



Be Inspired!

Central Houston IWA!
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Forward

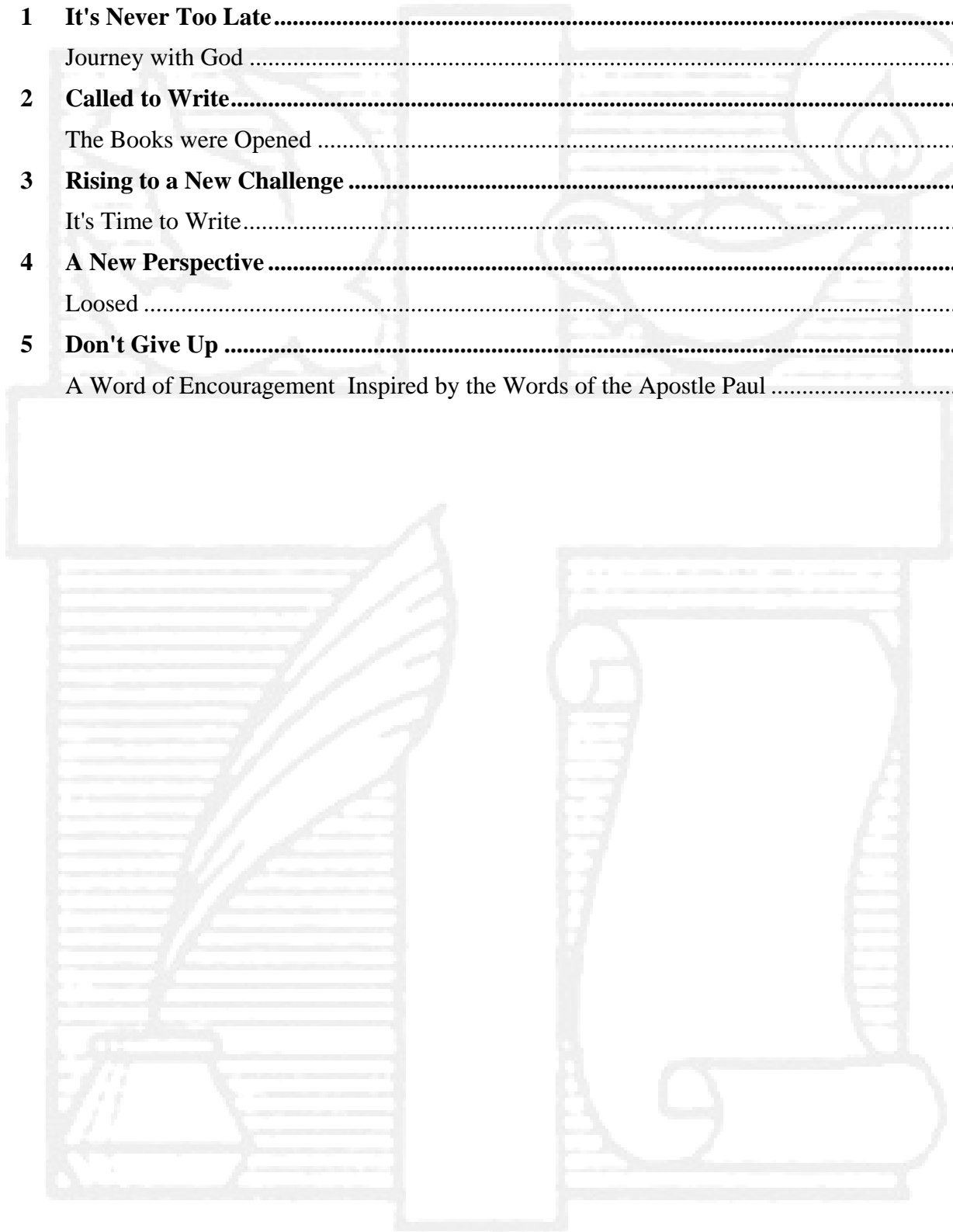
The members of the Central Houston chapter of Inspirational Writers Alive (IWA!) are a dedicated group of Christian writers with a passion for helping God's people rise up and fulfill their potentials in Christ Jesus. As the Lord has inspired us and called us forth to deliver His Word, so too would we like to inspire you to grab a hold of the vision that God has for you. Thus with 2015 now stretched out as a blank sheet before us, we pray that this collection of inspirational thoughts will broaden your horizons and light a passion in you to answer God's call on your life. May you walk in the revelation of your purpose, and may faith clear your way before you! Amen.

