

FREE AUTHOR GUIDE

THE ZECHARIAH GUIDE
**PUBLISH
WITH
POWER**

A Faith-Based Roadmap
From Book Idea to Published Author



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Publish With Power

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV).

From Calling to Completion

There is a difference between having something to say and understanding how to shape that message into a book.

Many aspiring authors carry an idea for years. Some begin writing but lose momentum. Others complete a manuscript and become overwhelmed by editing, formatting, publishing platforms, distribution, and marketing. Wherever you are in the process, this guide was created to help you identify your next step and move forward with greater clarity.

Every book I have published began with an awareness that something was needed. Sometimes it was a lesson that could strengthen families. At other times, it was a message concerning spiritual growth, healthy living, purpose, or transformation. The desire to write was not merely about producing another book. It was connected to service.

A faith-based author understands that words carry responsibility. The goal is not simply to fill pages, but to communicate truth with clarity, integrity, and purpose.

*“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”
Habakkuk 2:2, KJV*

This guide introduces the major stages of the publishing journey - from recognizing the message within you to preparing, publishing, and presenting your book to the people it was created to serve. You do not have to understand everything before you begin. You need a clear starting point, a willingness to learn, and the discipline to continue.

CLARIFY THE MESSAGE



Before you create a book, become clear about the people, purpose, and transformation the book is meant to serve.

STEP 1

Recognize the Need

Begin with the people you hope to serve. What are they experiencing? What questions are they asking? What truth, instruction, encouragement, or practical help could make a meaningful difference in their lives?

Some books are born from personal experience. Others emerge from years of teaching, ministry, professional knowledge, research, or observation. Your message may have developed through something you survived, something God taught you, or something you continually see affecting your community.

Do not begin by asking whether your idea is impressive enough. Ask whether it is useful, truthful, and necessary.

CLARITY EXERCISE

The people I want to help are _____, and they need this book because _____.

This book will help _____ understand, overcome, accomplish, or experience _____.

STEP 2

Identify the Reader

A message written for everyone often becomes too general to deeply help anyone. You may believe that many kinds of people can benefit from your book. That may be true. Still, you should be able to picture the primary reader.

Consider the reader's season of life, central struggle, level of knowledge, spiritual concerns, and desired outcome. Knowing your reader will influence your tone, chapter structure, examples, vocabulary, title, cover, and marketing.

Your reader is not simply a customer. Your reader is a person you have chosen to serve through the written word.

DEFINE YOUR PRIMARY READER

My primary reader is _____.

They are currently struggling with or seeking _____.

By the end of this book, I want them to _____.

STEP 3

Test the Message Before You Build the Book

You may feel certain about the message God has placed on your heart, but that does not mean the first title, subtitle, description, or presentation will be the clearest way to communicate it.

Testing does not determine whether your message has value. It helps you discover which language allows the intended audience to recognize that value. Create two versions of the same book idea and change only one major element at a time - perhaps the title, subtitle, promise, cover direction, or lead-magnet topic.

Share the two versions with similar audiences through social posts, Pins, emails, or simple landing pages. Observe which version produces more meaningful action. Clicks, email signups, thoughtful replies, preorders, and requests for more information are stronger signals than likes alone.

Listen carefully, but do not surrender the message merely to follow popularity. Use feedback to improve communication, not to replace conviction.

SIMPLE SPLIT-TEST EXERCISE

Version A: This book will help _____.

Version B: This book will show _____ how to
_____.

Ask representative readers: Which one makes you more interested in learning about the book, and why?
Record their exact words.

STEP 4

Clarify the Transformation

Readers do not purchase books merely because pages have been written. They are looking for an experience, an answer, an understanding, or a change.

Ask where the reader is at the beginning of the book and where the reader should be by the end. A testimony may move the reader from discouragement toward hope. A teaching book may move the reader from confusion toward understanding. A practical guide may move the reader from uncertainty toward confident action.

Your book does not have to solve every problem. It should make a clear and meaningful contribution.

TRANSFORMATION STATEMENT

Before reading this book, my reader may feel, believe, or experience
_____.

After reading it, I want the reader to understand, feel, believe, or be prepared to
_____.

BUILD THE BOOK



Inspiration may begin the writing process, but structure helps the reader follow the message.

STEP 5

Create a Simple Book Roadmap

Do not wait until every chapter is perfectly planned. Begin with the major ideas the reader needs in order to experience the transformation you identified.

Write the central subject of your book at the top of a page. Beneath it, list the major lessons, experiences, questions, or stages that belong within that subject. These ideas can become your chapters.

Arrange them in an order that feels natural. Some books follow a chronological progression. Others move from foundational principles into practical application. Your outline is a guide, not a prison. It can develop as the book grows.

