

Writings

by William MacDonald

Christian writing has the power to inspire, educate, and transform people's lives, and it is a vital tool for spreading the gospel and building up the church.

Duration: 45:15

Scripture: Ruth 1:16, Psalm 19:1, Psalm 121:1-2, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 6:33, James 2:17

Topics: "Writings"

Description

The video is a sermon on the preaching of the word of God. It emphasizes the importance of using short sentences and words, varying sentence patterns, and incorporating human interest to make the message more engaging. The speaker encourages the use of sanctified imagination and colorful descriptions to captivate the audience. The sermon also highlights the need for emphasis and a strong call to action in Christian writing.

Transcript

workshop, um, often enough so that you could be up here teaching it, I think. But anyway, it's a little bit more expanded than we've had in recent years, and we're going to thumb through most of it. Um, Christian writing, uh, the possibilities of Christian literature, page one.

A lot of this you're going to be able to read at your own leisure, um, but it gives illustrations of how God has used, uh, literature in the past. And I just want to pause here and ask you, anybody want to volunteer any book or practice, uh, resulted in a crisis experience in your life? I mean, really had a tremendous effect in your life? Who'll be the first? Anybody? Is anybody even affected by Christian literature? Well, I'll call it, I will give you a synonym for crisis. Mark a turning point in your life? Fred.

Okay, Christ's life for your life, I have to be mindful. Pardon? Okay. What's the new birth? What the Roman Catholic Bible says about the new, who wrote that? Okay, anybody else? Yeah.

It's hard to think of a book on prayer without thinking of that one, isn't it? It's really powerful, Charlie. I don't know, some obscure author. No wonder you can't think about it.

Milton. Dear friends, I did not pay these fellows to say that. Anybody else? Okay, Leroy Iams, the lost heart of disciples.

Anybody else? Knowing God. Tremendous book, isn't it? On the attributes of God by J.I. Packer. Anna Smith.

Anybody ever been, uh, sorry. Yeah, and not only through Gates of Splendor, but Shadow of the Almighty. Man, I think in some way that book has been one of the most significant books that it's about in my generation, the Shadow of the Almighty.

Jim Elliott's spiritual diary. Has anybody been affected by a tract or a short booklet at all? I used to. And people were saved through it.

Uh-huh. It's an interesting book, isn't it? Because it wasn't true at all, but, uh, but I used it. How can God do that? Yes.

Amy Carmichael, Donnevere Fellowship. Yeah, tremendous, Hudson Taylor. If you get his two big volumes through Hudson Taylor, his early years, The Growth of Soul, Hudson Taylor, and the China Inland Mission, The Growth for the Work of God.

I don't think you can read those books and never be the same. Let me tell you. I asked about a tract.

Anybody ever been influenced by a tract or a booklet? Is this a little booklet? Yes. Oh, okay. Yeah, John 17, right? The High Priestly Prayer of the Lord Jesus.

Yes. Go ahead, back here. Yeah, that's good.

By Robert Boyd Munger. A little booklet, My Heart Christ's Home. I'm surprised nobody suggested Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment by George Hutton.

But it didn't affect you. Okay. It was through that that I got a sure salvation.

And it was a book, Peaky Steadby Grub, that really changed the whole direction of my life as far as Christian service is concerned. Okay. Well, you can read this.

No use going over this first section. You could look at some of those notable quotes on page six. The smallest tract may be the stone in David's fling.

In the hands of Christ, it may bring down a giant soul. Uh, Robert Murey King. Martin Luther, we must throw the prince's inkpot at the devil.

That's good. You can write like that. You've got it made, dear friend.

Thomas Brooks. Books may preach when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dares not. Yes, and which is more, when the author is not.

Which means you can provide, through literature, you can provide yourself with some honorable work to do while your body's lying in the grave. The Prince of who gets inside the home and stays there. It always catches a man in the right mood.

It speaks to him only when he's reading it. Francis Bacon. If I might control the literature of the household, I would guarantee the well-being of the church and state.

Quick statement, but it's got a lot of truth to it. And Samuel Dreamer. No other agency can penetrate so deeply, witness so daringly, abide so persistently, influence so irresistibly as the printed page.

