I've learned from Scripture to prevent writer's block and enjoy limitless inspiration for writing. May you be encouraged and inspired to write more for God's glory!

Writer's Block & the Christian Writer



It's perplexing that a writer who writes for the glory of God could lack something to write about. Our God is the Creator of the universe, and we don't even have to look beyond our own bodies to find inspiration that displays His glory. Yet, for all of us, seasons of creative dryness are at least an occasional reality.

Causes of Writer's Block in the Christian Writer

Every writer's experience with writer's block is unique. Some writers have no idea what to write and stare at a blank page, no matter how diligently they try to fill it. Others continue to write, but feel creatively empty, lost, floundering. Writer's block can also be a temporary issue in the middle of a writing project—you just get stumped and can't seem to complete the piece in a satisfactory way.

Whatever writer's block looks like for you, the causes of it seem to be common to Christian writers. Let's look at a few.

Intimidated By the Power of Words

Sometimes the weight of responsibility that comes with representing Christ through the power of words can feel heavy. This is understandable considering Bible verses like these:

Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

Matthew 12:36–37 (ESV)

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Clearly, there’s wisdom in taking our time before sharing a piece of writing, but sometimes our hesitation, procrastination, or resistance to writing is a sign of a deeper issue. Keep reading.

Imposter Syndrome

All writers struggle with a sense of inadequacy, incompetency, or fear of failure at some point. It’s a tremendous encouragement to know that even heroes of our faith experienced this, too.

When God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, Moses was convinced God had chosen the wrong man. There were legitimate reasons why Moses shouldn’t be given such a great responsibility. He had real weaknesses. (See **Exodus 3–4**.)

The apostle Paul struggled with doubt and a sense of inadequacy. He obediently lived according to God’s call on his life, but he was “timid and trembling” as he did it (**1 Corinthians 2:3**).

What both of these men learned is that:

- Our weaknesses are not disqualifications to God.
- God intentionally chooses people who don’t seem like the natural choice so that He gets the glory (**1 Corinthians 1:25–30**).
- God is faithful—when He calls us to do something, He equips us with everything we need to carry out His purpose (**1 Peter 4:11**).

For some writers, knowing these truths is enough to cure their writer’s block. But let’s look at two more causes of creative stagnancy.

A Lack of Conviction

Another reason we might struggle with writer’s block is because we lack confidence in our words because we’re not writing from a place of conviction.

We may know our words are true and right, but we don't really know why. Our words are coming more from our heads than our hearts.

If you think this might be the root of your writer's block, keep reading.

The Well is Dry

The most common complaint of writer's block sufferers is that their words are the feeble scrapings from the bottom of the barrel—crumbs and crusts instead of fresh fruit. The well of inspiration has run dry.

The good news is that there's a solution for this problem. It can be fixed and it can be prevented. This is what we'll look at in the next section.

Where Do Our Words Come From?



Today, we write with pens, pencils, or keyboards. If our pens run out of ink, or the lead in our pencils is all used up, or our laptop battery dies, we can't write until we find a replacement or recharge.

In the old days, writers needed an inkwell to hold the ink they used to write with. If they ran out of ink, they simply couldn't write another word until they got more ink.

The key principle we must remember to cure writer's block is this:

You can't write from an empty inkwell.

Jesus said in **Matthew 12:34** that our words come from what's in our hearts. Our hearts are our inkwells. Whatever is inside our hearts is what will come out as words on the page.

James 3:12 (NLT)

"Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring."

This is an elementary concept, but we often forget about it and approach writing for God's glory as an exception to this very basic principle. We fill the inkwell of our hearts with things that are contrary to what we hope comes out. Or we allow our inkwells to dry up, then wonder why we run out of words or why we don't have the energy or inspiration we need to write well.

Our words are formed by what fills our hearts. This happens without effort on our part. It's automatic. But we can be intentional about the words we produce by being intentional about what we fill our hearts with.

If we desire to write words that glorify God, we must keep our spiritual inkwells full of God-glorifying ink. In the rest of this resource, we'll explore plenty of ways to do this.

3 Biblical Sources of Endless Inspiration



*"Sing to Him a new song...
For the word of the Lord is upright,
And all His work is done in faithfulness."
Psalm 33:3-4 (NASB)*

In **Psalm 33:3**, the psalmist exhorts us to sing a "new song" to the Lord. A new song requires fresh creativity—new words and melodies to praise, worship, and glorify God.

But where does our inspiration come from?

The word "for" at the beginning of **Psalm 33:4** means that what follows is the reason for our "new song". This passage suggests two possible sources of inspiration for this new creative work: (1) God's Word and (2) God's works.

Our own walk with God is another source.

Psalm 66:16 (ESV)

"Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul."

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

"...always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

So, according to the Bible, at least three sources of inspiration are:

1. God's Word
2. God's works
3. our own walk with Him

Keep reading for practical ways to apply this to your writing.

Practical Ways to Stay Inspired



How do we fill our inkwells with God-glorifying ink?

