

# G O S P E L → T A B O O →

*Gospel Taboo* is a contributor-based platform that poses and hopefully sometimes answers theological questions to an uncertain life. We believe our fundamental theology as individuals informs how we live on a daily basis. Our writers bring a variety of perspectives from their different backgrounds, lifestyles and locations, but our central theme is faithfulness to Christ in a world full of challenges.

## READABILITY

- Tone should be conversational
- Avoid being overly technical or academic
- Use short paragraphs and lots of headings
- Use bulleted or numbered lists whenever you can
- Blogs must be your own original work. If you quote from other writers you should always mention the source (such as author and title if it's a book or a link if it's an online source). Keep quotations brief; no more than a paragraph at a time, max.

## CONTENT

- Gospel and Christ centered
- Relational
- Real and practical
- Scripturally sound
- We are happy to consider other things besides written pieces (videos, art pieces, photography, short teaching videos). It still has to be relevant, helpful, and connect with our readers.

## GENERAL STYLE TIPS

- Articles usually range from 800-1000 words.
- Avoid passive voice as much as possible. Active verbs are your friends!
  1. God has placed a thirst for knowledge in all humans. (passive)
  2. All humans possess a God-given thirst for knowledge. (active)
- Have a clear and communicated theme for the article. Don't wait until paragraph five to reveal where you're going. You may have already lost people . . . let them know early on why they need to read this article.
- Saying less allows you to write with greater clarity and focus. Simplify.
  1. As I kneel today to pray, below are two truths that ring in my heart.
  2. As I kneel to pray, two truths ring in my heart. (simple and clear)
- Avoid clutter. According to William Zinsser, "Clutter is the laborious phrase that has pushed out the short word that means the same thing...it turns slum into a depressed

socioeconomic area, garbage collectors into waste-disposal personnel, and the town dump into the volume reduction unit.”

- Sub-headings help break up your article and enable easier on-line reading.
- Use clarifying and distinct word choices.
- Varying the length of your sentences gives a healthy diversity and rhythm to your writing. It makes your paragraphs more interesting. I promise.
- Eliminate unnecessary words (and sentences) as much as possible.
- Contractions give your writing a warmth and personal quality. I’m learning to use them! (I am learning to use them...sounds like a robot, right?)
- Personal stories are a wonderful way to illuminate truth. I encourage you to use them. But, sometimes a story can overwhelm the article so that people walk away knowing the story, but not the truth you hope to illuminate. A good question to ask a friend/editor, “What’s your main take away after reading this?”

## **EDITING EXPECTATIONS**

- We edit every article, and some pieces will need extensive editing. Editing can sometimes be a painful process (for me too!), so please know we do so in hopes of making your writing better and encouraging you in your work.
- Many articles can take weeks or months to appear on Gospel Taboo. This does not mean that your article is objectionable or unwanted. We are thankful for and value your contribution and willingness to write. However, there are often current event articles that are published with the immediacy they require.
- It’s wise to have at least two or three other people read your article and provide feedback before submitting it. (You may want to establish a “[feditorial](#)” team.) The best way to improve in our writing is to listen to helpful critique. The more you edit on the front-end, the more easily your article will move towards publication.

## **SPECIFIC EDITING**

### **Abbreviations**

#### Degrees

B.A., B.S., M.A., M.Div., D.Min., Th.M., Ph.D.

#### Months

(Only abbreviate a month when referencing a specific day or days)

Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.

#### Scripture references

Only abbreviate books of the Bible in parenthetical references

Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut, Josh, Judg, Ruth, 1-2 Sam, 1-2 Kgs, 1-2, Chr, Ezra, Neh, Esth, Job, Ps (plural: Pss), Prov, Eccl, Song of Sol, Isa, Jer, Lam, Ezek, Dan, Hos, Joel, Amos, Obad, Jonah, Mic, Nah, Hab, Zeph, Hag, Zech, Mal, Matt, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Rom, 1-2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1-2 Thess, 1-2 Tim, Titus, Phlm, Heb, Jas, 1-2 Pet, 1-3 John, Jude, Rev

### **Capitalization**

Only capitalize proper nouns.

Common mistakes:

- God is “he” NOT “He”
- The word “gospel” is only capitalized when referencing the canonical Gospels (e.g., Gospel of Matthew)
- “biblical” NOT “Biblical”
- “scriptural” NOT “Scriptural”
- Job titles are only capitalized when used as proper nouns (e.g., positions NOT capitalized in narrative text)

### **Ellipsis and emdash**

No space on either side of both the emdash and ellipsis

### **Numbers**

Write out all numbers lower than 10; use Arabic numerals for all numbers 10 and higher.

### **Serial comma**

Use the serial or Oxford comma (e.g., the comma following the second-to-last item in a list; e.g., “Me, myself, and I”; NOT “Me, myself and I.”).