Of course, literature isn't everything. Page 7, there are limitations. It presumes literacy on the part of people, and not all people can read.

And it doesn't always answer questions that arise in people's minds. Although, in writing, it's a good thing to try to anticipate people's questions. Especially if you're writing about the gospel, or assurance of salvation, or eternal decree, to try to anticipate questions that would arise.

And nothing will ever take the place of living examples of the truth, like the Lord sending out the disciples, and so forth. You can read that too. What makes great literature? Page 8. And we just emphasize here that all good literature should have these three characteristics.

Unity, coherence, and emphasis. Unity demands that there be one subject pursued consistently throughout the writing, and also that each paragraph in the writing have its own unity as well. Every paragraph should be like a block in a building.

It should have a unity in it, and it should move right on to the next block. And the whole writing should have unity as well. Coherence is that which binds the blocks together, the paragraphs together, so they move smoothly, and so you don't jerk the reader's mind.

It's quite an art. But there are transitional words. Secondly, we might mention something like that.

And then emphasis, of course, means that you're getting your point over. And actually, the writing should build up to emphasis at the very last part. So it might incite somebody to action, or to deeper thought, or to worship, whatever it might be.

Of course, you can have unity, and coherence, and emphasis without producing a masterpiece, because good literature is literature that is well written, but I think it expresses great thought, and expresses it in a wonderful way. This tells about John Macefield, who used to be the poet laureate of England, and somebody said that his words carried no cargos of wonder. It's a withering indictment of any writing that the word carries no cargos of wonder.

Down at the bottom of the page. Ah, literature is good when it produces pleasurable reactions. Verse 9. When it inspires to noble conduct, when it confers benefit on its readers.

Here's an example of poor writing in the middle of page 9. Three qualifications are added, applying to those who are to pray publicly. Incidentally, there's always the danger of praying so as to impress their listeners. First of all, they should lift up Holy His.

What's the matter? Absolutely jerky there. It destroys the unity right away, doesn't it? And incidentally, if you're interested in writing, well, you should read Critically. Come to this.

A lot of people think just because it's in black and white, or even printed in a book, it must be good. Doesn't follow. This was printed in a book.

That's not good. It's interesting how often hands are mentioned in the Bible. Well, you know, that's so, it's kind of dumb.

First of all, they should lift up Holy Hands. It's interesting how often hands are mentioned in the Bible. You can wander all over the landscape like a jackrabbit as you take a word and then you divert on that word and finally come back to your original theme.

That's what this does. Here's another example of poor writing. Yes.

Well, you can have emphasis in every paragraph, but like if you're writing a gospel tract, it should lead up to that climax at the end where you call for action. Well, you mean in a news story? A news story should encapsulate everything that's going to follow. But I was thinking more in Christian writing where, like you're writing a tract and you want the person to read it to come to Christ.

Well, you build up to that point. Actually, now that you mentioned that, most people in Christian writing, they write glorious first paragraphs and then peter out at the end. They get so weary of it all that they just take a bunch of scripture verses and throw them at the reader, you know, without any necessary correlation or anything else.

I'll give you an example of that before we're through. It's horrible. I have cardiac arrest every time.

Except, Brian, I get on the planes. You know, I hear that all the time and I think that all the time. People aren't readers.

And I get on the plane and they're all reading one of these paperbacks that they bought at the newsstand, you know. It's amazing to me how many people do read on the planes. Have you noticed that, any of you? They do read on the planes.

I don't doubt that. Here's another example of dull, irregular, prose-y writing. The truth clear and positive given as a revelation from God in the Word, clothed with his authority by which he has given the truth of communicating the facts and the divine thoughts which are necessary for the salvation of men and for their participation in divine life.

This is it which we are told to hold fast. That's horrible. I get through that and I say, what did he say? Here, on the other hand, is writing that I loved it.

I have always loved it. Philippians 4, 18. And Paul's acknowledging a gift, you know.

And here's the way Jowett handles that. How vast, then, is the range of an apparently local kindness. The saint ministering to Paul.

We thought we were ministering to a pauper. And in reality, we were conversing with the king. We imagined that the fragrance would be shut up in a petty neighborhood.

And lo, the sweet aroma sealed through the universe. We thought we were dealing only with Paul. And we find that we were ministering to Paul, Savior, and Lord.

