

Giving God Lessons in Writing

"To be or not to be, that is the question," not only of William Shakespeare, but of writers as well. To be a good writer, God will write with his own free will, but to be a great writer, God will write with the steps of the Composition Process.

There are many steps in the Composition Process. These steps will take time and patience, but in the end his piece of work could become a masterpiece. Only if God will listen to the words Justin has to say, he could very well be an even more effective writer than he already is today!

"God? Are you there?" Justin asked in a shy voice.

"Yes, Justin, I am here for you," God said in his thunderous voice.

"God, you're a good writer and all, but you could use a little help for the next book you write," Justin winced, expecting a great bolt of lightning to strike him.

"Oh?" God spoke in a surprised voice. He had not expected a human like Justin to speak up to him about writing. "So, Justin, what do you mean the Bible needs a little work?"

"Well, your holiness, first off, your book, the Bible, should have been written in a few different forms. You see, when you wrote the book, you wrote it for the older folks so they could teach their children about you; however, you should have foreseen what I am about to tell you.

As you know, our children are more independent and read for themselves at earlier ages . . ." Justin began to tell God how he should have sized up his audience. Justin began telling God that if God had written the Bible more understandable for the children and older folks as well, the book would have been even greater. He told God of the six questions he should have asked himself before he started writing the book:

1. What are the educational level, age, social class, and economic status of the audience I want to reach?
2. Why will this audience read my writing? To gain Information, learn my views on controversial issues, enjoy my creative flair, or be entertained?
3. What attitudes, needs, and expectations do they have?
4. How are they likely to respond to what I say? Can I expect them to be neutral, opposed, or friendly?
5. How much do they know about my topic?
6. What kind of language will communicate with them most effectively?

Justin began telling God why these questions will work out better for him the next time he writes a book. "See, God, knowing your audience will reveal to you how you should write, not saying that you didn't know who your audience was when you wrote the book or anything."

God laughed. "Tell me more my child."

Justin began explaining to God that he has to understand the assignment before he gets started. If he hadn't understood the assignment when he started writing it, the book would have been a disaster. He explained to God that when he understands the assignment there would be a lot less confusion in the long run. He has to consider the project his.

The next point Justin made to God was that he has to Zero in on a Topic. "God, you want something that is going to be fresh. Don't waste your time on topics that are already over used." Justin told God that he should select a topic that lets him draw upon his unique experiences, insights, and fresh perspectives so the audience doesn't get bored too quickly.

"I am glad that you are telling me this. You, Justin, are the first person to speak up to me."

"Well, thank you, God, but I am not finished . . . yet." Justin began explaining to God some strategies for finding a topic. He told God to tap into his personal resources, past experiences, and feelings. The benefits of these things are that they are fresh, and no one has experienced creating a universe quite like God has. Justin told God that if he cannot think of anything he should open a newspaper, magazine, or watch television. Justin explained to God how that would be a good thing to possibly write about in the future.

Justin told God how he should keep a journal. Even though Justin already knew God is omniscient, he figured he would tell God anyway. Justin explained to God that he should write in any kind of notebook that appeals to him. It's not the package; it's the content that matters. Justin explained that God should write in his journal on a regular basis, at least five times a week for 10 to 20 minutes each time.

"Well, Justin, as you know, I have all eternity up here so I will keep that point in mind!" God cracked a thunderous laugh.

"You should always sort out your subject. Break your broad subject into categories and subcategories," Justin explained. Justin also told God that he should always keep these eight questions in mind before he starts writing:

1. Can I define my subject?
2. Does it break into categories?
3. If so what comparisons can I make among these categories?
4. If the subject is divided into parts, how do they fit together?
5. Does my subject have uses? What are they?
6. What are examples of the subject?
7. What are causes and origins of my subject?
8. What impact has my subject had?

Justin told God that if he followed this point, he would be able to explain more clearly on each point in his essay or writing.

"Very good, Justin. Where are you learning all of these wonderful strategies?"

Justin replied, "WWTC. In Written Communications with John Grass."
Justin began to move along to his next point. Justin explained that Free Writing was a very good way of getting ideas onto paper. He explained, "Turn yourself loose for five minutes or so. If you get stuck, keep writing even if it's nothing! Then pick out the points you wrote and expand on them."

Justin explained to God that he has learned that he should gather information such as facts, ideas, examples, observations, and memories from different sources. Then Justin explained to God that he should organize his information. An outline is one of the best ways to do this. If God has his information organized, the reader will not be lost in reading the essay. Justin explained to God that after he has his information organized, he should start writing his first draft. Justin told God that he should follow these guidelines when writing a first draft:

1. Stack your thesis statement, flexible notes, and written plan in front of you.
2. Skip every other line.
3. Write quickly and concentrate on content and organization.
4. Take breaks at logical dividing points.

Here are some specific suggestions:

1. Rewrite your thesis statement at the top of your first page to break the ice and build momentum.
2. Write your first paragraph.
3. Follow the plan as you write.
4. Look over the supporting details.

"I also learned that you should Prepare to Revise your essay."
Justin explained to God that he has to read his essay over three times. Each time he has to look for something different. Justin explained that the first time he reads his paper he looks at ways he could improve the development of the essay as a whole. The second time he reads it he looks at how he can strengthen his paragraph structure and development, and the last time Justin reads his essay he looks at how he can sharpen his sentences and word usage. "These benefit my essay by making it more concise and effective," Justin told God.

"Speaking of being concise, I'd like to speak a little on that right now." Justin began telling God how to sharpen his sentences and words. Justin began telling him that being concise will let his audience understand him better. When he sharpens his word structure, he can sound more professional.

Justin also explained to God that he should consider his whole essay by using the F.A.C.T. system.

- F- does the essay FIT together.
- A- ADD appropriate sentences, paragraphs or pages if necessary.
- C- CUT away clutter.

Wink: An Online Journal | 5
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thing I wish for the most is world peace."

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