

Storyteller

THE PERFORMANCE TRAP

Scott Haus
September 27, 2020

GROUP ICE BREAKER

Who has been your best boss, employer or teacher? What made him or her the best in your opinion?

BECOMING A STORYTELLER

Give time for someone in the group to share their story using the Becoming A Storyteller Guide.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will admit I have a problem and not deny it.
- I will take responsibility for my problem and not wait for help.
- I will form a plan to overcome my problem.
- I will take action to deal with my problem and not procrastinate.
- I will tell a trusted friend or counselor about my problem.
- I will memorize a verse of scripture that deals with my problem.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

Jesus tells a story in Matthew 20 about a landowner who pays every worker equally, despite how hard they work. Jesus ends the story with, "So the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matthew 20:16). The kingdom of heaven is an upside down kingdom where it's more blessed to give than to receive, where strength is found in weakness. Life is completely soaked in performance-based mentality and culture. It is everywhere we look. And sometimes we run into this belief of a performance-based relationship with God. We look at what God is or isn't doing and become resentful, thinking we deserve more than we do. Two of the most damaging and destructive attitudes we can have are I've earned and I deserve. They form a transactional relationship with God. The performance trap is one of the greatest lies Satan uses to keep us from fully experiencing and embracing the grace of God. By definition, God's grace is not owed and cannot be earned. A relationship with God is not dependent on what you've done or do for God. So how do we guard against the performance trap with God? Don't hold God to promises He never made, don't assume God owes you, and don't complain about God's grace to others. God is never unfair to us. God has generously given each of us immeasurably more than we deserve, we have every reason to celebrate His goodness in our lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you identify with a character in the story (landowner, workers from a particular shift, foreman)? What do you identify with?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT)

2. Think of a time when you received more than you deserved. Share and discuss those experiences. How did that feel? Were you grateful? Did it seem unfair? Was it hard to receive?
3. How important is fairness to you and why?
4. What are some false expectations of I've earned and I deserve from God you once held that have changed? What changed them?
5. Read Numbers 23:19. What does this teach us about God's promises? If something we think is promised goes differently than we expect, what should be the takeaway?
6. What are some ways that we can avoid developing an attitude of entitlement towards God, that He owes us for all we do for him?
7. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. How would you define grace? Do you have a hard time receiving grace? How is it different from fair?
8. What does this story teach us about the heart of God?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will not allow a performance culture to define my life.
- I will resist transactional relationships.
- I will embrace the gift of God's grace in my life.
- I will not hold God to promises He didn't make.
- I will not assume God owes me anything.
- I will not complain of God's grace towards others.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 20:1-16
- Philippians 3:4-7
- Ephesians 2:4-9

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BECOMING A STORYTELLER

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“Stories are the creative conversation of life into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact.” Robert McKee

Stories move us. They inspire us. Stories are a way to touch the heart and inspire greater understanding about life. Life with God. Life with each other. There’s power in our story. Stories create connection, and that’s why we want everyone to have an opportunity to tell their story.

Being in community with others is really getting to know them, which usually entails knowing their story and them knowing yours. The idea of telling your personal story to others may make you a little uncomfortable, but it doesn’t have to be a big production nor comprehensive. It’s simply to give the others in your group a sense of what makes you uniquely you and what God has done in your spiritual journey.

WHAT PARTS OF YOUR STORY TO TELL

When you think of your story, it’s probably centered around people, places and events. Those three categories capture how we interact with the world around us.

One way to organize your thoughts is to use the space provided on the reverse side to identify people who have played significant roles in your life, places that are special to you, and events that have affected you. It’s really as simple as that.

You probably can’t talk about all the people, places and events you write down as your story should only be five to ten minutes max, but this will give you a place to start. From here, you can think through the parts of your story that are the most important to emphasize. It’s your story and you are free to share what you want to share.

Above all, remember this. You may think the other members of your group aren’t interested in your story, but that’s not true. Most of us are curious about the people around us, and we’re predisposed to empathize and connect with others. Your story will help draw the other members of your group closer. You’ll also be amazed at how many people will relate to parts of your story.

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KEY PEOPLE

KEY PLACES

KEY EVENTS

(Events can be turning points, something that took you from one chapter to the next, or plot twists, something that moved your story in a completely unexpected direction.)

You can keep this paper with you when sharing your story. The point isn't to be a perfect public speaker. The point is for your group to get to know each other and create or deepen authentic community. Our stories give background and context to our conversations each week and will enhance our time together. So as difficult as sharing your story may be, it's worth it! It'll give us a deeper understanding of each other as we all journey through this part of our stories together. And that's a good thing.