"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher."
(2 Timothy 1:8-11, NASB)



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1 It's Never Too Late

Time marches on relentlessly, trampling the flower beds of our well-laid plans, never seeking our permission before traipsing across our property and making off with our dreams as its booty. But then, why should it give heed to our "No Trespassing" signs when the sails of its every tic and every toc are filled with the breath of God? If then time is sent from the Father, how can it be charged with a crime?

Indeed we find that in time's pillaging all things temporal grow dim: both our plans and our offenses, our immediate cravings and our pain. And in their place we are filled with eternity in God. And somehow God always manages to snatch our dreams before they are swept away, and He restores them to us, freshly polished with a little added chrome, and at just the right... *time.*

Journey with God

By Martha Rogers

Although writing and telling stories have been a passion since I was a child, publication never seemed to be an option. I had no idea how to even begin the process. High school English teachers and college professors told me that I had a gift for putting words on paper, but I still had a bit of a problem with mechanics. That problem led me to minor in English along with my Home Economics major. Then my love of writing led to a Master's Degree in Education with an emphasis on creative writing and teaching composition.

My first novel was born during my freshman year at Baylor University in the spring of 1954, and I still have the original – yellowed pages and all. Then life intervened with a husband and three sons and a teaching career that spanned thirty-six years. All this time I wrote short stories and jotted down ideas for novels.

Looking back, I can see God's hand working all through those years of childhood, college, and adulthood when my imagination took flight in stories for my paper dolls and baby dolls, and my file drawer filled with poems, short stories, and notes for novels scribbled on yellow tablets. God knew from the beginning where my journey would end, but it would take many, many years for the dream to be fulfilled.

After a wonderful novella with DiAnn Mills, Janice Thompson, and Kathleen Y'Barbo was published in 2007, I thought my time had come. However, God's ideas and plan differed from mine and nothing happened. Hope for anything more than the novella, articles in magazines, and stories in compilations all but dissolved when my seventieth birthday rolled around. Who wants to take a chance on an author in the winter season of life? My agent, Tamela Hancock Murray, encouraged me to not stop, and she continued to submit my proposals.

All that time I asked God if He knew how old I was getting and how late it was. Of course He knew. I simply wasn't ready. God used the next two years to teach me more about writing and what it took to be offered a contract.

That's when Debbie Marrie at Strang, now Charisma, came into the picture. The company had decided to step into historical fiction for their Realms fiction line. She liked my story and took a

chance on this older-than-usual writer, and on my seventy-third birthday offered a contract for *Becoming Lucy*. God placed my manuscript on the right desk at the right time to begin the fulfillment of my dream. Since that time, thirteen novels and two additional novellas have been published.

My goal now is to write as much as possible in the time left whether it's one more year or ten more years. I want to get all the stories in my head "out there." With two bouts of cancer behind me, the Lord has a purpose for keeping me around, and I don't want to miss any opportunity.

Patience has never been a virtue of mine, but God has taught me to wait for His timing; His timing is always perfect. He taught me to persevere even when hopelessness tried to set in. He reminded me that His plans for me were filled with hope. My prayers were heard and answered when God chose the right people and the right time.

After seventy-eight years, a lot of life is under the bridge as well as so many experiences of God's grace and mercy in my life. Through my stories others can see how great our God is.

So my writing advice for the day is to pray, be patient, and persevere on your journey. If writing and being a published author is God's plan for your life, He will make it happen.

2 Called to Write

When we are able to rise above the chronological view of life with all of its distractions to embrace God's Will for each moment, our perspective shifts to an eternal view where time is superseded by the reality of God. Time no longer dictates what we can accomplish because God's eternal Word forges our opportunities. And if we have eternity in our heart, then as writers, eternity is what we put on our page.

