

Due date for submissions: September 4, 2018

All about us: *SEEK*[®] is a magazine created to encourage adults in their walk with Jesus Christ. *SEEK*[®] corresponds to the topics of David C Cook's adult curriculum line and is designed to further apply these topics to everyday life.

Dos and Don'ts of writing articles/stories for this theme list:

DO read the Scriptures (these will be studied in class), as well as the suggestions of *What to Write*.

DO dig in deeper. DON'T use obvious material the students will likely have studied in class. DO employ supplemental Scriptures beyond the most well-known passages.

DO quote from the *King James Version*.

DON'T put words in God's mouth or suggest what God thinks. Quote what He says. DON'T submit your first thoughts.

DO some research (include the sources that verify your information).

DO get written permission from people whose real stories you tell.

DO stick to the desired word count: 850 words minimum, 1000 maximum.

DO use good grammar and spelling. DO rewrite, tighten, and proofread your work.

DO include a suggested title on your manuscript.

DO put the intended issue number and its date at the top of your manuscript, **or it will be rejected**.

No decision will be made on any manuscript prior to the submission due cutoff date. Please e-mail your submissions to seek@standardpub.com.

Quarter titles for Fall 2019: Unit 1, *God Is Faithful* (Issues 1–5); Unit 2, *Responses to God's Faithfulness* (Issues 6–9); Unit 3, *Faith Leads to Holy Living* (Issues 10–13).

Issue 1: Faithful During Distress (Spared!)

September 1, 2019 (Labor Day Sunday)

Scripture: Genesis 19:1, 15-26, 29

What to Write: Write something titled "But, God . . ." Spring from Lot and his wife's repeated failure to just do what the angels said; they instead hesitated or questioned. Explore our tendency to do the same. Do we think God might be mistaken, or what? // Why on earth would Lot's wife dread leaving such an awful place? Help readers understand that we don't "miss out" on anything when we go with God, that life with Him is more—not less. // Explore the idea of how children benefit from a righteous parent (like Lot's daughters here; Noah's sons; others?). // How do we decide when to intervene on the behalf of others—either as an advocate or with tough love? // Report on some true stories of God's rescue. // Why are we afraid to do what God wants? We think, *But if I do that, ___ will happen*. Show how God has astonishing "rest of the story" endings that we'd never even think of! // Fortunately, two angels came to the city. Unfortunately, the city was to be destroyed. Fortunately, Lot could be saved. Unfortunately . . .

Issue 2: Faithful During Grief (Heart's Desire)

September 8, 2019

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:9-20

What to Write: Illustrate how to deal with our fear that "No one understands me!" Point out that that's true. Only God can fully understand us, so . . . // Hannah eventually got her heart's desire. But what if we don't? Encourage readers about remaining faithful and testifying for God even in those cases. // Is it OK to bargain with God, as Hannah did with her "If you'll do this, I'll ___"? How are motives/purpose related? // Believers struggle with the idea of being satisfied with God alone. We're usually in a mode of "If only I had ___, I'd be happy." Expose our tendency to keep adding to our wish lists. // Interview people who did not get prayers answered their way and were disappointed; but when they looked back later, they could see God's wisdom in what happened.

Issue 3: Faithful During Uncertainty (Where's the Food?)

September 15, 2019

Scripture: Exodus 16:1-15

What to Write: After seeing God part the Red Sea and destroy Pharaoh's army, how dare the Israelites grumble and not trust Him! Suggest how we can be harder on ourselves for being equally untrusting. // How might Jesus as the "bread of life" (John 6:47ff) relate to this passage? // Report true stories about food shortages, eating "their last meal," etc., and showcase God's provision. // Make fun of our tendency to overly glorify "the good ol' days." // A contrast between Pharaoh and the Lord is in the giving of manna. The Lord prohibited work on what would be a day of worship, whereas Pharaoh had prohibited worship on what would be days of work (Exodus 5:3-5). // Highlight (and be specific about how) a focus on the physical interferes with spiritual clear thinking. // Write something like "God Provides. Period." Prove that our provision doesn't depend on income, job, retirement accounts, etc. // Write "7 Things I Won't Complain About Today"—making fun of the things we typically grumble about and offering substitutions of thanks instead of each complaint.

Issue 4: Faithful Despite Unfaithfulness (We Don't Believe You!)

