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THE JOYFUL LIFE

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# Grammar & Style Guide





1. All pronoun references to God (He, Him, His, etc.) are always capitalized except in Scripture where it is not already capitalized. Further, all references to 'Scripture' or 'Word' (God's) should always be capitalized.
2. All dialogue text should be italicized, including the quotation marks, regardless of where the dialogue occurs within the article. Thoughts expressed as dialogue should remain italicized without quotation marks.
3. For words that are emphasized with quotations, we prefer single quotes with the word italicized, like '*this*'.

When introducing an emphasized word (for example, *ezer*): On the first reference, follow rules for emphasized word above: '*ezer*.' On second and future references, no italicization or quotes should be used.

4. We prefer an em dash with no spaces surrounding in lieu of ellipses, hyphens with space surrounding, or double hyphens, wherever it makes sense. Most writers use the punctuations incorrectly and use them where an em dash would be more appropriate. The only place we prefer ellipses would be in an intentional gap in the quoted text, such as in a long Scripture reference.

Shortcuts to insert an em dash:

**Mac** (Shift+Option+Minus)

**PC** (Ctrl+Alt+Minus)

**Chromebook** (Ctrl+Shift+u then 2014 then spacebar).

**5.** For Scripture quotes, we prefer the reference to be at the end of the quote rather than at the beginning unless it is written in such a way as to introduce the text. (i.e. In John 15, God instructs us to *'abide in Christ'*.)

**6.** We always italicize the text of any Scripture, but not the reference. Our preferred translation is ESV and our readers will assume quoted Scripture comes from this translation unless otherwise noted. If Scripture is, in fact, from the ESV, it should be formatted like this:

*"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28).

If the author has chosen a different translation to better clarify their text, Scripture should be formatted like this:

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

**7.** For titles, we utilize quotation marks only and do not italicize. For example: In John Bunyon's famous allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress," he uses theological fiction to portray the message of perseverance in the Christian faith.

**8.** Commas and periods always belong inside quotation marks in dialogue text. There are some exceptions for question marks and exclamation points, but not commas and periods. (Yes, sometimes it may look odd!) This is an American rule and differs from British standards.

- 9.** If using single quotes to introduce an emphasized word or phrase that falls at the end of a sentence, then the end punctuation would fall outside of the quotation mark. (i.e. They were instructed to '*abide in Christ*'.)
- 10.** On numbers/numerals, we typically use numerals for all ages, grades, and measurements. For other numbers, the common rule is to spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for 10 and up.
- 11.** While both Jesus' and Jesus's are considered correct possessives for Jesus, we prefer to use Jesus'.
- 12.** In general, we prefer the American English spelling.
- 13.** Here are a few additional style examples for your reference:
- a. problem-solver, co-worker
  - b. okay
  - c. 2-3 cans (hyphens to indicate a range of numbers)
  - d. one-third, one-half, etc. (spell out fractions, unless in the context of a recipe)
  - e. Kingdom / King (in reference to God/Jesus), One (God)
  - f. Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, etc. (specific names referring to God)
  - g. 1 a.m. / 3 p.m.
- 14.** Subheadings should be ALL CAPS, left justified, and regular weight text (not bold).