



# Special Concerns for Christian Writers



## Capitalization of Religious Terms\*

The capitalization guidelines in the [Christian Writer's Manual of Style \(CWMS\)](#) are based off the rules in the [Chicago Manual of Style \(CMOS\)](#). Kathy Ide's Proofreading [Secrets of Best-Selling Authors](#) and her [Capitalization Dictionary](#) are great condensed resources for authors.

Capitalization of deity pronouns, known as reverential capitalization, is a long-standing debate in Christian publishing. While CMOS and CWMS set the guidelines, you'll find a lot of variation among authors, editors, and publishers. But there are two rules that everyone agrees on: consistency and adherence to copyright.

The words who, whom, whose, my, and one should not be capitalized, unless the word is part of a name of God. Whether or not you believe masculine pronouns (He/he, His/his, Him/him, You/you) when relating to the Trinity should be capitalized, just be consistent throughout your writing to prevent confusion for your readers.

The publisher for each version of the Bible follows their capitalization guidelines throughout the text. Authors must maintain capitalization, along with all other conventions relevant to the version, when quoting Scripture. For example, the NIV does not capitalize deity pronouns. If you use reverential capitalization in your own writing, and you want to quote a verse from the NIV, you have to use lowercase pronouns for the trinity, just as it appears in the NIV. Some publishers are known to be protective, so be sure to stay true to the original text when quoting Scripture.

## Copyright

Permissions for the relevant version(s) must be included in any book that quotes Scripture. You can find the copyright guidelines and verbiage on the publisher's website. For example, if you're including Scriptures from the New Living Translation, just Google "Permissions for NLT" and the permissions page for Tyndale House will appear at the top.

\*This section includes affiliate links

## Quoting Scripture

We also have to include the verse reference and version as we quote Scripture within the body of our piece, whether it's as a block quote or within a sentence. If we don't directly quote the scripture, but make mention of it, we must include the verse reference and version as either a footnote or in the endnotes. Here are examples.

### *In-text Quote*

The verse is in quotation marks. There is no closing punctuation within the verse. The reference immediately follows in parenthesis and ends with closing punctuation after the reference. Italics are not needed.

We can't be with God on our own because we're sinners. But God loves us so much that that "he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV). Thanks to God's mercy and Jesus' sacrifice, now we can spend eternity with our Father in heaven.

### *Block Quote*

The verse set out between the two paragraphs is indented. The verse ends with the relevant punctuation and then the reference and version is in parentheses with no ending punctuation.

This is a paragraph where I'm telling you about how much God loves you.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)

This is the next paragraph where I continue telling you about how much God loves you.

### *Endnotes/footnotes*

When we make reference to a Scripture, we must insert either a footnote or an endnote. Footnotes appear at the bottom of each page. Endnotes appear altogether on one page at the end of the book.

God loves us so much that he sacrificed his only son, so that through believing in Jesus, we can live for eternity in heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> John 3:16 NIV

(Footnote at the bottom of the page).