

THE THIRD PATH | EDITORIAL REVIEW

Five defining manuscript quotes • A reader-focused rewrite guide for John Lawrence Rudolph • October 2026

FIVE LINES THAT REVEAL THE BOOK WITHIN THE MANUSCRIPT

John, these words from your manuscript trace the most compelling path for your reader: an adventurous life, an unfulfilled hunger, a personal pursuit of Jesus, and the humility of ongoing transformation. Let this thread guide the rewrite.

01 THE SPARK OF ADVENTURE

“John, never forget life is an adventure”!

Your father’s words give the story its original momentum—and a theme to return to at the end.

02 THE CHARACTER

“If there are two roads Rudolph, you always take the harder one!”

Readers meet a risk-taker before they meet a spiritual teacher. Show the costs and rewards of that instinct.

03 THE TURNING POINT

“God, I know I will be successful again. I just don’t want success without You.”

The emotional center of the book. Build the narrative toward this prayer, then show what changed.

04 THE DEEPER HUNGER

“My first experience of the ‘peace transcending all understanding’ came about by the sincere and burning desire to know Him.”

This is the bridge from adventure to worship in spirit and truth. Describe the experience clearly, without prescribing it to others.

05 THE POSTURE OF SURRENDER

“God owes me nothing, I owe Him everything.”

A strong destination for the journey: no longer proving achievement, but learning dependence on God.

EDITORIAL THROUGHLINE • Let the adventure earn attention, the honesty earn trust, and the transformation invite readers closer to Jesus.

1 | MAKE THE ADVENTURE DRIVE THE STORY

Build momentum and connect the experiences to spiritual transformation

A simple three-part journey

1. THE PURSUIT — Flying, achievement, risk, relationships, and the desire to make something of life. Keep episodes that reveal a meaningful decision, surprise, consequence, or character trait.
2. THE TURNING — Setbacks, losses, disillusionment, and the realization that achievement could not satisfy the deeper hunger. Allow the reader to feel the stakes.
3. THE DISCOVERY — The gradual deepening of prayer, worship, trust, and dependence on the Holy Spirit, including how your understanding continues to mature today.

A more engaging first chapter

Consider starting near the moment you prayed, “God, I know I will be successful again. I just don’t want success without You.” Then return to the beginnings of your aviation story. That tension gives readers a reason to follow the entire journey. Tell that moment as it happened, without inventing dramatic details.

Give your best scenes room to breathe

Strong candidates include learning to fly as a teenager, your parents’ graduation-day suitcase, becoming a Learjet captain at twenty-five, difficult flights, meaningful personal reversals, and the gradual change in your prayer life. Condense flight logs, names, routes, and technical background that do not change the story.

Ask these questions at the end of each chapter

- What am I pursuing in this chapter, and what stands in my way?
- What choice, setback, or surprise moves the story forward?
- What changed in me because of this experience?
- Can I leave the reader with a meaningful question or insight instead of stopping the story for a long explanation?

Help the reader find the path

Create a chapter map with the year, main event, emotional turn, and spiritual thread. This will also reveal where chapters repeat an idea or get out of sequence. Correct numbering and timeline inconsistencies during this pass.

Length guidance: focus on forward movement and reader satisfaction rather than an arbitrary word count. A tighter manuscript—possibly around 60,000–70,000 words—may be easier to position, but let the revised story determine its final length.

2 | INVITE THE SPIRITUALLY HUNGRY READER

Shift from explaining what is missing to showing what is possible

Make the reader a fellow traveler

Your ideal reader may already attend church, love Jesus, and still wonder whether there is more depth to a life of worship and prayer. Write to that quiet longing. A. W. Tozer offers a useful model: his writing names spiritual hunger in a way that draws readers into pursuit, even when he challenges complacency.

Three practical language shifts

CURRENT EMPHASIS: Denominational barriers keep people from worshiping rightly.

READER-FACING APPROACH: “I began wondering how many believers, like me, loved God and still longed to know Him more personally.”

CURRENT EMPHASIS: The church has become comfortable or lukewarm.

READER-FACING APPROACH: “I saw how easily comfort had taken hold in my own life, and Jesus’ words to Laodicea began to challenge me personally.”

CURRENT EMPHASIS: The church needs to adopt Purposed Transformative Prayer.

READER-FACING APPROACH: “Here is how my prayer life changed, what I learned along the way, and why I hope others will pursue God with fresh hunger.”

A simple editing pattern for every reflective passage

- START with a scene, an honest struggle, or a question readers recognize.
- SHOW your uncertainty, resistance, mistakes, and growth alongside the discoveries.
- CONNECT the experience to a biblical theme without presenting your personal experience as everyone’s required pattern.
- INVITE the reader to reflect and seek Jesus; resist turning each chapter into an assessment of what other Christians are doing wrong.

Bring your most relatable lines forward

“God owes me nothing, I owe Him everything” reflects humility and dependence. Your later admission that you still wrestle with trust and obedience is also powerful. Readers are likely to connect more deeply with a man still being formed by God than with a narrator who seems to have finished learning.

