

# True Story

## *Finding Yourself in the Script.*

May 15, 2022

Today we're learning to see **God's stories**, to hear **His Word**, to know **His people**, to transform **our lives**. And that means tackling *this* question face-first: **What's your part in God's plan?**



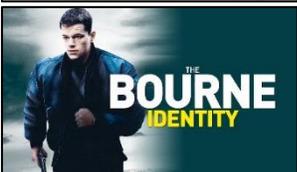
Last Sunday, Mother's Day, I made the *mistake* of playing catch with my 19- and 17-year-old varsity athlete boys. And when I challenged the *smaller* one for a ball, all 6'1" of him came down, elbow first, on my face. And as I worked to stop the gushing blood, I said, "Y'know, I've always wondered how plausible it was for action movie heroes to take a bat to the face and keep fighting... and if *I* had it in *me*. I feel like I have my answer." True that. Because, **shared experiences make stories relatable; and relatable stories make things feel believable; real.**



So, do you *relate* to the Bible stories in that *real, personal experience* way? Cuz *that's* the goal; *it's* what makes 'em memorable and moving.



When my daughter Parker was younger, the *only* bedtime stories that truly *held* her attention were the ones with heroines who were *coincidentally* just like *her*. Surprisingly, they *all* had similar likes and dislikes, situations and circumstances, and when dad was *real* tired, the same *name*. Because the truth is, **the closer to the characters we feel, the more absorbed in the story we'll be.** Nothing grabs our *attention* like *ourselves*. Self-centered little rascals, ain't we?



Well, it might just be by *design*! Because by *nature*, we're *all* the *star* of the story. And even though we're born that *confused* character, trying to push past our amnesia to find what we've *forgotten*, we're *also* born to *discover* our identity and take *control* of the story! And *that's* when the *action* happens! But **we have this misconception that we're only in the audience, watching life -truth is, you're also on the stage!** You're the star of your own story. Ever heard of a "star witness"? That's you!



Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars – Daniel 12:3 NIV

And to play your part, you need to get your eyes off *everyone else's* story, and focus on the Author and Perfecter of *your* story. **Stop staring and start starring!** Cuz baby, you were *born* to run!

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 12:1-2 NIV



Don't buy into the diabolical *deception* that the Bible is full of fantastical, faraway, and flawless people. The very *real* people starring in Scripture were *hand-picked* to relate to you. And as you see *their* stories unfold, you're meant to find *your* fit using the familiar faces to paint *yourself* into the picture. Because **when we relate to it, we retain it, recall it, and ultimately, are transformed by it.**

Don't forget, the *core* command of Christ is to *become* like Him, by *loving* like Him, by *knowing* Him, by the stories of *Scripture*. Which is why Jesus asked the Father to:

Sanctify them by the *truth*; Your *Word* is truth. – John 17:17 NIV

[Which is why He tells them] “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 8:31-32 NIV

[Which is why He said] *These* are the very Scriptures that testify about *Me*. – John 5:39 NIV

[Which is why Paul reminds us] [We] are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the *Lord*, who *is* the Spirit. – 2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV

**The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make us like the Son of God.** But before we can step into *that* spotlight, we've got to get a grip on where we *are* and what *roles* we're *ready* for. And that takes the *people* of God, *especially* the people of God in the *Word* of God. **They're there to gauge your stage of spiritual growth;** each character representing a role necessary to God's Script., from an Exodus extra to a Kings' king! And as you read the roles, some will stand out and clue you in to who you are and the role you were born to play.



**So, who do you see yourself in – in the Bible?** Can you relate to anybody's faults, flaws, desires, difficulties, set-backs, success, compassion, sorrow, pain, or joy? Maybe you've felt a little Jacob-struggle, Joshua-victory, or Judas-shame, lately? Well you've been made co-writer of *your* character, so use those clues to write *your* role *right!*

Sure you're thousands of years removed from *them*, but remember, *they're* examples – and **what you're really relating to is your own spirit** – *your* unique part – which is parsed out and pieced together using *those* in the stories that our Creator authorized for *us*.

For *everything* that was written in the past was written to teach *us*. – Romans 15:4 NIV

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, [And when His Spirit joins the mix – we're talking] piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12 NKJ



You see, **God's narratives aren't mere stories, they're mirror stories**. Painfully *honest* mirrors. I love what Bruce said about Scripture: "there's a moment when you're reading it or hearing it or sharing it, and a piece from another part suddenly appears and connects itself, and you realize: it's talking! To you. Not by magic. By His Word. By your faith. Cuz everything connects!"

