



"If I asked you to tell me your story, what would you say? God is the author of your life story. God is engaged in an ongoing creative work in your life. You are a story—a well-written, intentional story that is authored by the greatest Writer of all time, and even before time and after time. You are a living story that is meant to reveal and create glory. What makes your life a glorious bestseller is that the plot reveals not a mere moral or lesson but the very person and being of God." - Dan Allender, PhD, in *TO BE TOLD – Know Your Story – Share your Future*

TELL US YOUR STORY

The Drama of Loss & Love

Summary: A Man embraces his story as an expression of loss and love to reveal the Gospel.

Bible Verses: Genesis 2:8-23; Isaiah 43:10-13; John 15:1-17; Galatians 6:1-5

Video Clips: YouTube – “George Clooney, The Descendants - Hollywood, an Ahupua'a and Hawaiian Culture” and “The Descendants”

Music: “Shattered” by Trading Yesterday

Resources: *TO BE TOLD – Know Your Story, Shape Your Future* by Dan Allender and *THE STORIES WE TELL – How TV and Movies Long For and Echo the Truth* by Mike Cosper

April 7, 2016

PARADISE LOST > THE LONGING TO GO BACK!

1. Eden was _____ > The paradise of Eden was how the world was _____. It wasn't merely a garden; it was holy ground, a sacred place where men and women were to live in harmony with God and creation.
2. _____ > The intent of life in the garden was the whole experience of life was to be explored—work, food, sex, relationships, and rest—without any stain of sin or suffering. This was the life you were meant to live, and this is what you long for today. You are left to lament a loss you don't fully understand. Anytime you explore themes of perfection, starting again, and invention, you are dancing around Genesis 1-3. You hunger to return HOME!
3. You want _____! There is no paradise after Eden, no corner where the curse's cruel tentacles haven't spread. The Gospel—the Message of The Kingdom, The Cross, & Grace—is the hope for such a place ahead. Only in Jesus Christ can you go back.
4. _____ > Your attempt to create—our efforts at playing God—always stumble into the inherent problem of human weakness, creation's unpredictability, and the impending threat of evil.
5. _____ for redemption hinges on a miracle—an outsider who will enter the chaos and pull us back from the edge.

The Story of the Gospel > The Search for Love!

1. “_____” – Why? > Genesis 2:18. Adam had to go on a journey to find his bride because the story mattered! Even in a world without sin, there are love stories, and love stories are always marked by longing, searching, and finding one another.
2. The longing for _____ and _____ is hard-wired into creation—it's part of the actual design of the world—that the emotions behind it have such power and sway over our lives. People do crazy, horrible, sad things in their search for love.
3. _____! > Genesis 2 is the prototype of the search for love and is followed by Genesis 3, and we all know how that went. The story of a marriage is always more harsh, more full of trouble. More difficult to tell.
4. _____ and _____ > To believe that the search for love ends with everyone feeling “happy ever after” requires a suspension of reality—something we need for most of the stories we tell. In truth, we're aware that love does not ultimately satisfy the needs of our broken hearts. We need SOMEONE (Isaiah 43:10-13).

The Story of the Gospel > A Man Rescues His Bride!

1. _____ > God, the Great Storyteller, does not let Genesis 2 or Genesis 3 have the last word on life or love. Ultimately, the sacrifice of Adam's rib for the creation of His bride is only a sign that points to a greater sacrifice and a greater union.
2. _____ > The Greater Story tells of a Man who rescues his bride by laying down his life, making her new, and ultimately restoring all things.
3. _____ > Underneath all of the tendencies toward gossip and voyeurism, the fairy-tale fantasies, and the oversold exploits of people searching for love, there's a thread in the human heart that can't give up the belief that one day, true love will come along. Someone will come for You > His name is Jesus! (John 15:1-17).

Tell Us Your Story: Guideline #8 > Men's Coaching believes in the essential resource of learning to live in community (Gal. 6:1-5).

1. Community is rooted in relationship with God and one another.
2. Community helps you discover and define who you are and how you shall live in trust, love, grace, humility, dignity, and justice.
3. Community opens the door to gain permission to share truth among fellow believers and the unbelieving world.
4. The process of experiencing grace with God and others validates who I am, matures who I am becoming, and therefore is defining the way I should live.
5. Environments are more powerful than words!