That's beautiful, you know. And that's really what it is. That's really what it's saying.

He received the Vespasrodites, the things he sent for you. The odor of a sweet smell. A sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

And it's wonderful when you can take a verse of scripture and write like that about it, isn't it? It's marvelous, really. Pardon? Yes, Jowett. I've read every book by Jowett I could ever lay my hands on, because he has this ability to take things in a way like that.

Absolutely marvelous. You can never find any of his books yet for them to use. Most of it will have to be used nowadays.

Then on page 10, we also have a section on the importance of reading. It makes me think every time I come to this, of how kids used to say, he who does not read will not be read. And that's true, too.

And I think it's through reading that you build up your vocabulary. You study the style of people, and imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. You say, boy, I could use that.

And even if you read a magazine like Time, I'm not advocating it, but I mean, they have pretty clever journalists writing for Time Magazine, and they can come up with some terrific things. I remember them writing about the senator who walks into the tentacle wearing his forgettable tie. It's clever, isn't it, forgettable tie? Whoever used that ad would describe it, I before.

But, you know, it's clever, and they should pay for writing like that. It's through reading you develop critical faculty with regard to style. You become aware of greatness of expressions, free-flowing arguments, writing that sparkles.

You also become aware of sheer clumsiness, jerky movement of thought, downright monotony. I should pause here to apologize. You know, this was done in a hurry, and I gave it to a young fellow to put on the computer for me.

I thought he would proofread it, but he didn't. So, don't be shocked if you find a lot of typographical errors. I'm going to go back and take care of that.

And I have a section on inspiration here, and I don't mean it in the same sense as the inspiration of the scriptures, but a step lower than that. In other words, there is such a thing as God giving help to a person when he's writing, and enabling him to do it, I think, in some cases in a manner beyond his own ability. You can call it what you like I have here, but it's definite help from God.

When asked to confirm a rumor that he had been commissioned to write another Chicago poem, Carl Sandburg said, ordering a man to write a poem is like commanding a pregnant woman to give birth to a redheaded child. You can't do it. It's an act of God.

And even that's clever writing, isn't it? That's why Carl Sandburg, he's a good writer. He says he can put it down like that. I like the quote down at the bottom, Mr. Arthur Sullivan was attending a performance of his own opera HMS Pinafore.

He turned to a friend and asked, did I really write that? There will be an end of cowardice and of pride. Of cowardice, because you will find yourself borne along by an irresistible impulse. Of pride, because you will have no occasion to boast.

As soon might Milton's pen have been proud of writing the Paradise Law, as you of what Christ may have done through you. Shall the act boast itself against him that you are there with, or shall the thought magnify itself against him that they do? And that writing is really hard work. And some illustrations are

given here of men and how they weren't slaved over it.

And there's a good quote in here, I thought it was quite good. In the second paragraph on the bottom of page 12, T.H. White, who wrote the future king, said of an earlier book, I shall probably be glad to have written the book, but I hate writing it. Well, that's just another way of saying that it was hard work for him to do it.

Secluding himself, cutting himself off from people, just being quiet alone there. Various things that we can write, 13, page 13. Tracts, magazine articles, news stories, letters.

Everybody should be writing letters in the works of the Lord. You know, you escape it. Editorials, devotional articles, expository writing.

Now, at the bottom of the page is one of the worst tracts I've ever read. And it's too bad, because it's a good story. It's about Queen Victoria.

And was she a real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? You know, this man wrote to her. But it's a terrible, terribly written, it's printed, it's printed, and distributed. And it bothers me to see something as poor.

Is there any way of making sure that we should spend eternity in heaven, welcomed into the fellowship of God, and on in the second death of eternal separation from him? Many suppose that this question, the greatest that can confront men, must necessarily wait for its answer until the present life is over. But is it so? Must the question of eternal blessedness or misery, heaven or hell, remain a torturing uncertainty until it's too late to make any change? And it goes on, and on, and on. Sometimes the sentences aren't complete.

And it's just a poor, you can read that at your leisure. And I hope you won't be turned off. Hope you'll still like Queen Victoria when it's over.

