



Weekly Tip - August 3, 2026

Give Your Reader Something To Do

Dear Ministry Leader,

I want to hand you one small edit that has done more for my partner communication over the years than almost any strategy shift I have made. It has nothing to do with better stories or nicer design. It is this: give your reader something specific to do.

In my early years at Campus Crusade for Christ, I wrote a prayer letter I was genuinely proud of. Good stories, warm updates, a clean layout. I mailed it to every name on our list and waited for the phone to ring. It did not ring. A mentor who had been doing this far longer than I had asked me one question I still use today. “What did you actually ask them to do?” I did not have an answer. I had asked my partners to feel informed. I had not asked them to do anything.

Here is the distinction I want to put in front of you. Call it “telling” versus “giving them a job.”

“Telling” hands the reader information and hopes something happens. It is warm, it is well written, and it produces almost nothing measurable.

“Giving them a job” hands the reader one small, specific action and a reason it matters. It is what actually starts a conversation instead of ending one.

Philippians 4:17 sits underneath all of this. Paul was not writing the Philippians to squeeze out another gift, he was writing so they would see the fruit being added to their own account. When you ask a partner to do something small, frame it as an investment in what God is doing in and through them, not a favor to your budget.

Three things I look for now before any email or letter goes out:

1. Give a job, not just news. Replace “we wanted to keep you updated” with something the reader can actually do this minute: reply with one word, check a box, circle a name, forward this to a friend.
2. Keep the job tiny. Thirty seconds or less. The smaller the ask, the higher the response, and the more the reader feels like a participant instead of an audience.

3. Tell them why their small effort matters to their own growth, not just your need. A tiny action framed around their own fruit will always outperform one framed around your budget.

The prayer letter I eventually rewrote asked exactly one thing. Circle the name of a student on the enclosed list and mail the card back to us. Nothing else changed, same stories, same layout. The response did not just go up. Partners started telling us they felt like they were “on the team,” which was the whole point.

Finding that one sentence and rewriting it well is not glamorous work. It is closer to Colossians 3:23, the unglamorous discipline of getting a small thing right because you are doing it for the Lord and not for applause. Nobody claps for a well edited call to action. It still moves people.

Why not try this this week? Pull one email or letter you already have scheduled to go out. Find the sentence that only asks the reader to feel or know something. Rewrite it into a sentence that asks them to do something specific, tiny, and tied to their own growth.

An email that only informs gets read once. An email that gives someone a job gets a reply.

Passionately,

Rick

P.S. P.S. If you would like to workshop your own emails and letters with a small group of other ministry leaders doing this same work, the Virtual Consortium Group is a monthly roundtable built for exactly that kind of practical, in-the-trenches coaching. [REPLY HERE](#), and I will send you the details for the next session. You can also [CLICK HERE](#) to read a quick synopsis about the Virtual Consortium.

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