

2 God's Story

REVIEW

Last time we met you shared your story with your leader. It takes courage to invite others into your story and that's exactly what you've done. Way to go!

Telling your story is so important, especially when it comes to this journey. It give others an opportunity to speak into it - to encourage you, challenge you, and help you take steps forward. Your experience with pornography does not define who you are, but who you are is going to change your future experience.

While it's important to be really honest, it's also okay to recognize that it's going to be hard. More of your story will come out over time. Today, we're going to be taking a look at another story.

INTRO

Today, we're going to be talking about God's Story and looking at how our stories are all wrapped up in God's story of life, loss, love and life. Our hope is that this conversation will help you understand where you fit in God's story and encourage you to see yourself the way that He sees you.

Warm Up Question: What's your favourite story and why? It could be a movie, a book, or even a real-life story you read or saw in the news.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

If you had to pick 5 words to describe yourself, what would they be?

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Now, if you were to pick 5 words to describe how you think God sees you - what would they be?

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How do you think God feels about you when you look at porn?



Source: David Arms (used with permission)

Read through the following summary of "God's Story" (referring back to the image on the previous page). Pause after each bullet and draw it out on the next page. As you read each section, draw your story in the corresponding boxes on the next page. (Stick figures for the win!)

- **Life**

God created the earth, all the plants and animals in it, and the very first people - Adam and Eve. They existed in perfect relationship with God and perfect relationship with each other, in the garden of Eden.

God loved Adam and Eve enough to give them free will - He allowed them the freedom to make their own choices about what they believed and how they lived.

Draw a picture of something that represents 'life' in your story.

- **Loss**

Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the one tree God had commanded them not to eat from. Essentially, they decided to not trust God, and instead, chose to trust themselves and the serpent.

At this moment, sin entered the world and our relationship with God and each other became broken. There was nothing we could do to "earn" our way to heaven or to "fix" our relationship with God on our own.

The rest of the Old Testament is really an account of God's people, the Israelites, turning away from Him - sinning and rebelling - then finally realizing their need for him, repenting, and God forgiving. It's a cycle that repeats over and over, despite God giving them the 10 Commandments so they would know how to live, and sending Prophets to speak on His behalf. These Prophets also spoke of the coming King, who would rescue God's people once and for all.

Draw a picture of something that represents 'loss' in your story.

- **Love**

Jesus, God as a human being, arrived as a baby, born to the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, called his disciples, performed miracles, taught, spoke in parables and sacrificially loved people everywhere he went.

The religious leaders despised him, and when his disciple Judas betrayed him, Jesus was captured, beaten and crucified.

Jesus died for our sins, taking our punishment, so that we could be made right before God, and enter into a restored relationship with Him. Three days after he died, he was raised to life and lived on the earth for forty days before ascending to heaven.

Draw a picture of something that represents 'love' in your story.

- **Life**

Throughout the rest of the New Testament we read about the beginning of the early church and how the good news of Jesus spread throughout the earth.

We also read about the time coming, when God will restore the earth, heaven will come down, and we will enjoy perfect life with God and other followers of Christ for eternity.

Draw another picture of something that represents 'life' in your story.

Life	Loss

Love	Life

Read Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT)

Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. (3) All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else. (4) But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's special favor that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms-- all because we are one with Christ Jesus. And so God can always point to us as examples of the incredible wealth of his favor and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us through Christ Jesus. God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Do you ever feel alone in your struggle, like you're the only person who struggles with sin, and the guilt that comes with it? You're not alone. Notice what it says in verse 3.

"_____ of us used to live that way...."

Circle the word "All" in the passage above - or in your Bible.

Think back to what you drew in the "loss" box. Why did you choose to draw what you did? What does it represent loss or brokenness in your life? How does it feel recognizing that every single one of us is broken? That we've all made mistakes, and struggled?

We're all on a journey - we've all messed up in different areas of our lives and we all need God's love, grace and forgiveness.

Verse 4 says "He _____ us so very much..."

Put a heart around the word "loved" in the passage above - or in your Bible.

According to the Apostle Paul (the author of the letter to the church in Ephesus), how strong is the love of Christ for you? What modern-day invention or image do you think might symbolize the strength of this love for you?

Can your sexual sins separate you from the love of God? Why or why not?

Can you think of a time where you knew that you were loved by God? What was happening? Tell me about that situation.

What do you think it means when Paul writes in this passage "He has created us anew in Christ Jesus?" In the box of "life" explain why you chose to draw what you did.

God created us and loves us (Life). Our sin leaves us all broken (Loss). God rescues and forgives us (Love). God makes us new. He has a good, good plan for us (Life). **THIS is God's story.**

RESPONSE

Together, look up and read each of these verses.

God sees you as:

- His son/daughter - Galatians 4:4-7
- Loved - Jeremiah 31:3
- Valuable - Genesis 1:27, 2:7
- Known - Jeremiah 49:16
- Forgiven - Hebrews 10:17
- A New Creation - 2 Corinthians 5:17

TAKE HOME

Pick one of the words from above as your word for the week - the one that you need to be most reminded of. Write it out (with the corresponding verse) on a post-it note and put it somewhere that you'll see it often - on your bathroom mirror, on your nightstand, in your locker, etc. OR find a small object you could keep in your pocket throughout the week that represents that word.

Example:

- Coin - God has given me value
- Carabiner - God will never let me go
- Eraser - God has forgiven me
- Graphic of object - save it as their background.
- Hashtags?

If you want to, it would be great to spend a little more time drawing your story into God's story.

Listen to "No Longer Slaves" by Bethel (Look it up on Youtube) as a great reminder of God's love, and of the truth that your story is beautifully wrapped up in His... because you are His son/daughter.

FIGHTER VERSE

Fight the Lie: Your sin has left you alone, unloveable, without hope.

Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

PRAY to wrap up your time together!