



SELF EDITING

Essential Tips for Success

FIRST THINGS FIRST!

- 1. Pray before you write**
- 2. Pray before you read your manuscript**
- 3. Pray as you edit**
- 4. Pray as you listen to editors or other critiques**

WHY SELF EDIT?

- 1. Editors are busy! They don't have time to rewrite your whole manuscript.**
- 2. Busy editors can look at the first couple of pages of your manuscript and tell if they have time to publish your manuscript.**
- 3. If you want to be published, always present a clean, tight, and captivating manuscript.**

YOUR FIRST DRAFT IS NEVER THE FINISHED PRODUCT

- 1. Let your creative juices flow and write freely**
- 2. Do not stop to make corrections or make it sound better**
- 3. This is hard!**
- 4. Put your writing aside for a few hours or better yet a few days.**
- 5. Then pick it up again to edit.**

STEPS IN SELF EDITING

- 1. Run spell check and make corrections (spell check is not always correct!)**
- 2. Read your manuscript out loud from a printed copy earmarking the mistakes.**
- 3. Make corrections on your computer.**
- 4. Read your manuscript from your computer for grammatical and spelling errors. Make corrections as you go.**
- 5. Then read your manuscript for punctuation. Look up anything that you are not sure about.**
- 6. Check and recheck Scripture passages. Chapter, verse, and correct wording according to the version you have chosen to use. Document on the copyright page.**

COMMON ERRORS

- 1. Make a list of the errors that you commonly make in writing. Check your manuscript and correct accordingly**
- 2. Check for words that you tend to use too often. Replace with another word. Use Review/Thesaurus on your computer.**
- 3. Do not waste words. Tighten your writing by cutting out unnecessary words.**
- 4. Read and check for words that will date the material. For example: Two weeks ago such and such happened.**
- 5. Check for double spaces between words and at the end of sentences. Use find and replace on your toolbar.**
- 6. Use words that people understand. Don't try to impress with your vocabulary.**

WORDS TO AVOID/WORDS TO USE

That

up

Use Few Adjectives

Just

down

Use Few Adverbs

A lot

firstly

Show/Don't tell

All

secondly

Use strong nouns

Every

Thirdly

Use strong verbs

Always

is am are

Very

Really

FORMAT YOUR MANUSCRIPT PROFESSIONALLY

- 1. Send your manuscript in a simple word document**
- 2. Double space using 12 point Times New Roman font**
- 3. Single space after sentences.**
- 4. The first paragraph of each chapter is not indented.**
- 5. Number every page. Insert a header with your name and title of the book on every page.**
- 6. Do not bind or staple your manuscript if printed.**
- 7. Sending by email is the typical preferred method.**

STYLE GUIDE

- 1. Use the style guide that your publishing house requires. It may be listed on your contract. If you don't have a contract, it may be listed on their website.**
- 2. Most publishers use Chicago Manual of Style. Some use The Christian Writer's Manual of Style.**
- 3. The online version is \$41/ year. You will always have the latest version.**
- 4. The hard copy of the Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition is \$65 or less.**

CHECK READABILITY STATISTICS

- 1. Flesch Reading Ease**
- 2. Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level**
- 3. Word Count**
- 4. Passive Sentences**

OTHER EYES ON YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Critique groups are valuable. Asking other people with different skills to proof your writing with a different view.

- **1. Proof for correct theology**
- **2. Proof for grammar, spelling**
- **3. Proof for clarity of content**
- **4. Pay attention to comments.**
- **5. Different personalities will perceive the meaning of your writing according to their personality.**
- **6. Proof for Scripture**

LISTEN TO CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

- 1. Learn from constructive criticism**
- 2. Develop thick skin**
- 3. Remember the book doesn't belong to you! It belongs to the Lord. You want it to be the very best you can possibly produce.**