



## *How to Write a Book Without Breaking Your Marriage Vows*

VOWS TO KEEP

### Personal Homework

1. It's clear few things in life test our Christian faith more than the intimacy of our marriage. In marriage, we are close enough to each other's personal preferences and sin on a daily basis that it's easy to be more Christ-like to a perfect stranger.
  - a. The Bible describes these tendencies in 2 Timothy 3:1-9. Jot down any words/phrases from these verses that you feel represent what you've been seeing in your home in the last year. For each one you write down, determine if you see this as a sin issue or not.
  - b. On the flip side, 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, among other verses, describes what our love should be building. Write down as many of the commands of Christ that deal with relationships as you can (use the internet or your Bible concordance if needed!). Here are a few to get you started: **Respect, forgive, build up, speak life, love your neighbor more than yourself, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**.
  - c. Circle the ones that you find difficult to live out within your marriage. Put a rectangle around the ones that are especially hard when it comes to your **writing**.
  - d. Ask God to help you understand His love for you, His character, and His promises so that you can love your spouse like He asks.
  
2. Is writing a fun **hobby** I enjoy or is it something God is calling me to as an **extension of my spiritual gifts**?
  - a. Could you definitively say you would be in sin if you did not complete the writing project you are working toward?
  - b. Read the passages in God's Word that speak to spiritual gifts.
    - i. Romans 12:6-8

- ii. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
  - iii. 1 Corinthians 12:28
    - 1. Here's an additional resource that breaks each gift down <https://www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-gifts-list.html>
  - c. This is the time to be **authentically honest** before the Lord.
    - i. Pray about how God has gifted you, ask Him how you can best serve His Kingdom with your gifts, specifically ask Him if writing is something He has enabled you to do or something He is calling you to do.
3. Whether your writing is a hobby or a calling, it needs to be **prioritized correctly**. Here are a few things you can do:
- a. For an entire week, document everything you spend time on.
    - i. Use your phone to help with this. How much time are you spending on certain apps?
  - b. If time with God, time with spouse, time with kids are not on the list, then add them in BEFORE you factor in writing time/author development.
  - c. For everything else on the list: If it's not something for eternity, then it can go.
  - d. Replace the time you would have spent on watching Netflix or scrolling through SM with writing and see your skills and ministry take off!
  - e. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom on doing a No Media Month. Set aside entertainment for Kingdom work and see what He will do!
4. Now make a **pie graph** of how you are currently spending your **time/efforts/passions**.
- a. If you could change how things are divided, what would you do differently? (i.e. would you increase writing? If so, what would you decrease?)
  - b. In the pie graph, how much are you spending your time/efforts/passions on your marriage?
    - i. Are you evaluating your investment in your marriage based upon what's meaningful to you?

- ii. Ask God to show you where your investments need to change or shift, especially as you go through this next section...

5. Remember:

- a. What we **believe** sets our **standard**. And when boiled down, our standards are really just what we **expect**.
- b. What we **expect** often turns into a **demand**, especially if we don't see things done to our standards.
- c. Our **demands** reveal what we feel we have a **right** to.
- d. What we feel we have a **right** to is what we think we **have to have** to be satisfied, fulfilled, **happy**.
- e. What we think will make us happy is what we place in the highest **priority** in our lives - and that becomes what we **worship**. Basically, what we allow to **control** our lives and our homes.
- f. Here's the **progression**: Belief → Standard → Expectation → Demand → Right → Priority → Worship
  - i. Where would you **peg your writing** on this progression?
  - ii. Do you need to examine your **belief** about your writing?
  - iii. If you know you've been called to write to build God's kingdom, has your writing gotten into the territory of **standards** that aren't being met?
    - 1. If so, reexamine your **standards** before God. Are they His or yours?
  - iv. Do you **expect** too much of your family when it comes to their support? How do you react when your **expectations** are not met?
    - 1. A fight usually originates from a **demand** one person is placing on the other and the other person either not wanting to meet that demand OR have their demands met first.
    - 2. Read James 4:1-3. If you've been **demanding** to get what you want, willing to kill your relationship over it, make it right with your spouse and with your Lord.
  - v. Are you **demanding** they give you what you think will make you **happy**?

- vi. For many of us, we are looking to the next contract, review goal, word count to make us feel **satisfied**. Let's always turn to the Lord for that ultimate satisfaction and when the accolades and opportunities do come, we give the glory to God to not begin to **worship** these things.
- vii. Is writing **controlling** my life as opposed to God **controlling** my life? Is anything above God's place in my life?
- g. A key part to this is bringing your **priorities** to the Lord with an open hand. *God, you can reorder things, take away things, add whatever is needed! My heart and life are Yours.*

6. How can you help your spouse **live on mission** this week?

- a. Write down **2** options
- b. Then ask them how you can be their **champion** in what God has asked them to do.

7. Read Romans 12:9-21.

- a. What about this passage stands out to you as a married author?
- b. This week, what principles in this passage can you apply?
- c. How can you honor your spouse above yourself this week?
  - i. Be specific and set a reminder in your phone to carry it out.