True that! But you know what it says? "*Hey you – I know who you are! Wanna see?*" And you know what *we* say? "Uh-oh." But God's the Head Writer and He wrote His Word specifically to *you* – so yeah, *it* knows us better than *we* do! And sorry, but just like a mirror, **we're supposed to examine what it reflects in us, and adjust accordingly**. And we all know how it works: think *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, *The Ant and the Grasshopper*. They all have characters that, for better or worse, reveal something about *our* nature. And *that* draws our attention to the parts of our character that need a good *rewrite*. Which is why Paul says *broadly*:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training [change, change, change, and change] in righteousness, so that the servant of God [that's your role] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NIV

*All good stories with rich, relatable characters change us by engaging us by casting us in the roles we naturally connect with – so what's the problem? Why does it seem so hard with the Bible?! Well... the Bible can confuse, and an absorbing story's gotta make sense. Because when we hit a snag in the story – some seeming contradiction or inconsistency – doubt creeps in, the story loses credibility, and the power goes out.*



True that. Cuz, **we only remain invested to the degree that we can bring ourselves to believe in the plausibility of a story**. Because when you cast yourself into a story – you *demand* certain things. For it to absorb you, it *must* have all the hallmarks of *reality* – or else you'll snap back into *audience* mode and lose your first-person perspective. I'll be watching something *gripping* with my wife who is a nurse, and right when the protagonist dies and we're on the edge of our seat while someone works to revive them – she'll say, "Look at how shallow those chest compressions are, that's ridiculous!" And *snap!* I'm *me* again, *watching a made-up story*; instead of being *transported* into a *real* one. Which leads us to a big problem: **What do you do when the Bible appears to hit a snag?** Do you snap out of it and call *it* ridiculous? Well, **it all depends on the authority you've given the Author**. And Jesus broke down this setback of *believability* using *Moses* as example:

*If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?" – John 5:46-47 NIV*

You see, we watch movies like *The Sixth Sense*, *Fight Club*, or *Inception* because even when things get *weird* or *confusing*, we know to *trust* that the writers are going to make sense of things.

**Same goes for God. If you trust Him, have faith that He's making sense of His story and stay absorbed by holding Him to the same standard of plausible, relatable, believability!** And then, what appears to be a dead *end*, becomes the *beginning* of wisdom! Because every Biblical story's *snag* is an opportunity to show your heart: do you need to understand *before* you trust the Author, or do you trust the Author to *make* you understand? Well, *His* book says:

The fear of the LORD is the *beginning* of wisdom; all who *follow* His precepts have good understanding. – Psalms 111:10 NIV

True that. **We must give authority to the Author *first* and hear Him out.** And *this* is our approach here at His Place. **We believe that any problem with perfection is on *our* end, *not* God's.** We believe that not only is the Bible a series of stories inside one epic arc, but that they're *plausible*, and therefore *relatable*, and therefore *believable* and therefore *powerful*. **We believe in every sense, it's true.** So we get angry when we see things like Gospel harmonies that don't seem to care about violating story logic, believing we just need to pull the lessons and leave it alone. But when they do things like report Jesus coming down a mountain *before* He goes up it (*and they do*) they kill its credibility and inadvertently turn *truth* into mere *myth*. Which is why we're *warned*:

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to *myths*. – 2 Timothy 4:4 NIV

[So] Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; *rather*, train yourself to be godly. [Know how? By getting some Bible *know-how!*] – 1 Timothy 4:7 NIV

For we [writes Peter] did not follow *cleverly devised* stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were *eyewitnesses* of His majesty. – 2 Peter 1:16 NIV

But it's easy to forget *that* when trying to make *sense* of God's Script. So let me touch on a profoundly powerful *tool* for the entire cast and crew of God's production, *story logic*.



Story logic is the nickname for all those things which we all demand from a *true* story. **It's the rules of *coherency* and *consistency* that decide every detail's *credibility*** and therefore guide our understanding of them. **And when we trust the Author first and foremost, story logic will inevitably and ultimately force the true story out.**

We've spent *thousands* of years *arguing* and *debating* the Bible's *historical*, *linguistic*, *textual*, and *philosophical* credibility in an attempt to authenticate its Author; but *story logic* transcends them *all*. Because *textual variations*, translation *differences*, and all *apologetic* explanations are *moot* when we see the coherent and consistent *true story* that makes sense of *all* Scripture.

**Because every one of us was born an expert on true stories.** And *you* have the authority to verify them because all you *do* is write them as you *live* them. **You're born with a nose for the plausible, a taste for the relatable, and a heart for the believable.** So, with God's Word all you have to *do* is literally trust the *Author* first and get into the *story*. And *spoiler alert* – I've read the Script. and you *are* the star. But don't take *my* word – take *God's*... and go learn your lines!