ACTION: Journal This!

1. What are the 3 greatest losses of your life?
2. What was your response to each loss?
3. Where and from whom have you searched for love?
4. What is the connection between intimacy and Jesus for you?

Bible Verses

Genesis 2:8-23

⁸⁻⁹ Then GOD planted a garden in Eden, in the east. He put the Man he had just made in it. GOD made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, trees beautiful to look at and good to eat. The Tree-of-Life was in the middle of the garden, also the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil.
¹⁰⁻¹⁴ A river flows out of Eden to water the garden and from there divides into four rivers. The first is named Pishon; it flows through Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this land is good. The land is also known for a sweet-scented resin and the onyx stone. The second river is named Gihon; it flows through the land of Cush. The third river is named Hiddekel and flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.
¹⁵ GOD took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order.
¹⁶⁻¹⁷ GOD commanded the Man, "You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don't eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you're dead."
¹⁸⁻²⁰ GOD said, "It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion." So GOD formed from the dirt of the ground all the animals of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the Man to see what he would name them. Whatever the Man called each living creature, that was its name. The Man named the cattle, named the birds of the air, named the wild animals; but he didn't find a suitable companion.
²¹⁻²² GOD put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. GOD then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man.
²³⁻²⁵ The Man said, "Finally! Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh! Name her Woman for she was made from Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh. The two of them, the Man and his Wife, were naked, but they felt no shame.

Isaiah 43:10-13

⁸⁻¹³ Get the blind and deaf out here and ready—the blind (though there's nothing wrong with their eyes) and the deaf (though there's nothing wrong with their ears). Then get the other nations out here and ready. Let's see what they have to say about this, how they account for what's happened. Let them present their expert witnesses and make their case; let them try to convince us what they say is true. "But *you* are my witnesses." GOD's Decree. "You're my handpicked servant so that you'll come to know and trust me, understand both *that* I am and *who* I am. Previous to me there was no such thing as a god, nor will there be after me. I, yes I, am GOD. I'm the only Savior there is. I spoke, I saved, I told you what existed long before these upstart gods appeared on the scene. And you know it, you're my witnesses, you're the evidence." GOD's Decree. "Yes, I am God. I've always been God and I always will be God. No one can take anything from me. I make; who can unmake it?"

John 15:1-17

¹⁻³ "I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.
⁴ "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.
⁵⁻⁸ "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.
⁹⁻¹⁰ "I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.
¹¹⁻¹⁵ "I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.
¹⁶ "You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.
¹⁷ "But remember the root command: Love one another.

Galatians 6:1-5

¹⁻³ Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. *You* might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.
⁴⁻⁵ Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

SHATTERED

Written by David Hodges and performed by Trading Yesterday

Yesterday I died, tomorrow's bleeding.
Fall into your sunlight.
The future's open wide, beyond believing.
To know why, hope dies.
Losing what was found, a world so hollow.
Suspended in a compromise.
The silence of this sound, is soon to follow.
Somehow, sundown.

And finding answers.
Is forgetting all of the questions we called home.
Passing the graves of the unknown.

As reason clouds my eyes, with splendor fading.
Illusions of the sunlight.
And a reflection of a lie, will keep me waiting.
With love gone, for so long.

And this day's ending.
Is the proof of time killing, all the faith I know.
Knowing that faith, is all I hold.

And I've lost who I am, and I can't understand.
Why my heart is so broken, rejecting your love, without, love gone wrong, lifeless words carry on.
But I know, all I know, is that the end's beginning.
Who I am from the start, take me home to my heart.
Let me go and I will run, I will not be silent.
All this time spent in vain, wasted years, wasted gain.
All is lost, hope remains, and this war's not over.
There's a light, there's the sun, taking all shattered ones.
To the place we belong, and his love will conquer all.

Yesterday I died, tomorrow's bleeding.
Fall into your sunlight.

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- Dan Allender, PhD in *TO BE TOLD – Know Your Story – Share your Future.*

What's your story?

THE DRAMA OF LOSS & LOVE!

Genesis 2:8-23

PARADISE LOST > THE LONGING TO GO BACK!