Let's get super practical.

- **If we want to write words that reflect God's Word**, we must consume God's Word. This means we need to actually read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Bible.
- **If we want to craft paragraphs and sentences of quality and excellence**, we need to consume quality, excellent writing.
- **If we want our vocabulary to exceed that of a third-grade student**, we need to consume content that's created for a more mature audience.

In short, be intentional about the kind of content you read—online and offline. Read the kind of words you want to write.

Let me give you a glimpse of what this looks like in my own life.

Time in God's Word is a priority for me. I take time each day to at least read the Bible, but preferably, to dig deeper with some studying and memorization. I meditate on it by writing notes about what I read or study—observing what it says, asking questions of the text, and applying what I've learned to my own life.

This practice has given me dozens of notebooks filled with priceless nuggets I've gleaned from God's Word. Those pages are an invaluable source of inspiration for my writing. Often, the words I share with my readers are words that first found their place on the pages of my devotional journals.

There's so much room for improvement in my writing! I have lots to learn, but limited time and resources. So I'm quite selective about the books and online content I read and watch. I choose books with high-quality writing, inspiring and remarkable characters, redemptive themes, and an admirable vocabulary.

For online content, I avoid scrolling through automatically generated feeds. Instead, I use Feedly to handpick the websites I want to consume content from, and I'm extremely stingy about the social media accounts I follow. (Most of the time, I don't even use social media. It's just not something I enjoy. It's a personal preference.)

Writing Inspiration Through Conversation

Apart from the writing inspiration that comes to me directly from my own time with the Lord in Bible study, I can safely say that everything else I write is a result of conversations I've had with other people—some writers, and some not.

That inspiration comes at the most unexpected times:

- A friend asks for advice, and as I'm sharing my thoughts, I realize my answer could turn into a blog post.
- A neighbor tells me about a recent experience and I'm reminded of an applicable biblical truth. This turns into a humorous anecdote for a short devotional.
- A blog reader sends me a question as a follow-up to something they read on my site. I write out my response as a new blog post.

These are just a few examples of how connecting with others leads to writing inspiration, but the possibilities are literally endless.

Writing Inspiration Via Other Writers

There are tremendous benefits of getting involved in a community of writers—whether it's an online community or people you can engage with in person.

To fully experience these benefits, vulnerability is required. Engage in conversation, ask questions, share about your experiences, and invite feedback and critique on your work.

More Practical Ways to Fill Your Inkwell

- Actively listen to music. Don't multitask. Actually listen to the words and how the music was composed. Try a whole album at once instead of a mixed playlist.
- When you're out and about, observe the people and situations around you instead of distracting yourself with your phone.
- Go outside and enjoy nature, observing God's handiwork.
- Spend time with people who inspire, challenge, and nurture you.
- Spend time with people who help you lighten up and laugh.
- Take a class or workshop—it doesn't even have to be writing-related.
- **Teach** a class or workshop—I get **so** much writing inspiration from interacting with my workshop attendees! Literally every single class.
- Join or host a book club.
- Submit your work for publication and embrace the editorial process.
- Go to your public library and browse sections unfamiliar to you.
- Join an online writing community.
- Join or start a local writing group.
- Participate in a Bible study group.
- Indulge in hands-on, active hobbies and activities like gardening, photography, or hiking.
- Rest.
- Journal.
- Read poetry and fiction even if you don't write in those genres.

What fills your inkwell?

Schedule time in your calendar to make it happen.

20 Writing Prompts



Remember the three sources of inspiration suggested by the Bible—God’s Word, God’s works, and your own walk with God. Pick one, and you should have plenty of material to write about! Here are some ideas to get you started.

1. What has God done for you?
2. How has He/His Word changed you/your life?
3. What has God taught you?
4. What do you want to learn more about?
5. What is something about God you wish everyone knew?
6. What has God helped you to overcome? How?
7. Who inspires you? Why? What do they inspire you to do/become?
8. When you find a quote that’s meaningful to you, write about it. Why is it meaningful to you? What do you like about it? Is it thought-provoking? Do you disagree with it? Why?
9. Write about what you believe and why—on specific topics/issues.
10. What did you learn from your pastor’s Sunday sermon or any other ministry event?
11. Write a journalistic report of a ministry event, such as a conference.
12. Who has had the greatest impact on your faith? How?
13. Write a book review of a specific book in the Bible.
14. Tell the story of how you became a Christian.
15. Choose an attribute of God and write about how He has demonstrated that to you in your own life.
16. Select a non-fiction book on a topic you’re interested in writing about. Look at the table of contents. Do any of the chapter titles inspire you?
17. How has God used your weakness for His glory?
18. How has God proven His faithfulness to you?
19. What’s your favorite hymn? Why?
20. What’s the most memorable answer to prayer you’ve received?

Did you enjoy this resource?

I'd love to connect with you and provide you with more encouragement, inspiration, and resources to help you write for God's glory!

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