Magazine articles, news stories, sometimes you can get into a local paper. Not a big city paper, but sometimes into a local paper, you can get articles in. On page 16, I have a letter that I received once from the Gibsons in Marseille, Irish missionaries, North of Ireland missionaries, and it's a clever letter.

I think we could all learn something from this. Do you know what it feels like to be a foreigner, a stranger? It's really quite an odd feeling. Ten years ago, when we first arrived in France, we keep being natives and suddenly became foreigners.

The French Foreign Office became a familiar sight. The British Embassy became an important building. Familiar faces of friends and family left behind.

Suddenly, you're alone. Your clothes are different. Your accent is different.

Even your table manners are different. One look at you and they can tell you're not one of them. It can be a painful and bewildering experience.

It's a good, good paragraph. You've all experienced that, I'm sure. Think language.

When we first set foot in France, we spoke not a word of the lingo. That's good. I'm glad they said lingo.

It's better than the language, really. And we'll go over that in a minute, why it's better. When we first set foot in France, we spoke not a word of the lingo and stuck out as part of that strange species, the French call it, treated by the locals with more disdain and suspicion spoken to as some slow-witted child.

I like that. You know how they would treat you when you don't know the language well. A slow-witted child.

They were under some delusion that the louder they spoke the unintelligible words, the better we understood. And the fact that you're laughing, it means that's exactly the way it is. That's exactly the way it is.

When you're working with a foreign language, speak louder and they'll understand. Not a hope. A shrug of their shoulders and a roll of the eyes told us all, or whatever it is.

When would we ever learn? And so they go on here, very, I didn't get permission from them to use this letter, but anyway, don't tell them. It's a very good letter. Very good.

And then at the end, they have prayer points, praise, family news. Very good. We recommend that, and the missionary letters always separate prayer requests.

Because they go sometimes to prayer meetings, and they don't always read the letter, but if they can have concentrated prayer requests. Down at the bottom, I have, instead of thinking of letter writing as a drudgery to be endured, we should think of it as a means of ministering spiritual food dwellers. Paul's letter to the Philippians that we already referred to was written in acknowledgment of a gift of money.

Think of the lives that have been touched by it. Anyone can learn to write good letters. It's simply a matter of saying what you want, and saying it in an interesting, conversational style.

Avoid the use of hackneyed cliches. He didn't give the computer the right command there. Here is a list of some expressions that are still found in business letters.

Avoid hackneyed expressions like this. And then I have illustrations of other things that are so oblique the way they're set. Say it simply, as simply as possible.

Editorial, devotional articles, expository writing. Down at the bottom here, I have an illustration of good expository writing. It was done by a man.

If you can ever get a hold of any of Guy King's books, get them, because they're really good. He writes very well. I'll just read part of this.

It's clear that, A, there are things to be put up with to endure hardness. Remember that for Paul's soldier, it's not peacetime. There's a war on.

He will have to bear the hardness of rough fare and battle conditions, and perhaps cruel wounds. He need not be surprised at this. Old Saint Chrysostom said, It behooves thee not to complain if thou endurest hardness, but to complain if thou dost not endure hardness.

Good, isn't it? Comes right to the point. And the whole thing is well outlined. He goes right down the list, and by the time you get through, my, you have some food from 2 Timothy 2, 3 through 5. Page 20, Choice of Subject.

This is other than a letter, of course. How do you choose a subject? Well, you pray about it. You pray about it and ask the Lord to perhaps lay the burden of it on your heart.

And then, if he does, pretty soon thoughts will be coming to you, or you'll get something in a book you're reading that fits that subject, and ideas will come to you like swallows to the gable of a barn, and you start a file. You throw things in the file. I have a file up in my desk, and I'm throwing things.

He goes, Don't worry about it. Just throw them in. And then, after a while, you can start making an outline and fit those things into the outline.

You collect ideas, and I think the Lord gives you a sense of when you're ready, when you make an outline. Outlining is tremendously important for good writing. If the reader is going to follow you along, you want to have a good outline.

I've got some examples here. 23rd Psalm. Secret of a happy life, the Lord is my shepherd and shall not want.

Secret of a happy death, he hates himself, so I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Secret of a happy eternity, goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life, and I will go in the house of the Lord for a time and put on their shoes. I think any of us could put meat on those bones.

