

What I Enjoy About Writing

by Ed Welch

Ed Welch serves as a counselor and senior faculty member at CCEF and is the author of numerous books, including *When People Are Big and God Is Small*, *Side by Side*, and *Running Scared*. We sat down with Ed to talk about his writing and specific ways we can pray for CCEF's authors.

What led you to write?

I never planned to write. Years ago I didn't enjoy anything about writing. In graduate school I worked with many neurological patients in a secular setting. This presented me with the challenge of how to connect people and their complex problems to the truths of Scripture. Writing helped me do this.



Working through the first seven versions of my dissertation—yes, seven!—I can't say I enjoyed writing then. But as I learned how to critique and edit myself, I began to appreciate the craft of writing. It's hard work, but what I find so valuable about the writing process is that it gives me the opportunity to be careful and systematic in my thoughts, particularly as I try to think about issues biblically.

My first book was born from a class I used to teach at CCEF, Counseling & Physiology. I wanted a book to give to my students, but there was nothing out there. So I wrote *The Counselor's Guide to the Brain and Its Disorders*.

Why do you write what you write?

I've had the opportunity to work on a variety of writing projects here at CCEF, including blog posts, journal articles, and books. Blogs are fun, like eating dessert. Writing for the *Journal of Biblical Counseling* is like salad: it's not always fun, but it's good for me to do. It forces me to be organized and clear, and I always learn through it. Books are a longer-

term project. Seeds grow, weeds shoot up everywhere and must be pulled by hand. The work is slow, hard, and satisfying. By the end, the content changes you.

The topics come in different ways, but here is a common pattern. I am befuddled by something, such as schizophrenia or anger. I'm trying to help someone, but I'm stuck. I go through cycles of studying Scripture, reading, perhaps even teaching, writing, revising, offering it to others, and so on. Along the way I discover new ideas and fresh approaches, as though among this overflowing treasure chest of God's Word I notice a particular jewel that captures me and leaves me thankful for such a gift.

Everything in Scripture is connected, and often the seed of an idea expands and grows and multiplies. There's something deeply enjoyable about the process of taking that seed and seeing it become more elegant and attractive. I find that to be personally profitable. I'll give you an example.

I wrote *When People Are Big and God Is Small* in response to the cultural idea of codependency because I wanted to try to think biblically about it. Studying fear of man led me into the issues of shame and dishonor, which led me to write *Shame Interrupted*. This book leads into the Levitical laws, into what is clean and holy. So that material moved me into the priesthood, where I saw the idea of God walking with his people and the clear priestly connotations of the tabernacle. *Created to Draw Near* was born, and it kept me thinking about the question, "Who are we?" In Genesis 1–3 the priesthood shares prominence with humanity-as-royal-offspring. I'm currently working on a book about kings and kingship.

Scripture is the work of one author; we would expect one piece to be connected to the others, and I certainly enjoy seeing some of those connections. Scripture just yields more and more over time.



How can we pray for CCEF?

If you want to pray for CCEF, pray that we grow in the process of writing books. It's costly for an institution to give up time for somebody to write. It's costly for the writer. I hope that the work we do at CCEF, and what we write about, reshapes our own hearts first. So please pray for our writing time to be spiritual, that it would be fruitful in our own lives so those who are close to us see something new of Christ in us.

To learn more about Ed Welch and find his writings, please visit ccef.org/ed-welch.