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INTENTIONAL
WAYS TO
INVITE GOD
INTO THE
WRITING
PROCESS

Ava Hope



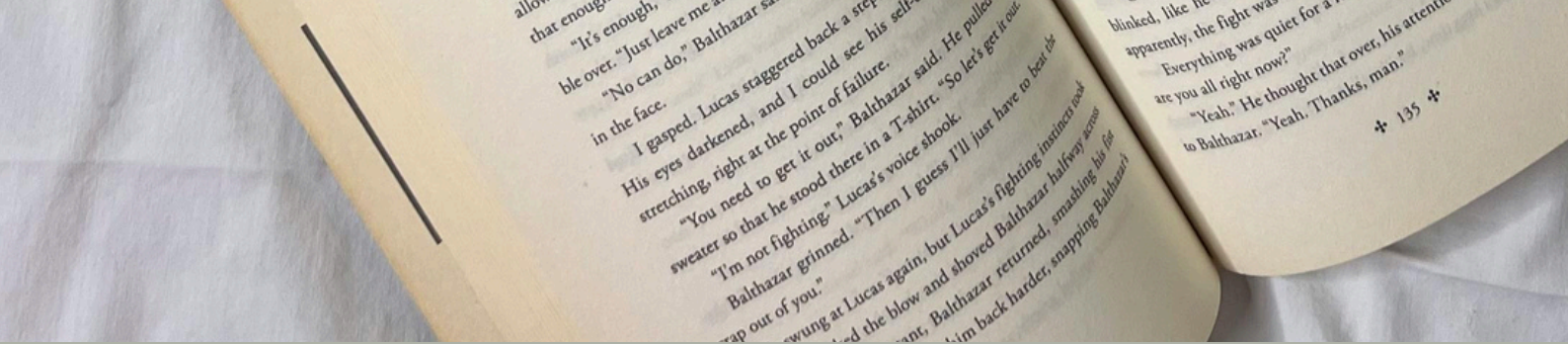
Writing with God is a journey, and is something that has changed both my perspective and my stories for the better. And if you're anything like me, you also have the same desire: to not only glorify and write *for* God but to write *with* Him as well.

There was a time when I didn't write with God, and let me tell you, writing solo ran me into a rut far too many times. It never brought me the satisfaction I was looking for and I never felt good enough. Every criticism I received and every feeling of writer's block crushed me, and as a result, I was consumed with perfectionism. I often felt like I was disappointing God or letting Him down. Writing became more than something I loved to do. My whole identity was wrapped around whether or not I was a good writer.

It wasn't until God met me in a very real way when I was editing a difficult project that I began to realize how independent I had become instead of trusting and surrendering to the One who gave me a love for writing in the first place.

Inviting God into my writing process has changed everything for me, and it continues to.

So, here are five things that have helped me recenter on Christ, invite Him into the writing process, and glorify Him with my words in an intentional way. I hope this post is an encouragement and help to you!



1 | WORSHIP

Steffany Gretzinger, a worship leader that I look up to, was asked in an interview, "How can you stand in front of thousands of people?" Her answer has always stuck with me. She said, "Because it comes back to the One."

Did you know that your writing can be a form of worship?

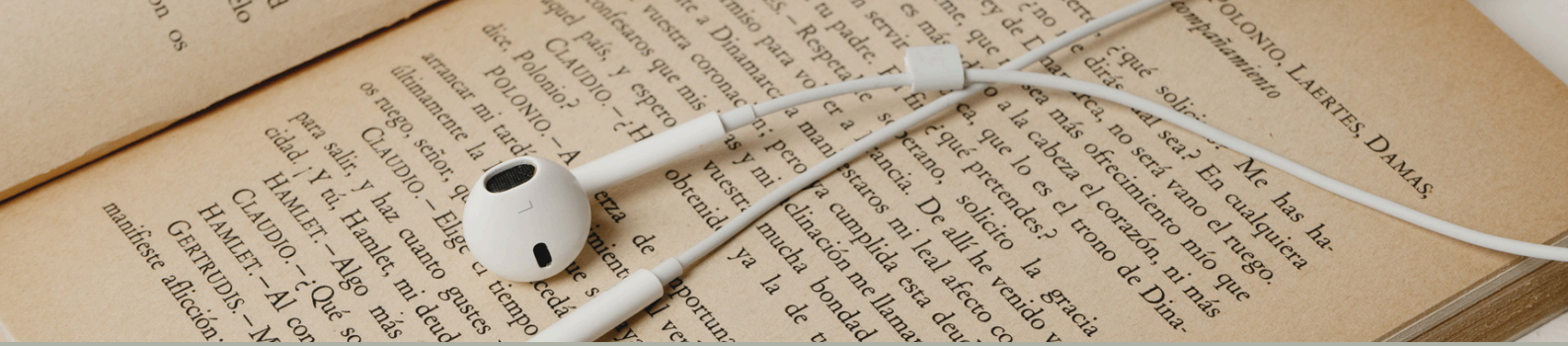
Worship is a heart posture of gratitude, awareness, delight, and praise for Jesus and all that He has done. You don't have to be in church singing with the praise and worship team to worship God. Everything we do should bring honor and praise to Jesus.

