

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THRIVING LIFE

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STORYTELLER

Your daily life tells your story and others are listening. What do you think they hear?

Live storytelling takes practice to perfect. As you reflect on recent days, what would you change to better tell Jesus' story in your life?

We do not tell a story—we **live** the story. What does it mean that you **live** the story of Jesus to those who know you claim Him as Lord and Savior?

Isaiah 43:10-11 – ¹⁰You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. ¹¹I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.

1) Go and Tell...

We want to tell our stories. Asked the right way, we will tell almost anything. We are made to tell stories. Specifically, our stories. There is purpose in our stories. Made in His image, God wills that our stories are His story. Each of us is blessed with a unique experience of God, with God, and we alone can tell this chapter of God's story. Our lives are meant to reveal something about Him that will otherwise be unknown. We did not do something to earn the privilege of telling His story. He made us as storytellers for this purpose. It is the inescapable purpose and result of our lives. We will each tell a story. We choose whether to tell a forgettable story of tragedy or an epic of hope.

◆ **Hey, you:** Likely you have been in the situation of having to leave before telling someone something important. You may have been able to find someone to whom you could tell your message and ask

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them to pass it along. Probably you wouldn't choose a stranger. You would look for someone reliable and trustworthy. Jesus chose you. Before He goes His way, the Lord pulls you aside and says, "You are my witnesses...and my servant whom I have chosen (Isaiah 43:10)." You are a great storyteller. He is about to tell you His story, and your story. Along the way, you realize He chose you because you are a storyteller. As His story unfolds, you understand you cannot accept His and deny your role as His witness.

◆**My story:** Some messages are simply factual. *Please tell her I will return in ten minutes.* Others are rich stories that take time to tell. The great books and movies of our age cannot be shorter than they are. Jesus' story is like this. It takes time to describe all the meaningful details without which He is less than He is. When He pulls you aside, He needs time to tell you everything "so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he (v10)." You realize the message He wants you to share is not easy to believe. More than a storyteller, He called you a witness. You will need to tell the story well with sufficient detail to be taken seriously. You are a storyteller but cannot effortlessly tell a precise story. It is time to pay close attention.

II) I Am He...

The renowned storytellers of our time—authors, film directors—know that they first must believe the truth within the story they will tell. Great stories uncover something true whether told by facts or otherwise. The story we are commissioned to tell is a biography. Jesus needs us to know who He is and believe so we can communicate His truth in our story. Not so much the facts of His life, death, and resurrection. The essence of His story—the deep Truth of our story—is that He is The One. Creator, Lord, Protector, Redeemer, Savior. He is The One by whom all may live. He needs you to know this in a way you can convincingly tell His message.

◆**The beginning:** The idea of a god is that of a willful being with power over the created world. Some imagine a set of gods, each exercising specific powers limited to a part of creation. This would explain the friction of existence, everything in a bit of conflict with everything else. It does not explain the cohesion of physical laws, the universality of life, your moral compass. The unity of creation is a theme of the story of One True God. "Before me no god was formed (v10)," conveys this Truth. Everything was conceived by one divine mind, created by one divine Word. In Jesus, all things are unified.

◆**The end:** Uncertainty arises from the unpredictable way in which two or more separate wills interact with one another. The mixture of harmony, tension, and dissension spawn the progression from calm to turbulent as what seemed to be one plan breaks apart into many. That is not Jesus' story. Before Him, "no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me (v10)." He is the beginning and the end. There is no other authority by which all life—your life—will be charted. When you know and understand Him, and believe His story, you see the continuity through the chaos of this world.

III) No Other...

The chaos of this world is the result of many denying Jesus' story and making a fiction that we are our own beginning and end. Everyone who believes this charts a chaotic path in search of...something. There is no unified purpose. We violently collide into each other and the rest of creation. Jesus' story is one of unity because we have a leader, hope because we have a savior. Those who believe His story see the path to purpose is following Him.

◆**Almighty:** The story you will tell is ordered. Beginning, middle, and end, with a consistent plot and theme throughout. God working in you to reveal His goodness and glory through you. All creation discovering the infinite expressions of God's loving character. The order is established by His ways—the law of love—and orchestrated by His Spirit working in all of us. When you know Him as He knows Himself, "I, I am the Lord (v11)," you live for the same purpose as all of us, telling your chapter in the Jesus' eternal story. Obedience is a matter of faithfulness to the message, getting the plot and details out correct, expressing Him as He knows Himself. He is Lord and you tell His story by way of your own.

◆**Savior:** Your story includes the part when you tried to ignore Jesus. As we all at some point do, you tried to author a story with a different plot, one in which you were the hero—or antihero. Living for yourself without regard for a Lord, your heart descended into chaos if not your outer life. Until the day that Jesus pulled you aside to ask if you would tell His story. Compared to His, your story was revealed as the bad fiction it is. Cheap tragedy, a story not taken seriously and forgotten before it finishes. Jesus finishes telling you the story He wants you to tell by saying, "besides me there is no savior (v11)." There is no story worth telling but the one you were made to tell. Know it, believe it, understand it, and go tell it. Be a storyteller.