8. Practical Ways to Involve Your Family in Your Writing

- a. #1 Ask them to pray **with** you and **for** you about whether this is a calling or hobby.
  - i. Letting them know that you want to be within God's will on this will help them see you're not just trying to grab something for YOU...You're trying to be Spirit led for God's Kingdom
- b. #2 Go to them for counsel.
  - i. Don't assume you will know what they're going to say in advance. Go with a humble, teachable heart and if they step on your toes, forgive and respond with love.
- c. #3 Brainstorm with them...
  - i. (Non-Fiction): concepts, common questions, and use real-life situations (with their permission)
  - ii. (Fiction): story lines, characters and problems they will face, history, etc.

- d. #4 Base your characters off of a family member or use their name as one of the characters or dedicate the book to them.
- e. #5 Ask a family member if you can dictate to them while they type. (This also leads to brainstorming together).
- f. #6 Ask them to read the book to look for errors – and let them know you want their honest feedback.
- g. #7 Update them often with your progress. Keep them in the loop!
- h. #8 Answer their questions honestly.
  - i. Sometimes writing can be a little bit like showing someone our artwork for the first time. Don't let pride or embarrassment prevent you from sharing
- i. #9 Encourage them in their own writing journeys.
  - i. Let them know you're on the same level as them, just learning and wanting your writing to make a difference in someone's heart and life.

## To Discuss With Your Spouse

- **Forgiveness**
  - If I've treated my writing as a **calling** when in fact it's a **hobby**, consider if I need to seek forgiveness from my spouse for deprioritizing them.
  - If I've treated my writing as a **hobby** when in fact it is a **calling**, consider if I need to seek forgiveness from God.
  - If there's a "right" I feel my spouse hasn't been giving to me, ask them to forgive me for holding feelings of bitterness or resentment.
  - If there's been a tug-of-war between what I want and what my spouse wants, ask them to forgive me for trying to win the fight. Let them know I want what God wants.
- **Priorities**
  - Share your thoughts on whether you feel your writing is a hobby or a calling and collect their feedback. Now is a time to ask for your spouse's help in being obedient to God...as a follower of Christ, a husband/wife, a parent, and an author for HIS glory.

- Show your spouse your list and your pie chart. Ask them to add anything that you may have missed.
- Then ask them to help you weed out anything that doesn't belong to make space for what counts.
- **Accountability**
  - Ask your spouse to be your writing accountability partner
    - Help me correctly assess my margin to write
    - Keep me accountable in making forward progress
    - Keep an eye out for when I am beginning to make writing too high a priority
    - Keep me accountable to stay in step with the Spirit and not run out ahead of God
- **Getting the Family Involved**
  - Share some of the practical struggles
    - Would you like to be involved? (i.e. brainstorm, be a character, stenographer, feedback and editing, counsel, prayer that I am Spirit-led, etc.)
  - How can the two of us work together to take God's Word even further as a united team?

## For Further Study and Encouragement

- **If you want to dive deeper into some of these heart topics, subscribe to VowsToKeep Radio (available on all major podcast networks: [Apple Podcast](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Audible](#), [Spotify](#)).**

### **Here are a few episodes that tie into your homework:**

- Powerful Pursuit: What Paradise Are You Pursuing? (Part 3) :: [Ep. [115](#)]
- Powerful Pursuit: Priorities (Part 5) :: [Ep. [117](#)]
- Powerful Pursuit: From Observer to Champion (Part 2) :: [Ep. [114](#)]
- Keeping Score In Marriage :: [Ep. [79](#)]
- Spiritual Gifts (5 Part Series) :: [Ep. [62](#)-66]

- Happy Wife, Happy Life: Fact or Fiction? :: [Ep. [58](#)]
- How To Love Your Wife Like You Want To (2 Part Series) :: [Ep. [23-24](#)]
- How to Get Your Husband To Engage With You (2 Part Series) :: [Ep. [121-122](#)]
- **Like our Social Media Pages ([www.facebook.com/vowstokeep](http://www.facebook.com/vowstokeep) and [www.instagram.com/vowstokeep](http://www.instagram.com/vowstokeep) for:**
  - Weekly Prayer Prompts for your marriage
  - Biblical Marriage counsel at your fingertips
  - Scripture you can apply to your marriage in the moment
  - VowsToKeep Radio snippets to keep you on track
  - Event and ministry updates
- Visit [www.vowstokeep.com](http://www.vowstokeep.com) for details about our unique approach to couples' counseling, a searchable resource library for your unique marriage needs, our latest podcast episodes, events and other resources for your marriage!
- If you're like me (Tracy), you love to read a good love story, especially one where God's Word is at the center and you turn the last page having taken God's truth into your heart, ready to apply it to your own relationships!
  - **Read my historical, romantic, suspense trilogy, *Roots Run Deep* and be encouraged!**



- *Roots Reawakened* <https://amzn.to/3FDg4PT>
- *Roots Revealed* <https://amzn.to/3bXzcM8>
- *Roots Redeemed* <https://amzn.to/3FxsxF4>

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