**DEVELOPING A CLEAR MESSAGE**

**TO CUT THROUGH THE NOISE**

**“That energy is God’s energy deep within you.” Phil 2:13a**

**Exercise 1**—**Inventory Your Work**

Start by inventorying everything you’ve written or published (or wanted to publish). Identify patterns with your work, then go beyond simply listing ideas or themes. Tell a story about *why*. Story has so much power and allure. Begin to form a narrative around yourself and your work. Help people understand where you’re coming from.

* What topics or themes emerge in your pieces?
* Where have your pieces appeared, or who has read them?
* What patterns can you identify?
* If you want to consider the financial return on your writing, is there a theme for a subset of your writing that earned income?

**Exercise 2—Interview Yourself**

Once you have the themes, now look for the *whys* to identify the core of your story (or *brand*). Expect this to evolve over time. It’s not meant to be static. Don’t get hung up on thinking you need to create an identity that will encompass anything that you’ll write in the future. It’s more about presenting yourself as a professional. You can change it every year if you need to move into new writing territory.

Try to get beyond job titles and school degrees. Think about why you chose that role, job, or degree.

* Who are you?  How did you get here?
* What do you care about and why?
* What part of the Gospel most resonates with you right now?

**Exercise 3—Create a Tagline**

* Create a short tagline reflecting who you are and the themes you write about to help readers know what to expect from your writing or speaking. Add this to your business card and/or website.

(Some of these exercises have been adapted from Jane Friedman’s book, *The Business of Being a Writer*, 2018.)