I like this one in Hebrews 2, 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Salvation so great, neglect so easy, escape so impossible. Could you write a gospel tract on that? I could. The trouble is, it isn't my outline.

Here's another good outline, based on Luke 23, 43. Jesus said, Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. What certainty! Verily I say unto thee, Truly I say unto thee, What feast! Today! What glory in paradise! What company with me! Thanks be on all standards, it's unforgettable.

Someone once outlined Isaiah 26, 3. This is for you, but I will keep them in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. You, a precious God, perfect peace, a priceless possession, whose mind is stayed on you, a present focus, because he trusts in you, a powerful place. Isn't that good? Haddon Robinson, you won't appreciate this one in Psalm 121 so much, unless the verses are before you, but it's good.

He's a God of the towering hills who gives help to his people. He's a God of the night watch who neither slumbers nor sleeps. That's lovely.

He's a God who provides friendly shade to protect from the elements that might hurt us. He's a God of the house and of the road who looks after us in all our comings and goings. Isn't that good? It really says what the psalm says.

Then, of course, you come to the lead paragraph, and this is very important. The purpose of the lead paragraph is to get people hooked, introduce your subject to them, and say it in such a way that they want to read on. It could be done by an exclamation or a humorous or startling statement.

Sam Levinson said, we have a permissive father. He permitted us to work. Well, that's clever, you know, and I mean, it hits the chord today, whether so much unpermissiveness.

It can be done by a quotation. According to one lawyer, Rose Byrd was undistinguished but not otherwise remarkable. No, Rose Byrd was in the Supreme Court, state Supreme Court in California.

Not the most popular jurist that they ever had out there. They finally removed her, and this was her condemnation. We have a permissive, I mean, according to one lawyer, Rose Byrd was undistinguished but not otherwise remarkable.

That just drips with sarcasm. It could be done by the use of an incident. During a trial at which I was an attorney, an eminent psychologist was called to testify.

A severe, no-nonsense professional, she sat down in the witness chair, unaware that its rear legs were set precariously on the back of the raised platform. Would you state your name as the district attorney? Tilting back in her chair, she opened her mouth to answer, but instead catapulted, head over heels backwards, and landed in a stack of exhibits and recording equipment. We watched in stunned silence as she extricated herself, rearranged her disheveled dress and hair, and was reseated on the witness stand.

The glare she directed at onlookers dared anyone to as much as smirk. Well, doctor, continue, the district attorney, perhaps we should start with an easier question. Would you like to read the rest of the article? I mean, that thing, you can just see it happening, can't you? Catapulted.

You can see it happening. It's so vivid in your mind. It can be done by colorful description, the old philosopher still among us in the brown coat, with a metal button, and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, wallowing his seeds in oceans.

Or it could be done by dialogue. I really don't know what to do with my books, he said, looking around for sympathy. Why not read them after Coptic sullen? Then you start your first rough draft of the, and the first rough draft is certainly never the final copy.

You finish your lead, and you start building in an orderly way, and you're going to write it so smoothly that the minds of your readers will follow you without any interruption, without any, the transition will be perfect just going along. Then, of course, rewrite. I say don't think that you're through when you finish the first rough draft.

The rest is murder. Yes, murder. You must murder your darling production.

You must reread it and criticize it ruthlessly. Hard to do. For somebody else's, it would be easy, but when it's your own, that's different.

Words need to be refined. Sentences need to be polished. Paragraphs need to be rewritten.

Grammar and punctuation need to be checked. Facts need to be checked, too. When I was working with the Harlows, I had, on the commentary, I had Daniel in the fiery furnace, and nobody caught it.

Doesn't that sound good? Daniel in the fiery furnace? Isn't that the way it should be? We had to take him out of the fiery furnace, put him back in the den of lions. I mean, how could a, you know, misinformation like that ever creep in? It's hard. If you have any doubt about a passage, it's probably defective, so work it over just to be sure.

Notice this at the top of page 24. Virgil spent the last 10 years of his life writing the Aeneid, and even then he would have destroyed it if some friends had not intervened. Plato rewrote the first sentence of his Republic no less than 13 times.

He wanted to get the cadences exactly right. It took Thomas Gray eight years to finish *Elegy*, written in a country for chum. I like Ernest Hemingway said that he began every day by reading and editing everything he had written to the point where he left off.