1. Eden was **REAL** > The paradise of Eden was how the world was **meant to be**. It wasn't merely a garden; it was holy ground, a sacred place where men and women were to live in harmony with God and creation.
2. **A loss to lament** > The intent of life in the garden was the whole experience of life was to be explored—work, food, sex, relationships, and rest—without any stain of sin or suffering. This was the life you were meant to live, and this is what you long for today. You are left to lament a loss you don't fully understand. Anytime you explore themes of perfection, starting again, and invention, you are dancing around Genesis 1-3. You hunger to return HOME!
3. You want **Paradise**! There is no paradise after Eden, no corner where the curse's cruel tentacles haven't spread. The Gospel—the Message of The Kingdom, The Cross, & Grace—is the hope for such a place ahead. Only in Jesus Christ can you go back.
4. **Failure** > Your attempt to create—our efforts at playing God—always stumble into the inherent problem of human weakness, creation's unpredictability, and the impending threat of evil.
5. **Hope** for redemption hinges on a miracle—an outsider who will enter the chaos and pull us back from the edge.

The Darkness of Porn and the Hope of the Gospel

- *TIME* magazine has published one of the saddest, most horrifying cover stories I have ever read. It is not horrifying like the carnage of war. It's horrifying like the carnage of a culture that is committing slow-motion suicide. The essay documents a civilization-wide calamity on a scale that we have not seen before.
- The title of the article is "Porn and the Threat to Virility" by Belinda Luscombe. I am not linking to the article here simply because the cover art for the magazine and at least one of the images within the article are too explicit to share. Indeed, the article is itself fairly explicit and definitely NSFW. Having said that, the article reads as a coolly rational look at modern porn use among males, even though it seems unaware that it is narrating a civilizational crisis.
- At the heart of the article is the contention that there is a backlash against internet pornography among young men who have been heavy users throughout adolescence and adulthood. Luscombe writes:
 - *A growing number of young men are convinced that their sexual responses have been sabotaged because their brains were virtually marinated in porn when they were adolescents. Their generation has consumed explicit content in quantities and varieties never before possible, on devices designed to deliver content swiftly and privately, all at an age when their brains were more plastic—more prone to permanent change—than in later life. These young men feel like unwitting guinea pigs in a largely unmonitored decade-long experiment in sexual conditioning.*
- The rest of the Luscombe's article recounts what these young men have been consuming for the last decade and what the results have been in their adult relationships with real women. Many of them are simply unable to experience a sexual response with a real live woman. They are only able to respond to pornography. In fact, they prefer pornography.

The Story of the Gospel > The Search for Love!

1. **“It is not good”** – Why? > Genesis 2:18. Adam had to go on a journey to find his bride because the story mattered! Even in a world without sin, there are love stories, and love stories are always marked by longing, searching, and finding one another.
2. The longing for **love** and **companionship** is hard-wired into creation—its part of the actual design of the world—that the emotions behind it have such power and sway over our lives. People do crazy, horrible, sad things in their search for love.
3. **It will be hard!** > Genesis 2 is the prototype of the search for love and is followed by Genesis 3, and we all know how that went. The story of a marriage is always more harsh, more full of trouble. More difficult to tell.
4. **Naivety** and **Sentimentality** > To believe that the search for love ends with everyone feeling “happy ever after” requires a suspension of reality—something we need for most of the stories we tell. In truth, we’re aware that love does not ultimately satisfy the needs of our broken hearts. We need SOMEONE (Isaiah 43:10-13).

The Story of the Gospel > A Man Rescues His Bride!

1. **Sacrifice** > God, the Great Storyteller, does not let Genesis 2 or Genesis 3 have the last word on life or love. Ultimately, the sacrifice of Adam's rib for the creation of His bride is only a sign that points to a greater sacrifice and a greater union.
2. **Rescue** > The Greater Story tells of a Man who rescues his bride by laying down his life, making her new, and ultimately restoring all things.
3. **Someone** > Underneath all of the tendencies toward gossip and voyeurism, the fairy-tale fantasies, and the oversold exploits of people searching for love, there's a thread in the human heart that can't give up the belief that one day, true love will come along. Someone will come for You > His name is Jesus! (John 15:1-17).

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