



Write Your Story!

A guide to processing your pain,
captivating readers, and pointing back to
God as He humbles your heart.

By Ericka Clay

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From the Author



Not all stories are lovely. But God encourages us to dig deep, see the beauty in the ashes, and walk with Him as we walk away from our pasts and into His incredible forever.

This study prayerfully gives you the Scriptural tools and insights to write your testimony. It's also the first step in gaining the courage to share it with those who could learn and grow from it.

As we walk together through Genesis 1, Psalm 88, and Revelation 22, we'll watch as God shares His own story of creation and allow His Holy Spirit to guide us in reflecting on our lives, offering them as a living sacrifice to our Lord.

So come, let's get started viewing what Satan meant for evil as what God has always meant for good.

Yours in Jesus,

Ericka¹

1. <https://erickaclay.com/about>

Part I: The Beginning

What We Can Learn from Genesis



Before you begin: Watch *Part I¹* and *Part II²* of the Book of Genesis Summary by The Bible Project.

Genesis³: the beginning of God's story, where he loves His creation so much, He gives His only Son over to death to save them.

But that's not the end of the story, something that is vital to remember when reflecting on our own.

Jesus was raised to life after conquering death, and as Christians (or "little Christs"), we, too, have been redeemed and saved from the jaws of darkness.

Our ultimate goal? To write our story in a way that points to that future goal of revealing God's glory, even when it looks impossible in the beginning stages.

This lesson focuses on those "beginning stages" – the seeds that were first planted by others around us, both good and bad.

Like how Genesis spotlights the Garden of Eden, we'll spotlight the soil we were planted in as children, revealing the care (or lack thereof) that was given to us right until the cusp of a decision we eventually have to make.

Will we choose God's way or our own?

1. <https://youtu.be/GQI72THyOSI?si=menaJ5upXkcJgkXb>

2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4isSyemFo>

3. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=NIV>

Take some time to sit quietly and reflect on your "beginning" (no pen or paper necessary). Allow God to bring to mind the best way to start your story. And when you're ready, let's move to the next lesson and dive into Genesis 1.

Free Journaling: Genesis 1



Read all of **Genesis 1**¹.

Write freely about what you've learned about God in this chapter. By focusing on who God is, we see more of who we were before we were saved and who He's sanctifying us to be.

Need a little guidance? Download **this journal page**² for a more structured approach to journaling your thoughts.

Now, let's pray.

Dear Lord,

We're offering up our stories, our lives as living sacrifices. We're diving into Your ultimate story so we can learn how to share our own with others, always pointing back to You and Your glory. Be with us as we move forward into remembering past hurts, not to stay there or wallow in them, but to give them truly over to You. Help us to learn from our pasts so we can help others find a firm future in You.

We pray all of this through our precious Lord Jesus.

Amen.

After you've reflected on the beginning of God's story, we'll move on to our next exercise, where you'll reflect on your own.

1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=NIV>

2. https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQDxIh1_Jy4cSpWGnmOoq-gKAUazhge-_Kx-QizB5x-DutS8?e=3Q46LD

Tending the Soil: A Memory



It's now time to write a memory from your childhood (where your story began).

Use **this journal page**¹ or write your thoughts in your own notebook. Feel free to write bullet points about what happened or to flesh out an entire scene.

This exercise will help you connect with your past, seeing it from the perspective of someone who doesn't live there anymore. Be sure to keep in mind how this pivotal moment led you to Jesus, no matter how hard or difficult it might have been. Or perhaps it's a joyful memory showing how God has been gracious and kind from the very beginning.

Childhood is the soil from which we were birthed. Sometimes it's nourishing, sometimes it's dry and brittle. But fortunately, the ultimate Gardener still uses it so we can flourish and grow.

1. <https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQBeiE6a6aFfQbDF1XZSswJ1AWVTaSB-jLD4McNw0p7qes7A?e=5r8Cv0>

How to Write the Beginning



Beginnings can be brutal, both in life and on the page.

Have you ever read a story that took FOREVER to get to the turning point for the protagonist, dragging you through murky prose and making you wonder how a story could be any more boring?

I certainly have (and I may or may not have written a few!).

