

Seizing Significance!

Realizing Our Role in the Story

May 18, 2014



You ever feel left out of life?

Watching from the outside?

Relegated to an irrelevant role?

Does life feel like a movie you've arrived at 40 minutes late, knowing you have to leave 40 minutes early, leaving you little hope of figuring out the plot, purpose, or ending?



You're not alone. Well, actually you *are* alone ... but, we *all* are ... and, that's why you're not. **We're all alone in this together.**

The deception is that we're in the *audience*; truth is, **you're not in the audience, you're on the stage! Not only are you *not irrelevant*, you're the center of attention. You're on!**

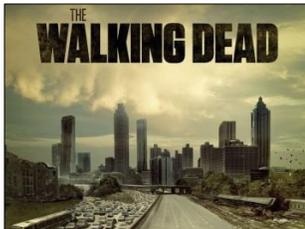


Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ... – Hebrews 12:1-2a NIV

Get your eyes off *everyone else's story*, and focus on the author and perfecter of *your story*.

Stop staring and start starring!

Remember when I told the Easter story with four TV shows? Lost, the Walking Dead, Person of Interest, and Resurrection. I pointed out how each has stand-alone episodes in a greater story *arc*?



And, I said **you've been given your own episode, and you've been made co-writer and co-producer of the greatest story arc ever!**



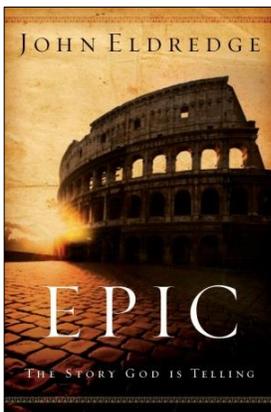
I love how John’s Gospel ends. In the very last line, John says ...

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. – John 21:25 NIV

Yours is being authored as you live it out. **You are the ultimate reality show!** And, your viewing audience is cheering for you.

[Jesus said] “... I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” – Luke 15:10 NIV

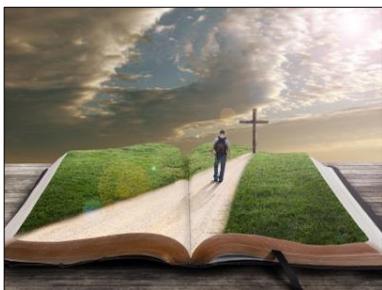
You get to decide *how* your character will face challenges, *who* your character will try to save, *what* your character will seek to discover, and *in what ways* your character will grow.



I greatly enjoyed the book, Epic, by John Eldredge.

*Life is a story. That’s the way it comes to us. It doesn’t come to us as a math problem, or an IRS form. **Life comes to us like a story, chapter by chapter, as we head toward the conclusion.***

*And, it’s true of all the great stories that something significant has already happened, something has taken place. I’m important, but life isn’t about me. **I’ve been dropped into the middle of an ongoing story, invited to embark on a journey, to be the hero in the part of the story when my character has been introduced.***



Now that your character has been introduced, **how can you hope to co-write your part in God’s ongoing story without knowing His Story?**

Can you imagine trying to write a script for a series you’ve never seen? And yet, that’s exactly what we do with our lives.

To embark on the journey we must enter the story.

When we dig, seek, and search God’s Word, we’re looking for who the Head Writer, our Author and Creator, *really is*. In so doing, you’ll realize who *you really are* and your role in His story.

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver ... She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. – Proverbs 3:13-14a, 18 NIV

Why do we like to have scary things explained to us *before* we try ‘em? **Ignorance ushers in fear, understanding drives it out.**



Here's the thing: **I won't try what I don't trust; and I won't trust what I can't grasp.** And, **that includes God's perfect love.**

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." – John 8:31b-32 NIV

Free to fearlessly co-write an epic episode for your *character!*

There's a shame from feeling worthless that can only be healed by a significance that can only be found in God's infinite love for us.

And so [because of Jesus] we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. [And, you will grasp this more and more as you seek Him in the 215-episode story-arc He wrote to reveal His heart and your role in His unfinished eternal story] Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment ... There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. [Jesus is our author and our what? Perfecter] The one who fears is not made perfect in love. – 1 John 4:16-18 NIV

God is perfect love. And, we understand Him through His Word. And, perfect love drives out *all* fear, including the fear of being left out of life and being relegated to an irrelevant role. So, **entering God's Story is the ultimate search for significance.**

I used to struggle with believing God could actually care about us. *We're gross!* I remember as a kid being told God carved the Grand Canyon with His *finger*. *He cares about bums and bag-ladies?*



I step on ants without a care. And, the difference between an ant and me is minor compared to me and God. So, **wouldn't we seem worth even less to God than ants do to us?**

No.

It isn't about the ants' insignificance, but my incapacity to care.

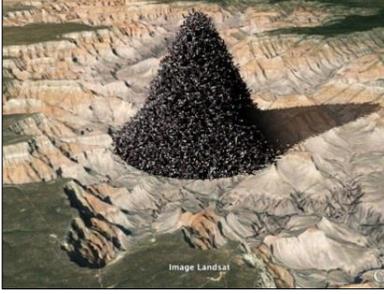


And, my perceptions of value are so ... random. I'd never step on a ladybug. Why? Um ... 'cause she's got lady in her name; and she's so cute? Well sure, you blow her up like that and she loses some of her attractiveness.

The greatness of God makes Him more likely to care! In fact, in terms of value, the Lord has established your supreme worth.

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. – John 15:13 NIV

There's your value! He'd rather die for you than live without you.



“But, there’re *so many* people!” True. 7.2 *billion*. How big do you think a pile would be of every person on the planet?

Here it is.

This is an accurate depiction of 7.2 billion people in a pile in the Grand Canyon. That’s it. I estimate we’d fit in His thimble! That’s *every episode currently* in production.

That pile is *finite*, and His capacity to care is *infinite*.

[Jesus said] “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.” – John 10:28-29 NIV



A few years ago I was writing in the lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel in downtown Seattle. It has big windows that face the sidewalk. I had headphones on. Mood music as I wrote. I looked up to think, and noticed the song was synchronizing with what I was seeing. Like, weirdly so. Each time I tried, people were professionally scored! I realized I was subconsciously selecting what to focus on, based on what I knew the song would play next.

It was like a movie. Mesmerizing. I was seeing living stories. A man running for the bus; a woman fighting her umbrella in the wind; a young couple walking, chatting, obviously in love; and, a mumbling bag-lady bum with a shopping cart.



I left out one part: each time I tried it, I cried at the connections I felt and the deep beauty, invisible to me without the song. **The music was vividly revealing the beauty of the bag lady!**

Well sure, you blow her up like that and *anybody* can see it.

A movie-music composer I respect said music can’t make *anyone* feel *anything*; it can only *enhance* what we’re already feeling.

If that’s true – and, I believe it is – then, **deep down inside, we must be made to inherently value the beauty of the lady-bum.**