You can absolutely worship and touch God with your writing. However, I really believe this comes down to pursuing a deep and intimate relationship with Christ outside of our writing and letting our art be an overflow of being in that secret, sacred place with Jesus.

Being in the season where it's just you and God writing together with no one else to see is a beautiful thing, and living and writing from that secret place will prepare you for when your writing gets more recognition.

Recall all that He has done for you and all that He is doing as you pour out your heart to Him through your writing. Minister to the Lord first, by giving him joy and admiration with your words. It's not about you and me. It's not about our writing.

It's about Jesus. It's about the One. He is the reward.



2 | PRAYER

Prayer used to be something I took lightly, but God has been teaching me recently how powerful and necessary it is. I find that whenever I pray before I write, I both feel better and write better. Prayer is a reminder to me of how much I need God and how holy, mighty, and beautiful He is. It also helps me recognize and trust in His enoughness.

It's also powerful to pray against certain strongholds in writing such as perfectionism, writer's block, distractions, and discouragement.

The more time I've spent with Jesus, the more I've learned that prayer is not a religious practice, but a genuine conversation with God. Talking to my Creator as a friend (or my writing buddy, if you will) has given me greater confidence both as a person and a writer. It has also reassured me that I am never alone and that He is working out the details behind the scenes.

So pray over your writing. Pray over other authors. Pray that the right words would flow and that God would give you a heart posture of grace and humility. Pray for courage and discipline. And most of all, pray for His will to be done in your writing above your own.



3 | IMMERSION

I've found that the more I read God's Word the more it seeps into my mind, heart, and my writing. Writers are told to read in their genre to gain experience and ideas, but what if we let the Bible be the main book that was fueling and inspiring our stories?

One of my high school classes was a survey and study of the New Testament. I honestly thought it was going to be boring, but I was so wrong. My eyes were opened in an entirely new way to the Bible, its timeline, and the literary techniques used throughout.

I have learned so much about the storytelling craft and I have improved as a writer just by reading the Bible, by paying close attention to the language and literary devices being used, and by asking the Holy Spirit to help me understand. God has shown me verses and stories that were just what I needed to shape my plot and characters, and He also uses His Word to refine, strengthen, and encourage me to keep going.



4 | INCLUSION

My mindset completely shifted when I stopped just acknowledging God and began to actively and intentionally include Him in my writing. And I am still working on this. As I said before, writing with God is a journey and a daily act of surrender.

Talk with God about your writing! Process ideas with Him and ask Him what He thinks. Rant about your story and work through plot holes with Him. Celebrate the joys of writing together, and let Him carry you through the hard and discouraging days. He is our writing buddy, after all.

One week, I was so frustrated with my writing that I honestly wanted to give up. I asked God what He thought of my writing and what He wanted me to do to move forward. He led me to 2 Corinthians 12:9 which says, "My Grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness...". It was exactly what I needed at the time.

I've found that there is nothing more enjoyable and rewarding than creating with the Creator. On the days when I truly make an effort to invite God into my writing and when I'm mindful of His presence, I experience a deep sense of purpose and joy.

WHAT ARE SOME ACTIVE WAYS THAT
YOU CAN INCLUDE JESUS IN YOUR
CREATIVE LIFE AND THOUGHT PROCESS?



5 | RECOGNITION

The best stories are the ones that point to The Greatest Story. That is, the one you and I are living and the one God is writing. Recognizing who God is and what he has done for you is a powerful way to center your writing on Him.

Being mindful of how God is working in my life and letting that influence and infuse my writing has changed everything for me. It not only gave my stories more meaning but the struggles and questions God brought me through were able to reach and touch other people.

Think of a difficult time in your life that God used for good. How did He bring you through it? I know I can think of countless in my life -- big and small. Those circumstances are precious moments that can bleed into your stories and offer hope and redemption to others.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope this post was helpful for you and gave you ideas to more intentionally create with our Creator, and glorify God with your writing process. With Jesus, writing never has to be pure drudgery or monotony because each day with Him is a new adventure. One of peace, promise, and fulfillment.



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Ava Hope is a novelist, avid tea drinker, and daughter of The King with a love for fairytales and wild adventure. What started out as stories scribbled and stapled together on printer paper has turned into a passion for sowing seeds of light and hope with her writing. When she's not typing up fantasy novels in the mountains of Colorado, you can usually find Ava reading way past her bedtime, hunting for Narnia in wardrobes, or making yet another cup of tea. Connect with her on her website at www.avahopeauthor.com where she discusses all things whimsy, faith, and storytelling.