September 22, 2019

Scripture: Numbers 13:1, 2, 17, 18, 25-28; 14:1, 2, 5-10a

What to Write: Write "5 Five Ways to Kick But (not Butt)"—to stop ourselves from questioning God, to stop saying, "I know God says, but . . ." // Consider Satan as a spiritual bully. Picture a believer holding a basket full of God's promises. Then the bully shouts "Boo!," and the person drops the promises and runs, afraid. // God's people turned on their own Caleb and Joshua, talking of stoning them. What's up with THAT?! And what's a modern-day application? // Profile some heroes (from the Bible and/or modern) and the fears they overcame. // Introduce an article with the English proverb: Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. No one was there. // How much research/prayer/consulting is enough before we feel "safe" enough to move forward and do what God wants? // List some Bible promises and the fears (exaggerated in our own minds?) that might interfere with our believing them.

Issue 5: Faithful in Consequences (One More Chance)

September 29, 2019

Scripture: Numbers 14:10b-20

What to Write: OK, so if God is perfect and always right, what's up with Moses' telling God what's "wrong" with His plan to destroy the people? When is it OK to play defense attorney and make our case before the Lord? // How does today's text compare with a parent telling a kid, "Don't you talk back to me, young man!"? // People speak of the "angry" God of the Old Testament. But seriously, can't we imagine how God would feel—after ALL He'd done for these people? Write about the great patience of God. // Illustrate and warn about how we need to be careful of the ripple effect if we provoke the Lord/show contempt for the Lord. Sin of an individual becomes the sin of the family, becomes the sin of the church . . . // Create a few fictional entries from Moses' diary. // Tell some stories that illustrate "Just give me another chance."

Issue 6: Obedient Faith (Do as You're Told)

October 6, 2019

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:1-8, 12, 13

What to Write: Tell true stories of several people you know (or have heard about) who demonstrated obedient faith, "no questions asked," in spite of seemingly impossible odds. Describe the results. // God's math. He says don't add to/subtract from His word. How do we mess that up? Work in other math terms/symbols like divide, multiply, "in the red"

. . . // Verse 6 says that other nations would observe Israel and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What can we (the church) do better to put people in awe of the merits of obeying God? // The opposite of the previous suggestion is the odd fact that instead of others being attracted by us, we tend to

be attracted to secular/pagan ideas—which was exactly the case with Israel/Canaanites. Address that. // Write a humor piece showing how toddlers defy parents’ rules, being ignorant of danger/foolishness . . . and then parallel how we do the same with our Father. // 1 John 5:3 says that God’s commands are not grievous/heavy/burdensome. Defend that.

Issue 7: Active Faith (Doing Right Brings Reward)

October 13, 2019

Scripture: 1 Kings 17:8-16

What to Write: In Luke 4:23-28 Jesus used this widow as an illustration. She puts us to shame. We’re hesitant to part with 1 of our 35 outfits, but she . . . What could we do this week to prove that we rely on God and not on what we see in front of us? // List some things—as relates to the Lord—that “never run out”/“never dry up”; illustrate with true stories that confirm specific Scriptures. // The drought in today’s text was a judgment on the people’s worship of Baal, a Canaanite fertility deity believed to be responsible for bringing rain. Write a fictional story or skit in which we see that the widow was a believer in God, not Baal—and therefore, was blessed and rewarded. // Help readers decide to “recklessly” give away something this week—and show them specifically how to make sure God gets public credit for the results. // See the title of this issue. What’s difference between “faith” and “active faith”? Or should faith in God inherently imply some sort of action? // Recount true stories of times when believers (in Bible times and modern) publicly gave God credit for things in their lives (instead of being quiet or just saying, for example, how “lucky” they were).

Issue 8: Humble Faith (Just Say the Word)

October 20, 2019

Scripture: Luke 7:1-10

What to Write: Prayer lists are so often about physical illness. Explain how readers might add to their prayer lists some non-illness (and more eternity-related) needs for which we’d like Jesus to “just say the word.” // The healing incident occurs during Jesus’ first ministry tour of Galilee, making the centurion’s awareness of Jesus’ authority all the more amazing. Imagine how the guy may have heard about Jesus. And what does that tell us about being witnesses? // Do a humorous piece, citing a list of spiritual-life prayer requests in physical terms, like someone who has “inflammation of the ___” or “hyperactive ___” or “clogged ___.” // Catch up on missionary news from those your church supports, and recount stories about extreme faith/trust/confidence. // Are we so familiar with stories about Jesus that we forget how much power He really has? The military aspect of today’s text lends itself to describing Jesus as a powerful, authoritative, commanding general—with us as His submissive and willing soldiers.