Are you called to write? Is your pen filled with the timeless ink of God's Word? Then let it flow and open blind eyes to the reality of eternal life.

The Books were Opened

By Donna J. Branham

[12] *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”* [15] *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”* (Rev. 20:12 & 15 [KJV])

Books. Father, You have books that will be opened in heaven. They are very important books – so important that life and death depend on the contents of those books. People’s works have been recorded in those books, and You said in Your Word that “the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” The most important book of all is the Lamb’s book of life. That book contains names; people’s names are recorded, verifying their salvation, which means they will have eternal life.

I have heard You tell me to write: “Write a book.”

“What Lord, do You want me to write?” You have answered, “Listen! Listen to My Words.” And therein lies the problem. I need to listen to Your Words. I have found that blocking out the noise around me is a challenge. Noise is all around me – noises like: “Your grandchild wants a Barbie doll princess dress”; “The computer crashed”; and “Company is coming. Fix a delectable Thanksgiving dinner.” Some of these noises clutter my thoughts and really aren’t important. Then others are important and need attention.

Father, please help me to focus – focus on Your Words. Who knows? Perhaps the Words I hear from You and put down on paper will have an impact on someone's life.

Thank You Father, for using me as a conduit for Your Words to flow through me to touch someone’s life and to help them make a life – not a death – decision.

3 Rising to a New Challenge

As Christian writers, nothing thrills us more than communing with God about a fresh revelation as His Word flows through us onto the page. As God blesses us, He touches our hearts deeply, and for many of us, our first instinct is to share this new Joy with everyone around us. So we write, and we write in whichever way is most natural for us.

But if we are to truly taste the fullness of God, if we are to explore the awesome potential of our own unique callings, we must not be content to merely let the words spill out in whichever way they come naturally. We must challenge ourselves to take on projects that will stretch us and pull us beyond our comfort zones. As we step out in faith to pursue these new endeavors with God, He will develop, refine and mature our gifts even further.

It's Time to Write

By LouEllen Hoffman

After finishing the umpteenth book and not remembering half of what I have read, I decided that it was time that I stopped reading and started writing. Just read two books by a friend of mine and of course thought that if she could do it, then why couldn't I? But she writes novels and my only attempt at doing that has resulted in part of one chapter.

Poems I've done (a lot of those) and songs (a good number) and some journals and a few devotionals. But to undertake a full fledged novel is a somewhat daunting thought. I admire those who have the gumption to start and finish such a task.

If I should write a novel, I have decided that I will not use words that are outside of the normal, useful boundaries. When I am reading and I come upon a word I don't understand, I put a sticky note on that page. Then when I have several notes, I stop and look up those words in a dictionary. Maybe my writing will be too bland for some smart folks!

I do know that what I write touches people, and because God has given me the ability and the inspiration, I will continue to record things for Him and for His glory. Hope you will too.

4 A New Perspective

For many people, life has a way of downsizing our dreams. Every fork in the road forces us to discard certain opportunities in favor of pursuing others. Every word we hear, every word we read, every detail of our surroundings shapes our perception of who we are and what life may hold in store for us. And as we mature and take on new responsibilities, there comes a day when we realize that the unfettered outlook of our youth is a thing of the past. We have become slaves to the all consuming issues of daily existence.

Yet God's Word reminds us that He does not expect us to pour all of our time and energy into merely juggling responsibilities: "*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" (Matt 11:30) And God's Word encourages us that He will cause everything we have been through to work for good for us who love Him and are called according to His purpose – His purpose which aims to reap an eternal harvest (ref. Rom 8:28, Rev. 14:15). So rather than giving up on the starry eyed dreams of our youth, we are to press on to the prize of our high calling (ref. Phil. 3:14), knowing that every detail of our experience has been carefully crafted to position us for the fulfillment of those dreams.

