



# *Dipping the Quill*

*Writing News from Author J.D. Winger*

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No need to check your vision or your Junk Mail folder; I never published Issue 2 this year. I blame no one but myself for not executing, but I will offer a defense. Between consulting that had me traveling the first three months of this year, sequestering my wife on quarantine with this pandemic, and a case of “Poor Me” syndrome, I just never released it.

To confirm, the writing goals I sat in January still hold true. Situations of the past couple of months, some of my making, some not, have re-prioritized life for many of us. Instead of finalizing my next manuscript and starting two others I’ve thought and prayed through, I took a much-needed break from my Christian writing. While I continue posting my blog each week, I realized in late January that my heart wasn’t in what I was trying to write. Rather than feeling energized after praying before I sit down to write, I felt burdened as it became “chore-like.” I wondered, “Was I depressed somehow over November’s rejection?” Satan tries to tell every writer now and again that we aren’t good enough; that we should stop pretending to be something we’re not.

In praying through this period of self-doubt, I kept getting called back to two verses I’ve long held dear. Matthew 11:28 reminds me where I need to look for true rest. Romans 8:28 assures me that God’s got this. My job is to walk along the path He has set me upon. I needed to rest and reassure myself I am on His path and not my own. In doing so, the desire to get back to

the work I am called to do has returned. I once again find joy in using the gifts He's given me to bring about a positive impact for God's kingdom.

I didn't realize it over two months ago, but God knew this was my perfect time to break from my writing and rest. I was working myself into quite a lather trying to force my work into an artificial schedule that aligned with the spring writer's conferences, etc. Getting manuscripts completed, edited, book proposals, one sheets, and preparing pitches was all overwhelming in a short timeframe. What I didn't realize was how God already knew what was coming. He knew the Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writer's Conference was moving to the fall. God knew I needed to take a step back, re-evaluate my writing goals, and remember why I am writing. More important than why I'm writing is who I'm writing for.

With many publishing houses scaling back, agents not actively seeking new clients (since there's not as many opportunities to sell new manuscripts), I'm using this time to continue working on other goals. My primary goal for this year is to further grow what us writers call our *platform*. By increasing the audience for my writing, I hope to accomplish two things. It will make my book proposals and manuscripts more attractive to publishers because a larger audience equates to more potential book sales. Second, it increases the number of lives that God can touch through something I've written to glorify Him. Not that I want to be the next Max Lucado or other million-book selling author, but that I have given my best effort to God. How He uses it is God's business. My job is to bring Him my very best offering; the increase is His.

This is perhaps why I've chosen to pursue a traditional publishing route. This isn't to discount the wonderful works many self-published authors have done, as I too long to see my name on the cover of a book one day. In my mind, I want to earn my name on the book cover, not pay to put it there. If I give God my best, I'm convinced He'll place it where He wants it,

when He wants it published. It's difficult to do some days, but with each passing year, I'm trying to learn to trust Him more and me less.

On the platform growth front, I want to share some amazing statistics that have opened my eyes to the wonderful blessings God has given in the past year. In 2019, my first full year of blogging, God has blessed me with:

- A 367% increase in the average number of responses to our Around the Cross-Dubya blog.
- Blog penetration (the number of unique people who view my blog/number of unique website sessions each month) averaging just over 101%.
- Steadily increasing social media connections, with Twitter averaging nearly 9% growth per month and my Facebook Author Page seeing steady growth.
- Becoming a regular guest on PJNET TV ([www.pjnet.tv](http://www.pjnet.tv)), providing writers, speakers, and other ministries the opportunity to share their message with like-minded Christians around the world. What a joy to learn under their media expertise while they stream my thoughts and words on multiple social media platforms.

I could not imagine any of this could a year ago, and none of it would be possible without each one of you. Know that I continue to pray for each one of you daily. While it would be wonderful to have 10,000 subscribers to my web site and blog, I cherish more that I have a unique relationship with each of you. Much more than readers or potential book purchasers, you are trusted friends I can rely upon to pray me through this journey.

Like the rest of the world, it's time to get back to work. Thank you for your continued prayers, support, and encouragement; and I ask for your prayers as we persist in this journey together. Please also continue to invite your friends and family who enjoy the rural lifestyle and seek to find God in the natural world around us to subscribe at [www.jdwininger.com](http://www.jdwininger.com). Remember that we each must have #FaithGreaterThanFear during these trying times.

*God's blessings...*



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