Issue 9: Grateful Faith (Extravagant Love)

October 27, 2019

Scripture: Luke 7:37-48

What to Write: Talk about relief we feel at getting off the hook (those “Whew!” moments, perhaps naming some little things, like a high schooler failing to do homework but then the teacher extends the deadline); then contrast that against the much greater relief felt in receiving the Lord’s forgiveness // Expose a hoity-toity mind-set of “It just isn’t DONE!” (like the mind-set of the Pharisee in today’s text) and encourage readers to break free from certain social norms that are at odds with how Jesus would do things. // Profile some other “unlikely” with whom Jesus interacted (ex: demon-possessed man, Mark 5; Nicodemus, John 3; Samaritan woman, John 4; Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9), and point out WHY He did so. // Insiders vs. outsiders. How do we distinguish between making unbelievers feel welcome at Christian gatherings without wrongly showing acceptance of sinful lifestyles?

Issue 10: Faith That Is Tested (Look in the Mirror)

November 3, 2019

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-11

What to Write: Play off some of the things parents say to kids to emphasize today's theme (ex: "Don't make me come over there!" or "I'm punishing you for your own good!"). // Is it a cop-out for us not to hold each other accountable? You know, when we tell ourselves, "Well, I shouldn't judge. I have my faults too." But then, on the other hand, though we don't speak up, we privately tend to judge others instead of examining ourselves. Jesus' "first cast out the beam out of thine own eye" (Matthew 7:5) comes to mind. // How do we find people to follow—people who have "passed the test"—who will help us stick to a high standard? // Create an acrostic from the word EXAMINE (v. 5). Offer a step-by-step process for keeping ourselves in line.

Issue 11: Faith That Sets an Example (Deception in the Family)

November 10, 2019 (Sunday before Veterans Day)

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

What to Write: Create a self-evaluation quiz for readers to answer a series of questions with this thought: "Behind my back, people say that I'm a good/bad example in the area of ____." // Detail the strong spiritual family tree of an individual, and indicate the importance. // How can we make sure that the Lord's message sounds/rings out? And that means from ME individually—not leaving that to local church leadership. // See verse 9. The Thessalonian Christians were passionate because they had come out of occult/pagan practice and, obviously, cherished the superiority of Christianity. Interview one or more people who came to Christianity out of atheism/occult practice/pagan religion. Use direct quotes of their own words of testimony. // "Why can't you be more like ____?" // Living out our faith not only helps others; it makes us stronger in a "practice makes perfect" sort of way.

Issue 12: Faith That Is Focused (Dare to Be Different)

November 17, 2019

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:13-25

What to Write: Zero in on the "obedient children" wording of verse 14, which reminds us of times when we were scolded with "You know better than that!" // Verses 18, 19 seem to contrast pagan practice with Christianity. People who think Christianity is silly haven't examined the depths of emptiness/"silliness" in other religions. Do some research, and help readers see this (with the idea of being able to explain to others). // Use housecleaning humor in an article about doing a little "cleaning" of our minds/thinking in order to be on top of our game. (Ex: Use comparisons to dusting, mopping up, using a protective finish, etc). // On verse 15—holy living is not about religious ritual but about . . . what? Prove that a holy life is more fun, not stodgy like the image that's often associated with "holy." // There's "bad different" and "good different." How can Christians be the good kind?

Issue 13: Faith That Escapes Corruption (Believing Promises)

November 24, 2019 (Sunday before Thanksgiving Day)

Scripture: 2 Peter 1:1-15

What to Write: Even longtime Christians can be confused, trying to be "good enough" to earn God's favor. Prove that living out the qualities in today's text is not to earn points, but should be a natural outcome of knowing/loving Him. // Report on several news stories about a boat that drifted away, a pet that wandered miles from home, etc., to illustrate the importance of remaining tethered to the Lord. How do we do that? // Corruption is gradual. Compare a number of "thens and nows"—things like what was allowed in movies/TV in the 1940s vs. now. Prove that we allow our thinking to be tweaked/brainwashed, a little at a time, rather than continuing to measure by God's ways. // Challenge readers to create a spiritual "bucket list"—things with eternal value that they don't want to regret not having done/accomplished. // Help readers rate themselves on

the qualities in verses 5-7. This could be a multiple-choice quiz with some humorous options. // Could there be an opposites list for verses 5-7, showing how atheism/occultism/other world religions feature the opposite characteristics? (That is, pick one illustration for each.) Be specific. // There are several *P* words in this text: *precious, peace, power, pertain, promises, partakers, purged* . . . Those might suggest an outline for an article on today's title.