



INTRODUCTION

Week Three: Your Story

Many of us end up thinking about the stories we read in the bible as interesting, but not really applicable to our lives. But what if you might actually be able to find clues to God's will for your life in the stories you read in the Bible? That's what we'll explore this week as we go one level deeper in how to hear God speak to you today.

Scripture: Luke 15:11-32

Bottom Line: By following the dynamics of a story, we can respond to the dynamics in our own life to align us with God's desire for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you look back on your life so far, what are some of the most powerful moments to you? Take a few minutes in group to hear a few of the stories in the room.
2. In the message, Carey said every story has a plot line with a beginning, a problem, a resolution and an ending. In fact, the Bible is filled with stories that fit this pattern and God shows up in those stories. Read Luke 15:11-32. Trace out the plot line of that story as a group, paying attention to the characters, the plot line for each character, and the drama and tension for each character.
3. Try to imagine the emotions of the characters in the story. What would it have been like to be the father, the younger son or the older brother?
4. Stories in the Bible don't just relay historical events - they help us discover how God operates and what we can come to expect in similar situations. Compare yourself and your life situation to the characters in the story, the situations they are in and the issues each is dealing with. Who are you most like? Who are you unlike?
5. Does the story line of any of the characters parallel a story line in your life?
6. In this story, what is the "God" character (the loving father) doing? What is his attitude toward his rebellious son? What is his offer to his cold-hearted older son? What does that say about what God's disposition toward you?
7. How does this story end? How does it end for the younger brother? How does it end for the older brother? Whose story most closely parallel yours?
8. What learnings can you draw from this story? Think through the following real-life scenarios:
 - If you are struggling with feeling close to God, how might this story encourage you?
 - If you have a child who is far from you or far from God, how might the father figure in the story guide you as to how to respond?
 - If you there are issues between siblings in your family, how might this story give you insight and a path of action?
 - If you believe you have strayed too far for God to forgive you, what does this

story reveal about God?

- If you are going through a relational struggle of any kind (friend, neighbour, work, marriage), how might this story help you discover God's will and heart for your situation?

TAKING IT HOME

This week, take some time to reflect on your story. What issues are you struggling with? If you were filming a movie about your life, what would the "problem" be? What resolution would you long for? Pick up your bible daily and start looking for your plot line in God's story and ask him to help you see where His heart is and how He might want you to respond.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. Luke 15: 20