That way I go through a book several hundred times, honing it until it gets an edge like the bullfighter's sword. Good writing, you know. I rewrote the ending of *A Farewell to Arms* 39 times in manuscripts, and worked it over 30 times in proof, trying to get it right.

Really incredible. Then if you can farm it out for editing, it's very valuable, because an editor will see things that you will never see. A sentence might read very well to you, and yet to the editor could be very, very awkward, and you'll want to change it.

That's really good if you can get a good editor. A title is very important. Be sure to get a good title.

I like this one, *Your God Is Too Small*. Phillips, you know. Actually, the title was set up in the book.

Beliefs That Behave. That's a lovely title for the commentary on James, isn't it? *Beliefs That Behave*. I think that's great.

Was it Ruth Paxton that wrote *The Wealth, Walk, and Warfare of the Christian Ephesians*? Not good enough line of Ephesians right in the title. And of course, probably the greatest commentary on the Psalms, *Treasury of David*. Be simple.

I don't think you can emphasize this too much. When does this end? Let me, 15 more minutes. When you come right down, this is the bottom of page 24, when you come right down to it, there's no law that says you have to use big words when you write or talk.

There are lots of small words and good ones that can be made to say all the things you want to say quite as well as the big ones. This whole article is written in monosyllables. There's no word in there more than one syllable.

I'm just getting a revision on that time, ten minutes. And the second article, too, on page 25, when you speak and write, no law says you have to use big words. Short words are as good as long ones, and short old words like sun, grass, and home are best of all.

And, once again, that whole article has just monosyllables in it. Surest way to lose your audience is to use big words and involve sentences. A well-known trick of using a pure technical jargon in a discussion is often a device of acquiring undeserved prestige.

The squire in the *Vicar of Whitefield* computed his opponent by asking whether you judge the analytical investigation of the first part of the entumum deficient cundum coed or coed minus. So, thanks a lot. I'm not going to read that book.

Jesus said, feed my sheep, verse 26, not choke them. Rudolf Flesch says, this is a good quote. Incidentally, that's one of the books I recommend.

The book, *The Art of Readable Writing* by Rudolf Flesch. It's old. It's old now, but it's still good.

And what he writes is good. And, in it, he says, if a worthwhile idea or work of art is skillfully popularized, everybody stands to gain. After Kirby had played Chopin's Polonaise in A-flat in *A Song to Remember*,

people bought two million copies of the record, which was a good thing for I. Kirby, for Chopin, for two million American families.

When we become as involved as the author of the following paragraph, we have narrowed our audience and perhaps have lost it altogether. Listen to this paragraph. Now, I shall for these reasons review the great occasions which the Holy Ghost records for our instruction, and hope to show I trust plainly to any man who is subject to the word of God that there is nothing capricious in the manner in which the Holy Ghost was given, that there is nothing to weaken the confidence of the feeblest child of God, and that there is everything flowing from a full or comparatively full acquaintance with the revealed mind of God, to comfort and steady the soul, enhancing our sense of his grace and wisdom.

For we shall have abundant proof of his holy considerateness in all possible circumstances. What in evidence the simplicity in the things of God is a real secret of seeing things clearly. Yeah, you know who that was? That was William Kelly.

That was William Kelly. Two sentences in that whole paragraph. Virgin said, put the food down where the sheep, where the land can reach it.

It won't hurt the capitalization. Don't worry too much about capitalization. You're not going to get two people to agree on it.

Two publishers won't agree on it either. I think the main thing is be consistent. Once you start a work, be consistent in your capitalization or lack thereof.

I was always taught to use word, a small w for the Bible, and capital W for the Lord Jesus. You read all kinds of books and they don't follow that at all. So, this is just a suggestion here.

This is not set in concrete. Don't worry too much about it. Punctuation.

Then on page 28, we have tips on how to achieve readability, and we emphasize there that the current attitude is write the way you talk. That is, write in a conversational style. That's why I like that word, lingo, instead of language or something like that.

It just hits a responsive chord with people. Use contractions just as you do when you're speaking. In other words, I've tried to illustrate it in the census, using contractions just as you do when you're speaking, not when you are speaking.