Good editing sets the tone for an enjoyable read, and that is why it's important to effectively edit the beginning of your testimony. It's also important to keep in mind that the beginning is the perfect opportunity to **foreshadow**¹, giving your readers a taste of what's to come and keeping them engaged.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- *The first sentence can either make or break your story.*

As easy as it would be to break out "It was a dark and stormy night," God has given us a whole myriad of words to use to set the stage for the beginning of our stories. How you share your journey should reflect the person He's made you to be. Are you often humorous? Serious? Reflective? Be sure to use language you'd typically use. After all, this story is yours and nobody else's.

- *When in doubt, say more with less.*

I, for one, can often get carried away with trying to say "all the things." This is where good editing comes in. I've found that getting to the point

1. <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/foreshadowing>

in fewer words (while still keeping my reader engaged and entertained) is always the best option. Unfortunately, nowadays, attention spans are short, so inviting your reader in from the get-go is key. Think about Scripture here. Genesis 1 begins with, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth." Talk about attention-grabbing! Think about how you can start your story in a similar fashion.

- *On that note, remember the words of William Faulkner.*

To help with the "say more with less" aspect of writing your introduction, remembering William Faulkner's famous quote might come in handy here. He's reported to have said, "Kill your darlings," meaning we, as writers, should be willing to remove any aspect of our writing that impedes the flow and readability of our work, no matter how precious those words are to us. It's a bit of a sacrifice, but one that's well worth it when we end up with a testimony that people truly connect with.

Move on to the next lesson to hear some of my thoughts on writing the beginning of your story.

A Writer's Thoughts on "The Beginning"



You can listen to my thoughts on what it's like to write the beginning of your story **here**¹.

Happy listening!

1. <https://1drv.ms/u/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQCPD8GclZrgRpZaIvOBL3ybAS8yXMXbaBt-MAegGmCvUAng?e=v3KRR3>

Time to Write!



It's finally time to start writing!

Remember, this isn't about perfection. This is about baring your soul before God. It sounds daunting, but it's basically trusting our Father enough to give Him every inch of ourselves, including the hurts we've endured and have inflicted on others.

God gives us the beautiful gift of repentance, but life change can only come first with confessing the things we've done that we're not proud of. It's a painful process, but it's even more painful keeping these things in our hearts for them to fester.

You can use this journal page¹ to write the beginning of your story. Or feel free to type it up, write it down in a favorite journal – the choice is yours!

Need a little inspiration?

*Listen to **this song**² before starting to write. Read along to the beautiful lyrics **here**³.*

1. https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQA0eDTfaApyQ55PdHmvk7FdAZj6cUzBMad-PD_U35HWD7DU?e=uvaKW5

2. https://youtu.be/QaEx2A7p9Dk?si=ZgBuR_wnFOY-Cpd8

3. <https://genius.com/Hillsong-worship-seasons-live-lyrics>

Part II: The Middle

What We Can Learn from Psalms

Before you begin: Watch *The Book of Psalms Summary*¹ by The Bible Project.

Psalms²: a book that aptly represents what being in the middle of hardship can look like, and the God who doesn't give up on us.

And it's important to note that even though the middle is often "rough," it's also the turning point that leads to God's redemptive power.

King David wrote a good bulk of the Psalms, and we can learn a lot from his journey. Often, he's lamenting the current state he finds himself in, caught in "the middle," if you will, of terrifying circumstances where his enemies are trying to vanquish him.

But like David, we can have a heart that looks to God during our toughest trials, as He fights on our behalf and we stand still and watch our stories change from ones of defeat to ones of hope.

The middle is often the place in our writing where we can share the gritty details. This often seems like a daunting task, but it's less daunting when we remember two important things:

1. *God is by our side, protecting us from evil and moving us forward to His glorious end.*
2. *Sharing our hardships with others can be a beautiful way to connect them with our Lord, the ultimate goal when sharing the Good News of Jesus.*

1. https://youtu.be/j9phNEaPrv8?si=QQ3MLDLiUiu_E3aa

2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%201&version=NIV>

Taking a page from King David, we'll pour our hearts out to our God, bringing the darkness of our past into the light where it can no longer claim a hold on us.

Are you ready to face your demons and let God slay them for good?

Take some time to sit quietly and reflect on your "middle" (no pen or paper necessary). Allow God to bring to mind the best way flesh out the "meat" of your story. And when you're ready, let's move to the next lesson and dive into Psalm 88.

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