

Walking in the Story of God

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Introduction

God reveals himself in a story. He tells who he is and his interaction with humanity in a story. The Bible contains various types of literature, but the Bible is basically a story.

His story includes people—not Bible people, but people who happened to be alive during the time of the story that God reveals. Some are active participants in advancing the cause of God, others work against God.

You and are not part of a written story, as in OT or NT, but we are part of a story. The great challenge of our Christian life is to walk in the story and share the story, to live so that when people look at our life, they see and learn the story; they recognize the story. Stackhouse in his book, *Humble Apologetics*, calls this “incarnational apologetics.”

Since some call this “being religious,” one place to begin is with a good understanding of religion.

Two Definitions of Religion

Substantive: what is the substance or nature of religion? This is an important question but often has little impact on our decisions or lifestyle.

Functional: how do we demonstrate the application of religion?

These two tensions are reflected in a pyramid: principles, values, and ethics-behavior. Substantive refers to the concepts or teachings, functional is ethical behavior. The connection between the two is the value system that arises from the principles—something we talk about very little.

One way to describe our Christian life is that we are called “to live in the ‘story of God’” (Eph. 3:20-21). God’s dream for you is better than any dream you have ever had for yourself.

To live in God’s story is to live in God’s mission. Help people see God/Jesus as an answer. How?

LIVE A COHERENT STORY

How to read a book, how to read the Bible. We must learn to read “big picture,” to see the end at the beginning. The story has to make sense. The story must be coherent, without a lot of “disconnections.”

- We live in a world of competing stories.
- Everyone has and believes a story.
- Think of other religions and world religions as having a story.
- Think of your own life in Christ as a story.

C.S. Lewis: the problem is not that we want too much but that we are satisfied with so little.

There is a great difference between applying the Bible to our lives and applying our lives to the Bible.

There is a big difference between God’s mission for me and me for God’s mission.

LIVE A STORY THAT CORRESPONDS TO LIFE

Can we talk about the major problem we face? For visitors, please understand our heart and our ability to see our weaknesses, and try to share our love and concern and compassion.

We have often told a story that is disconnected from the world in which we live. We must tell the Bible story accurately, but we must make clear that the story is relevant in today’s world. Too often we have told a Sunday only story—we have lived a Sunday only story. In fact, many have lived a Sunday morning worship only story. As a result, we have failed to show how the story impacts our life, how it changes us, transforms us, molds us.

This Bible story that corresponds to life on this planet is a continuing story. It is not a story told once and for all. Yes, the faith is once for all delivered. But the story is a continually unfolding story. That is

one problem with “once saved, always saved.” It presumes the story has already been written and cannot change the world in which we live.

Faith in a vibrant, living God means the story continues. It means people can be rescued. It means people can change. It means the reprobates of this world can become the righteous in Christ. It means the evil and vile can live, can live eternally with Christ.

“Such were some of you....” (1 Cor. 6:9ff). We have lost the ‘such were some of you’ aspect of Christianity. We are a pretty good, pretty upright bunch—or at least we present ourselves as such. We do not have enough problems in our past. We do not have enough appreciation for how much God can change lives. We have been too closed, we must learn openness, and that the story is relevant and life-changing today.

LIVE A COMPELLING STORY THAT CALLS OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STORY

Two things remain: (1) I want to tell you why you should join this story; (2) I want to tell you how you can join this story.

First, you should join this story because it is the only story that makes sense of life. Reese Witherspoon interview: help my children understand that when difficulties come, others have already experienced them, and there is a support system on which we can depend. 2 Cor. 1:3-4.

Second, you can join the story of God. He wants his story to intersect your story, influence your story, direct your story, give your story success. Only one person who has ever successfully lived the Christian life, and the good news of the gospel is that he wants to do it again in you. How can Christ be in me? What does it mean for Christ to be in me? It is our hope of glory, Col. 1:23. Gal. 4:19, until Christ be formed in you.

Christ in us, we in Christ. How? Baptized into Christ. Put on Christ. Baptized into his death, participating in his resurrection. Like him, disciples. Christians—like Christ. Become like him. The newness of a new birth after the death of the old person.

Good news: Your story can be rewritten. You can be forever changed.