Bad grammar? It depends on how bad it is. No, I'm serious when I say that. None of them agree.

None of them agree. You know, you can get away with either one of those. Yeah, well, you can get away with some things.

There are some things like, who's at the door? It's me. Well, it's not like, grammatically, you can get away with that. Because that's the way you talk.

We don't say it, I, it's me. So, I don't know, you just have to have a feeling of the situation. Use loose sentences.

They used to have to be complete sentences. Not any longer. Not any longer is a loose sentence.

You can get away with that. That's good writing now. Not in, if you're in college and you're going through an English class, you better not try it.

But, but, after you get out and are writing, you can do that. A loose sentence. Use repetition.

It's considered good style now, especially when you want to get a point across. Stress it up in different words and say it again, and I've done that in those sentences. Which is, incidentally, very strong in Hebrew poetry, isn't it? The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament filleth its handiwork.

Repetition. It's saying it in different words, the same thing. There's no additional thought there at all, as far as I can see.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament filleth its handiwork. As a form of Hebrew poetry. Use short sentences and short words, too.

Vary the pattern of your sentences. Vary the pattern of your sentences. Don't begin every sentence with D. You know what I mean? You can sum with when, or having done, or this type of thing.

Another way to achieve readability, so heavy on human interest. People are interested in people. You liked that paragraph when that woman catapulted back overwards into all of that equipment.

Because you were the human being, you know, and you were reading about, um, I was going to say someone like yourself. I hope not. You sanctified imagination in your writing.

Bunyan pictured Christian running from the temple with his fingers in his ears. How much more expressive than to say Christian refused to listen to the voice of the temple. Can't you see him? I mean, he's running from the temple with his fingers in his ears.

It conjures up a great picture in front of you. And I'll use this illustration of the blind beggar. He wasn't getting very much until he put a sign up that said it's spring and I'm blind.

And then they say that this is interesting. Use verbs and nouns rather than adjectives and adverbs. And that's not easy, because the tendency for writers, especially when they're beginning, is to use an awful lot of colorful adjectives.

It's a tendency. But notice what it says here. Verbs make it happen while adjectives and adverbs tell what happens.

The dog lunged at me and ripped my pant leg. Lunged. That's a good word.

Lunged. I can see the dog doing it. And ripped my pant leg.

And then don't use a passive mood in writing. If you send a work to an editor, one of the first things he will do will be remove all passive verbs. On the first thing, he'll go right to it and remove every one of them.

Use only one adjective at a time, not two together. Avoid repeating significant words in the same sentence or paragraph. Don't overuse pet words.

And watch out for flowery words. Very, rather, little, pretty, rather important, little better, pretty sure. That's not considered clever writing at all.

Be sure your vocabulary is current, lively, fresh, and that it has plenty of variety. Watch out for gobbledybooks. That is hackneyed expressions.

Eliminate unnecessary words. A male peacock. All peacocks are male.

The P-N of it is male. Nod your head. What else to nod outside of your head? Easy to do this, though.

Really easy to do it. Guard against identical word beginnings or endings. The president was contemplating resigning.

These are kind of refinements in writing. But they help. They help.

And they're something that we should take seriously if we're going to be writing. I like 14. Don't end a sentence with a preposition.

All right. Sometimes a student's field of study influences his outlook in surprising ways. A friend of mine was having problems with her boyfriend, who was an English major.

After much discussion one evening, she finally confronted him. Does this mean we're breaking up? Said he, I'd hate to think that we were ending this relationship with a preposition. Breaking up.

Yes. Go ahead. Yeah.

This is the type of errant nonsense up with which I will not quit. Time? Father Barna? Okay. Well, there's quite a bit more information in here.

And then at the very end is some proofreader's mark, which you'll find in almost any big dictionary, in case you're ever doing proofreading. It'll help you know how to do it. Let's pray.

If you have any questions, feel free to come up afterwards. Sorry we had to go so fast. Father, we just thank you for the impact that literature has had in our lives.

And we think of those today who are writing and translating and publishing Christian literature. We think especially of the former Soviets. And we just pray, Lord, that you'll give special help to those who are laboring so diligently that the word might come out and that people who've been deprived of it for many, many years might benefit from it.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7804.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/writings/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net