God invites you to coauthor your future. It starts with reading your past.

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What’s Your Story?

If I asked you to tell me your story, what would you say? Would you mention the pressures you’re facing at work? Would you talk about where you went to college? Would you tell me it’s none of my business?

Everyone has a story. Put another way, everyone’s life is a story. But most people don’t know how to read their life in a way that reveals their story. They miss the deeper meaning in their life, and they have little sense of how God has written their story to reveal himself and his own story.

If you don’t think such things are important, consider a conversation I had recently with a friend who was weighing a career move. He showed me a list of pros and cons. There were an equal number of problems and benefits no matter what he decided – whether he changed jobs or stayed where he was. “If the list is weighted according to my values and dreams,” he observed, “it’s a dead heat. I might as well flip a coin.”

But my friend was overlooking his own story, the one thing that would give him direction in making this decision. He hadn’t considered God’s
authorship of his life. He was aware of God’s authority but not of God’s ongoing creative work in his life – and in all our lives.

“Which choice allows you to live your life most consistently with how God has been writing your life story?” I asked.

My friend had no idea what I was getting at. So I asked him if he’d ever studied his life to see what story, what themes, and what plot God was writing his life to reveal. He still looked at me as if I were from outer space.

“Why would I study my life?” he asked. “I was there as everything happened, so what is there to study?”

This is a bright, honest, good man who is sensitive to God. He listens well to his wife’s heart, and he is intentional about doing the right thing in countless areas of his life – health, finances, time with his kids, and spirituality. But he saw no value in reading his own story.

Most of us have spent more time studying a map to avoid getting lost on a trip than we have studying our life so we’ll know how to proceed into the future. When we’re preparing to make significant decisions, why will we study a stock report but fail to look at our own story? Why will we read various articles and editorials to help clarify our views on a controversial topic but ignore our own past, which helped form our most important views? If we’re taking a course, we’re willing to study books that bore us to pieces, but we won’t take time to review our own life, which holds answers about God and our selves that will thrill us, amaze us, and sober us. We read and study a great variety of sources and spend time researching our options in order to live in the right direction. But seldom do we approach our own life with the mindset of a student, eager to learn, gain insight, and find direction for the future.

We habitually push aside the one thing that can clarify not only how we got to where we are today but also where God is leading us tomorrow.
and beyond. Our own life is the thing that most influences and shapes our outlook, our tendencies, our choices, and our decisions. It is the force that orients us toward the future, and yet we don’t give it a second thought, much less a careful examination. It’s time to listen to our own story.

**What Your Life Reveals**

If you stick with me awhile, we’ll take a close look at four core issues that are of crucial importance to you – even if you don’t yet realize it.

First, God is not merely the Creator of our life. He is also the Author of our life, and he writes each person’s life to reveal his divine story. There never has been nor ever will be another life like mine – or like yours. Just as there is only one face and name like mine, so there is only one story like mine. And God writes the story of my life to make something known about himself, the One who wrote me. The same is true of you. Your life and mine not only reveal who we are, but they also help reveal who God is.

Second, neither your life nor mine is a series of random scenes that pile up like shoes in a closet. We don’t have to clear out old stories to make room for new ones. Both your story and mine have unique characters, surprising plot twists, central themes, tension and suspense, and deep significance. Each is an intriguing tale, and neither is fiction. Our story is truer than any other reality we know, and each of us must discover the meaning of what God has written as our life story. In our story God shows us what he’s up to and what he wants us to be about.

With the third core issue, things start to get exciting. When I study and understand my life story, I can then join God as a coauthor. I don’t have to settle for merely being a reader of my life; God calls me to be a writer of my