



Dipping the Quill

Writing News from Author J.D. Wininger

Volume 1, Issue 1, November 2018

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Dipping the Quill*, the newsletter about the happenings of Christian writer J.D. Wininger.

Where do I begin; perhaps I should start at the beginning. Since a young child, words have fascinated me. As a young man with an often less than a happy family life, I found reading and writing a diversion from the challenges of life. After learning to read, I escaped to the woods every chance I could with a schoolbook or a discarded magazine. Later, the Bookmobile that made its way through our rural community every few weeks loaned me books.

During summers, I scrounged bread, leftover green beans, or snuck onto the back porch to *steal* a jar of grandma's apple butter. Supplies in hand, I ran into the woods with my treasured books to find a new adventure. One day I traveled with Huck and Tom down the mighty Mississippi. The next, I fought off invading pirates on Treasure Island. I served on a mighty sailing ship, pursuing Moby Dick. I solved mysteries with Sherlock Holmes, Nancy Drew, and the Hardy Boys. When I discovered Ernest Hemingway, his words swept me away to new and exciting places. I spent weeks catching giant fish, fighting bulls in Pamplona, and destroying bridges during the Spanish Civil War.

Reading others' exploits wasn't enough for me. I wanted to make my own adventures. Redeeming them for a penny each, I collected discarded pop bottles

until I had enough to buy a pad of Big Chief paper and two pencils. Now I could create my own



stories. Each night, I lay on my bed on the floor dreaming of new adventures. Each morning, I finished my chores and dashed off to the woods to write. I learned to keep my paper, pencils, and stories hidden away in an old stone slave quarters building on the land we were renting. With mice and snakes, my siblings wouldn't play there—as enticing as the barred windows were.

I spent countless hours writing poems and stories I stored away like personal treasures. I seldom shared my writing with anyone else for fear of further rejection. They were mine alone. I never considered how the gifts and talents my Creator gave was something that should always be share with others. I can't remember the name of the publication, but someone launched my “writing career” when a national scholastic magazine published one of my poems. My fifth grade English teacher submitted it, telling me how she believed in me. I will always remember how it felt the moment I first saw my name in print. I was *somebody*.

Following my adoption into a wonderful Christian family in my teens—who showed what a loving family was — I found my way to Christ on a fall evening in 1975. My writing changed after that incredible experience as I found I had something more exciting to write and pray about than adventures and fanciful dreams. I had a future. As I grew older, I placed my faith on the *back burner* while I focused on military service, college, marriage, and building a business. After years of paying it lip service only, I almost completely walked away from my faith. What I didn't understand until it was almost too late is that God never abandoned me.

Just after Christmas in 1996, sitting alone in a tiny one-bedroom apartment in St. Charles Illinois, I fought the battle of my life to rediscover my faith. Finding my *bottom of the pit*, I yelled, screamed, cried, and argued with God for two days. Finally, out of sheer exhaustion, I opened my Bible, which I had not cracked open in years. Without knowing it, I opened to Chapter 8 of the book of Romans. As I read the last two verses, God reached His mighty hand

into the darkness of my life and brought me home. ***“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** (Romans 8:38-39) (NKJV)

In that moment of ultimate surrender, my heart replayed the verse I held dear without realizing it; one I hold as my primary life verse to this day; Philippians 4:13. ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*** (NKJV) It was in that moment of pure love and grace I found the strength to turn my life around. I still seek to become the man God intends for me to be. I understand this journey will continue until I am called home to glory. Until that day, I am God’s child, and I will try to share His light of mercy, grace, and love with this fallen world I inhabit—for now.

So. That’s my story friends. I wish I had a splashy spectacular tale of adventure, struggle, and triumph, but that’s not the story God has given me to tell. Mine is of a stubborn, prideful, arrogant, selfish man who had to reach the bottom of his proverbial pit before allowing himself to surrender his will for God’s. It remains the best deal I’ll ever make in this life.

My Christian writing journey began in 2015 when I began writing devotionals and Bible lessons for our small church here in northeast Texas. With lots of learning, prayers, help, and sometimes urgings from God, I will become a writer worthy of your time and encouragement. Until then, please remember I pray for you each day.

God’s Blessings...



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