CHAPTER FRAMEWORK

For each chapter, identify: the subject, its purpose, the key truth, the supporting story or Scripture, and the application the reader should carry forward.

STEP 6

Write the First Draft

The purpose of the first draft is not perfection. Its purpose is to bring the book into existence.

Many aspiring authors remain trapped because they try to write, edit, format, and judge every sentence at the same time. Constant correction can interrupt the flow of thought and make writing feel heavier than it needs to be.

Choose a realistic schedule. You may write for thirty minutes each morning, complete a certain number of words each week, or concentrate on one section at a time. The best schedule is one you can maintain.

When resistance appears, reduce the size of the task. Do not tell yourself that you must finish the book today. Decide to write the next page, explain the next idea, or complete the next section. Progress restores confidence.

STARTING EXERCISE

Open a blank document and write three headings: What I want the reader to know; Why this matters; What I have experienced or learned. Write freely beneath each heading without stopping to polish.

STRENGTHEN THE MANUSCRIPT



Finishing a draft is a major accomplishment. Revision helps the message become clear, organized, and effective.

STEP 7

Revise for Clarity and Structure

Begin by examining the book as a whole. Does the introduction establish the purpose? Do the chapters follow a logical progression? Are important ideas explained fully? Does the manuscript contain unnecessary repetition?

During revision, focus first on meaning and organization rather than punctuation. You may discover that two chapters need to become one, a long chapter needs to be divided, or an important subject deserves greater attention.

Revision is not a sign that you failed to write well. It is part of writing well.

REVISION QUESTIONS

Does each chapter have a clear purpose? Does it support the central promise? Is anything missing? Is anything present that distracts from the message?

STEP 8

Edit and Proofread Carefully

After the structure is strong, refine the language. Look for unclear sentences, awkward transitions, excessive repetition, grammatical errors, and inconsistent terminology. Read the manuscript aloud. Your ear will often recognize problems your eyes overlook.

Proofreading should take place after the major revisions are complete. There is little benefit in perfecting punctuation inside a paragraph that may later be removed.

Whenever possible, allow another qualified person to review the manuscript. A spiritually grounded friend may offer valuable feedback concerning the message, but spiritual agreement alone does not replace strong editing.

THREE LEVELS OF REVIEW

Developmental review considers structure and completeness. Copyediting strengthens grammar, consistency, and readability. Proofreading catches remaining errors after the manuscript has been edited and formatted.

PREPARE FOR PUBLICATION



Professional presentation affects the reader's experience. The interior and cover should support the message rather than distract from it.

STEP 9

Format the Interior

Book formatting involves more than choosing a font and justifying the text. You must decide on a trim size, establish proper margins, allow sufficient gutter space near the binding, format chapter openings, and create consistent paragraph and heading styles.

A book may also contain front matter such as a title page, copyright page, dedication, acknowledgments, table of contents, introduction, or preface. Headers, footers, page numbering, section breaks, image placement, and spacing must be handled consistently.

When the interior is complete, export it as a high-quality print-ready PDF and review it page by page. Do not assume the exported version looks exactly like the working document.

COMMON TRIM SIZES

Many nonfiction paperbacks use 5 x 8, 5.5 x 8.5, or 6 x 9 inches. The right choice depends upon the type of book, expected page count, and reading experience.

STEP 10

Create a Cover That Communicates

Your cover is often the reader's first encounter with the book. It should communicate the subject, emotional tone, and level of professionalism within seconds.

A complete print cover normally includes the front cover, spine, and back cover. Its final dimensions depend upon the trim size, page count, paper type, and publishing platform.

Typography should be readable even when the cover appears as a small online thumbnail. The imagery should support the message rather than overwhelm it.

COVER CHECK

Does this cover accurately prepare the reader for the book they are about to receive?

CHOOSE THE PUBLISHING PATH



Publishing involves production, distribution, pricing, ownership, and long-term goals.

STEP 11

Understand Your Publishing Options

Traditional publishing generally involves submitting a manuscript to a publisher or literary representative. The publisher may oversee editing, design, production, and distribution, but acceptance is selective and the process can take considerable time.

Self-publishing gives the author greater control over the content, timeline, design, pricing, and marketing. It also places more responsibility upon the author to prepare the book professionally.

Print-on-demand services allow books to be printed when customers order them, reducing the need to purchase and store a large inventory. Platforms such as Amazon KDP and Lulu offer different combinations of printing, distribution, ISBN options, author compensation, and product formats. Study current requirements before uploading.

COMPARE BEFORE YOU CHOOSE

Consider printing cost, retail price, author earnings, distribution reach, return policies, file requirements, hardcover and paperback options, ISBN ownership, and the cost of personal inventory.

