

Writing Your Elevator Story

Peter writes the following in 1 Peter 3:15. ¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

At Westwood Christian Church, we believe that every follower of Jesus should be prepared, or get prepared, to answer questions such as, “Why are you a Christian?” or “What impact has Christianity had on your life?” Or said another way, “What difference has Jesus made in your life?” These questions should not catch us by surprise.

Our stories of what our life was like before Jesus and what our life has been like since becoming a Christian, can play a significant role in impacting others with the good news of Jesus. In listening to people share their story over the years, it is evident that our stories could be greatly improved if we would take the time to think through them, write them out and practice them.

So here is the challenge – write out your “story” in 100 words or less. (MS Word provides a feature that will count the words for you – highlight the paragraph(s), go to the drop down tab Tools, click Word Count.) Type a paragraph on what your life was like before Christ and what your life has been like since Christ. In other words, what difference has Christ made in your life – the before to the now. After you get your paragraphs down, look for a theme for the before and for the after. You can probably express the theme in a word or phrase.

As you are working on your stories, here are some questions to ask yourself. Is it clear? Is it concise? Is a particular sentence essential? If I am in line at my favorite coffee shop and I have only 60 seconds or less to tell someone my story, what is most important to tell them? What could I leave out? Etc.

Below you will find a few samples. You can look over them to get a better idea of what we’re talking about. This is not an easy exercise. Telling something important in a concise and clear way is not easy. But we really believe you will be glad you went through this exercise. It’s easy to add content if you have more time, but in the heat of the moment, when it needs to be very short, you will be glad you do not have to think about what to say and what to leave out.

When you feel like you have it, share it with your small group or a trusted Christian friend for feedback. (Give honest feedback when you are asked. No one grows when you hold back.) Use that feedback to make edits and adjustments to your story.

Once you have it right, read through it over and over. Say it standing in front of a mirror. Practice it until you can say it naturally whenever you have the opportunity.

Adam's Story

100 word version:

I grew up feeling like perfection was the only acceptable outcome—at school, in sports, and in my faith. This led to great anxiety as I was worried that I wasn't *doing* the right things, that maybe I was messing up or making the wrong decisions. Recently, God has shown me that God loves me, because God made me, and not because of my actions. God loves me even when I fail, and I don't need to worry about impressing or winning God over. That has brought both joy and peace to my life. God makes life better.

My Themes: (Before Christ and After Christ):

Perfection and achievement

God Loves me regardless of my achievements

One Theme:

God's perfection is sufficient for me.

Ron's Elevator Story

200-word version (190 actually):

I grew up in a fairly normal home in Tennessee, with a brother and two sisters. My mom and dad took me to church every Sunday and modeled a relationship with Jesus. When I got to adolescence, however, I struggled to make this faith my own. I was looking for self-worth and fulfillment and tried to find them in academics, athletics, and girls. I even tried to find them by being religious – by doing all the right things at church and knowing a lot about the Bible. Nothing I tried brought me self-worth and fulfillment.

Then I came to understand Jesus was the only one who could provide me with self-worth and fulfillment. Jesus' unconditional love for me, in spite of my mistakes and sins, gave me self-worth. I discovered I am loved by God and therefore I have value. A relationship with Jesus has brought me great fulfillment as he has led me on a grand adventure of serving him and impacting the lives of other people. Because of Jesus I not only have value, but I have a purpose and direction in life that brings me great joy.

100 word version:

My mom and dad modeled a relationship with Jesus for me and my siblings but as a teenager I struggled make this faith my own. I was looking for self-worth and fulfillment. I tried to find them in academics, athletics, girls, and even in religious activities. Nothing brought me self-worth and fulfillment until I understood and embraced Jesus' love for me. I am loved by God and therefore I have value. Following Jesus has brought me incredible fulfillment. Because of Jesus I not only have value, but I have a purpose and direction in life that brings me great joy.

My Themes (Before Christ and After Christ):

Searching for self-worth and fulfillment
Finding them only in following Jesus

One Theme:
Jesus brings self-worth and fulfillment