Loosed

By Diana Battista

*Tired
Worn
Listless and dull
Bright freedom of youth
Now a yellowed memory
Shuddering with the clicking of the
Movie reel*

*Mature
Stifled
Caged and shackled
Creativity enslaved
To higher purpose
Bowing beneath the gravity of
Stark duty*

*Did not young heart once crave a life of
Consequence,
Transcending bounds of naiveté on
Wisdom's wing?*

*Prepared
Trained
Yoked and bridled
Inspiration aimed to yield
Eternal harvest
Dauntless despite the toil of plowing
Stony ground*

*Revived
Restored
Poised and alert
Past vision resurrected
For a new season
Loosed to pursue the promises of
My calling*

5 Don't Give Up

God created each one of us with a purpose, and He planted in each heart a dream in keeping with that purpose. When we recognize His hand in the course of life, and we remember that His Plan for us was devised from the beginning to bring our dream to fruition, then the trials and obstacles are transformed into the very agents God uses to empower us to fulfill our dreams.

This is the greatness of life in God, that we have a present and a future in Him. Our reality consists of our journey with Him. And as we give ourselves fully to this walk with Christ, our old thinking, our old behaviors, our old perceptions pass away in the renewing of our minds. Sometimes this is an uphill battle and we need encouragement to continue on. So let this be your inspiration to run the good race and fight the good fight. Don't give up!

A Word of Encouragement Inspired by the Words of the Apostle Paul

By Carl Grijalba

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if someone famous, whom you admire and who is no longer living here on earth, could speak to you in person today to encourage you to keep writing to reach your goal? I thought of several people in both the secular and Biblical worlds from whom I wouldn't mind hearing some motivating words. I decided to speculate on what encouraging words the apostle Paul would say. The following is what I think he might have said:

As an apostle and a servant of Jesus Christ, I, Paul, greet you. I am grateful to be His slave for His glory. Be grateful that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. This is His grace we don't deserve. We are obligated, therefore, to live and write totally for Jesus Christ. Do not hold back anything in your writing that would possibly make you fall short of reaching your goal of glorifying Him.

May your hearts, through Christ, guide your writings, just like the Lord's Spirit guided my letters to the churches where I ministered. But before you write, pray that you will allow the Lord Jesus Christ to lead your Will to be His Will. After you pray, write without any distractions. Do not let anything distract you that might cause you to not reach your writing goal. You are involved in spiritual warfare against an enemy that will bring temptations and distractions to you, trying to prevent you from writing to glorify Christ. So take the shield of faith to quench the enemy's temptations and distractions.

When you have finished your work and either submitted it to a publisher, or published it yourself, keep on writing. If your submitted work gets accepted and published, the hard work paid off. If your work gets rejected, don't give up. Write. Write. Write. You were not rejected. Only your written work was rejected. So no matter how much you may struggle, no matter how much you feel pain, no matter how much you might feel discouraged, keep on writing until you reach your goal.

I understand your pain. I have been imprisoned and beaten three times with rods, I've had rocks thrown at me to be stoned to death, and five times I was lashed forty times minus one. But despite the consequences of preaching about Christ, I considered it a privilege to suffer for the Lord. When I am in my weakness, the power of Christ rests on me. If you are in your weakness, the power of Christ rests on you too.

So don't give in. Don't give up. Don't give up on your goal. Remember, you are the only "you" in the whole world. You are unique to the Lord. Only you can write from your perspective. You were not rejected. Only your submitted work was rejected. So allow the Lord to help you redirect your heart and mind to try harder. Learn all you can of the writing craft.

Also, may the love of Christ be your motivation to write. Then your motive will be good, acceptable, and in the Will of God. This will help you become more like Christ. So press toward the prize of being like Christ. This will glorify the Lord.

Don't give in. Don't give up. Don't give up on your goal. Do you want your work to be published? Do you want to glorify Christ? Don't give in. Don't give up. Don't give up on your goal. The Lord will never give up on you. May the Lord's grace be with you.

I thank you, Paul, for these encouraging words. I hope my humble attempt at speculating on how the apostle Paul would motivate writers to reach their goal was close to what his actual words might have been. Paul, please forgive me if I missed the mark. Paul, thank you again.