STEP 12

Order and Examine a Proof Copy

Never approve a book for public sale without examining a physical proof whenever the platform provides that option.

A digital preview is helpful, but it cannot fully show how the book will feel in someone's hands. Examine the cover, spine, image quality, font size, margins, gutter space, page numbering, chapter openings, blank pages, paper, and binding.

Finding a mistake in the proof copy is inconvenient. Discovering it after dozens or hundreds of copies have been distributed is far more costly.

PROOFING PRACTICE

Read portions of the physical proof under normal lighting. Invite another careful reader to examine it as well. Mark every correction before approving the final edition.

RELEASE WITH PURPOSE



Publishing makes the book available. A thoughtful launch helps the right people discover it.

STEP 13

Build Interest Before Publication

Marketing should not begin on release day. Start identifying and gathering potential readers while the book is being written and prepared.

Share selected insights from the book. Discuss the problem it addresses. Tell the story behind its creation. Invite people into the journey without giving away the entire work.

You can build interest through an email list, social media content, short videos, speaking engagements, a free guide, a waiting list, ministry presentations, or behind-the-scenes updates. The purpose is not to pressure people. It is to help the right audience recognize that the book was created with them in mind.

STEP 14

Create a Simple Launch Path

A successful launch does not always require a massive audience or complicated campaign. It requires clarity.

Your launch may include a landing page, email sequence, launch video, release event, personal outreach, partnerships, or speaking opportunities. Choose methods that fit the audience and the subject of the book.

Marketing should extend the service of the book.

SIMPLE FUNNEL

Attention -> landing page -> email relationship -> book or course offer -> continued service. Keep the next action clear at every stage.

STEP 15

Build a Reader Journey

One book can become the beginning of a larger relationship. After someone encounters your message, what should happen next?

The reader may be invited to join your email community, attend a workshop, watch a teaching series, purchase a companion workbook, enroll in a course, invite you to speak, explore another book, or become part of your ministry or educational community.

Your book is part of an ecosystem. It can educate, establish trust, open doors, and lead readers toward deeper transformation.

LOCATE YOURSELF ON THE ROADMAP



Identify your present stage and commit to the next faithful action.

YOUR PUBLISHING ROADMAP

Stage One - The Idea

You sense that you have something to write, but the message is not yet fully defined.

Your next step: Identify the reader, the need, and the transformation.

Stage Two - The Plan

You know what the book is about, but you need structure.

Your next step: Create a simple chapter roadmap.

Stage Three - The Draft

You have begun writing but need consistency and momentum.

Your next step: Establish a realistic writing rhythm and complete one section at a time.

Stage Four - The Manuscript

The draft is complete, but it needs revision and professional preparation.

Your next step: Strengthen the content, edit carefully, and prepare the interior and cover.

Stage Five - Publication

The book files are ready, but you need to select a platform and release the book.

Your next step: Compare publishing pathways, upload carefully, and order a proof.

Stage Six - Market Reach

The book is available, but the right readers must still discover it.

Your next step: Build a clear launch path and continue serving the audience.

YOUR NEXT SEVEN DAYS

Day One: Write the one-sentence purpose of your book.

Day Two: Describe the primary reader.

Day Three: List the major ideas or chapters.

Day Four: Write or revise one complete section.

Day Five: Review your current manuscript for gaps and repetition.

Day Six: Research the requirements of your preferred publishing pathway.

Day Seven: Decide the next milestone and place it on your calendar.

DO NOT POSTPONE THE NEXT STEP

Small, deliberate movement can break a long season of delay. Choose the action that matches your present stage and complete it before gathering more information.

FINAL WORDS

Faithful Stewardship of the Message

Publishing with power is not about pursuing recognition for its own sake. It is about taking responsibility for the message entrusted to you and preparing it with enough care that others can receive it clearly.

Faith does not eliminate preparation. Purpose does not remove the need for excellence. A genuine calling should move us toward faithful stewardship of the gift, the message, and the opportunity.

You may not yet know every technical step. You may still need guidance with editing, formatting, cover design, publishing platforms, email marketing, or distribution. That does not mean the book should remain unfinished.

Begin where you are. Use what you have. Learn what the next stage requires. Continue until the message is no longer living only within you, but is available to serve the people it was given to reach.

*“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”
Ecclesiastes 9:10, KJV*

READY TO GO BEYOND THE ROADMAP?

This guide has introduced you to the major stages of moving from a book idea to a published work.

The Publish With Power course takes you deeper into the process.

Inside the course, you will receive guided instruction designed to help you clarify your message, develop your manuscript, understand editing and preparation, explore publishing pathways, and position your book for greater reach.

CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

You do not have to keep guessing your way through the process. Visit ZechariahPublishing.com to learn more about Publish With Power.

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