Preserve both conviction and generosity

Be confident about what God has done in your life while making room for the ways He works in other believers. Keep the emphasis on Jesus, not on whether readers reproduce a particular emotional or tangible experience.

3 | LET SCRIPTURE SUPPORT THE INVITATION

A collaborative approach to biblical clarity and pastoral resonance

Make John 4:23-24 the recurring biblical anchor

Your desire to encourage worship in spirit and truth is the spiritual heartbeat of the book. Let readers meet that invitation through your experiences with prayer, surrender, and spiritual growth. Define recurring language plainly so regular church attenders can follow without specialized terminology.

Give each kind of statement its own place

1. STORY — What happened? Help readers see the setting, people, and choices.
2. EXPERIENCE — What did you pray, sense, fear, or come to understand?
3. SCRIPTURE — What biblical principle illuminates the experience?
4. INVITATION — What might a reader consider, pray about, or practice? Explain Purposed Transformative Prayer as the pattern you developed through your own journey.

Pastoral and biblical collaboration

- Pastor LW Lundstrom will provide biblical principles and relevant Scripture passages to help connect the memoir's major themes to the Bible in context. This support can strengthen theological clarity without changing your personal testimony or voice.
- Suggested review areas include worship in spirit and truth, knowing Christ, the Holy Spirit's work, prayer, sanctification, surrender, discernment, and the relationship between grace and spiritual growth. Any claims about end times or particular spiritual experiences should be carefully framed and supported.
- Verify attributed quotations, especially the C. S. Lewis reference, and review how Bible passages are interpreted and applied. Where an interpretation is debated, describe it with appropriate care.
- When discussing difficult interactions with pastors, church leaders, or family members, focus on what the experience taught you. Reduce unnecessary names and accusations; keep the story fair and credible.

Consider brief chapter-end invitations

Use one short reflection question at the end of selected chapters, rather than teaching after every story. Examples: "Where have I confused success with significance?" "What would it look like to approach God with greater hunger?" "Where am I learning to trust His leading?"

A helpful quality check

After each chapter ask: Did the reader enjoy a real story? Did the reader see genuine growth? Was the biblical connection understandable? Did the ending stir curiosity or hope?

4 | REWRITE WITH A CLEAR PATH TO READERS

Priorities, positioning, and practical publishing preparation

Recommended revision order

1. **WRITE YOUR ONE-PARAGRAPH PROMISE.** Describe who this book is for, what journey they will follow, and what you hope it will awaken in them.
2. **MAP ALL CHAPTERS.** Note the memorable scene, the tension, the change, and the spiritual thread. Mark each chapter keep, compress, combine, move, or cut.
3. **REWRITE THREE REPRESENTATIVE CHAPTERS.** Start with one exciting flying story, one hard personal turning point, and one meaningful prayer/transformation chapter. Use these as the template for the full rewrite.
4. **SHAPE THE ENDING AS AN INVITATION.** Bring the story back to the original hunger for God. Let your final words make readers want to seek Jesus rather than debate the church.
5. **COLLABORATE ON SCRIPTURE.** Pastor LW Lundstrom will recommend biblical principles and passages to weave naturally into the story. Keep the biblical support faithful to context and accessible to church readers.
6. **TEST WITH YOUR REAL AUDIENCE.** Ask 6–10 readers—including active church members, small-group participants, and a pastor—where they felt drawn in, lost momentum, or wanted more. Listen for patterns.
7. **POLISH AND PREPARE TO PUBLISH.** After the narrative and biblical review, complete line editing, proofreading, cover and subtitle testing, endorsements, and a launch plan.

Highest-marketability positioning

Position *The Third Path* first as a gripping true-life adventure and spiritual memoir, not as a critique of Christianity. A possible line: “From the cockpit to the breaking point—and into a deeper pursuit of Jesus.” Keep the title if the three-path idea becomes easy to understand early and meaningful at the end.

The clearest starting audience is believers who enjoy Christian memoirs and are interested in prayer, worship, and spiritual formation. Churches, men’s groups, and small groups may be promising channels if the book stays welcoming, story-led, and discussable. These are positioning hypotheses to validate with reader feedback—not guaranteed sales results.

Useful materials for a future launch

- A back-cover description that starts with the adventure, names the turning point, and ends with the spiritual invitation.
- A polished 15–20-page opening sample that demonstrates pace and readability.
- Three short shareable excerpts: a high-stakes flying scene, the prayer at a low point, and a vulnerable reflection about knowing God.
- An approachable author introduction, plus optional chapter discussion questions for church and small-group readers.

My encouragement as your editor and publishing advisor

John, keep the courage, wonder, and conviction that led you to write this. The opportunity now is to let those qualities shine through a clearer story. Invite readers into the adventures, share honestly how God has been changing you, and let the desire to worship Him in spirit and truth emerge as the book’s natural heartbeat. That is the version most likely to be read, recommended, discussed, and remembered.