

Interview Questions for Ava Pennington

1. Why did you begin writing?

The more I learn, the more I want to share what I'm learning. It's one of the reasons I teach. Writing books, magazine articles, devotions, and short stories is another way to share the truth and joy of God's love for us.

2. How long did it take you to become published?

After a successful career as a Human Resources executive in New York City, I relocated to Florida with my husband. Instead of returning to the corporate world, I began to teach and write. My first story was published in *Chicken Soup for the Working Woman's Soul* three years later. That story was followed by stories in twenty-six additional anthologies and numerous magazine articles.

I also attended writers' conferences. It was at a conference that I met an editor from Baker Publishing Group who published my first book, *One Year Alone with God*. I met another editor at the same conference who published a co-authored series of children's picture books.

3. What do you hope to communicate through your writing?

Previous generations were often brought up in the church and had an understanding of the biblical account of God's dealings with humanity. Even if they didn't believe the biblical record, they were at least familiar with the content.

Fewer people today have learned the biblical accounts many of us take for granted. Our post-modernist culture doubts absolute truth. "Find your own truth" is often their motto. This biblical illiteracy often prevents people from understanding the language of salvation.

Through devotions, magazine articles, and books, my goal is to re-introduce life-changing, biblical truth in relevant and winning ways.

4. What inspired you to write *Reflections on the Names of God*?

Early in my Christian life, I heard a sermon series on the Lord's Prayer. When my pastor reached "Hallowed be Your name," he took a detour into a series on the names of God. That series changed the way I prayed. Not long after, I completed Kay Arthur's study, *Lord, I Want to Know You*. I was reminded that to truly trust God we must know who He is, and He has revealed who He is through His names.

5. Tell us about your family.

Russ and I were married forty years before his graduation to heaven. Although we were not blessed with children, we opened our home to a series of dogs throughout our marriage. Several of their stories have been published in various *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books.

6. What are your hobbies or favorite activities?

When I'm not writing, I'm usually teaching or reading.

I teach a Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) class from September through May each year. The class of approximately 200 women meets weekly.

My favorite non-fiction authors are C.S. Lewis, Elisabeth Elliot, and Kay Arthur.

My favorite fiction authors are C.S. Lewis, Frank Peretti, and Bodie and Brock Thoene.

7. Describe your own faith journey.

I came to know Christ when I was twelve through a Vacation Bible School class in my friend's backyard. After a serious auto accident in 1983, I rededicated my life to the Lord, and became intentional about growing in my relationship with Christ. I was blessed to be part of a dynamic church family where discipleship was a priority. As my spiritual life grew, I began to lead small groups and teach Bible studies.

8. What advice do you have for new writers?

Read as much as you can in the genre you are interested in writing. Develop your proficiency by learning the craft of writing. Invest in your writing by joining a writers' group and attending writers' conferences. Finally, find a critique group where you can share your work and receive feedback to help you improve your skills.