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session 1: GOD'S STORY, YOUR STORY

This study isn't primarily about issues related to sex, purity, and romance. Primarily, it is about helping you understand those things in light of God's eternal, bigger story. Only when you are able to see your role in that story will you know what God wants to do with you and through you.

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This may sound strange, but we are going to begin our study on purity, sex, and romance by not talking about purity, sex, or romance. There's no doubt that the things we talk about in this lesson are directly related to issues of physical intimacy, but in order to correctly tackle the issues surrounding sex and purity, it is essential that we first begin with the One who created these things. By understanding God's story, we will gain a better understanding of ourselves and how our individual stories fit into His larger story.

video guide:

CREATION

God made us because He _____ to.

You were fashioned and designed to _____ like God.

FALL

We see in Adam and Eve a reflection of our own _____. We think we know better than _____.

We believe He is _____ something from us that would make us happier.

REDEMPTION

The word that best describes this process of being rescued from sin and destruction is "_____."

In essence, it refers to the fact that Jesus _____ the perfect life we could never _____.

RESTORATION

Part of this restoration means He wants to _____ us to the place He originally intended us to be.

Restoration touches every part of your life, repairing your perspective on _____ and _____.

video feedback:

- + Why would it be important to begin a study on purity and sex with a discussion about God's story?
- + What does Clayton mean when he talks about understanding your individual story in light of God's bigger story?
- + How does each of the story elements (creation, fall, redemption, restoration) speak directly to issues of relationships, sexuality, purity, etc.?

CREATION:

FALL:

REDEMPTION:

RESTORATION:

- + What do these story elements communicate about God's character and intention for people?

Develop and post a personal tweet or Facebook status related to this session using the hashtag [#trueloveproject](#)

part 1: CREATION

Share your favorite stories in the categories below.

Favorite story in a book:

Favorite story in a movie/television series:

Favorite personal story:

Everyone loves a good story. The reason we connect so deeply with stories is because we are all part of a much bigger, more important story that has been playing out since the dawn of human history. It's a story written by God Himself. He is the main character, and His son, Jesus, is the hero. We are a part of the cast of characters and the plot revolves around a pretty big problem—a universal resistance to God and His ways.

Do you consider yourself a character in God's story? Why or why not? How can knowing that you are a part of God's bigger story bring meaning and fulfillment to your life?

Act One of God's story began long ago.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it."

(GEN. 1:26-28A)

- + Why is it important to emphasize how humanity came into existence?

- + Why is being created in God's image an important part of your identity? Is there any use in finding your identity in anything other than the image of God? Why or why not?

Our identity should be wrapped up in being image-bearers of Christ. God's original blueprint was that we look like Him, reflecting His relationship within the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit) as we love one another in friendships and marriage.

part 2: FALL

In the midst of this perfect environment filled with life, wonder, work, and pleasure, God graciously allowed Adam and Eve to enjoy all of the good gifts that grew in the garden of Eden. There was, however, one item that God banned—fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God lovingly warned them against eating from the tree, saying, “...the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.” (See Gen. 2:16-17.)

- + Genesis 3 marks the beginning of Act Two in God’s grand story. **Read Genesis 3:1-19**, and summarize what happened in the garden of Eden.

Every story has a main villain. In Genesis 3, we meet the villain of this story—the serpent. He goes by several names: Satan, Lucifer, the Devil, the Accuser, and the Evil One. He hates God, and he hates us because we were made in God’s image.

- + **Read John 10:10 and 1 Peter 5:8.** What is Satan’s desire?
- + While it’s Satan’s desire to steal, kill, and destroy, what has God done to save us from destruction? **Read Romans 5:6-11.**

This is where the story takes a dramatic turn. Adam and Eve were deceived and they disobeyed. They rebelled against the God who made them and gave them all good things. They took the fruit and ate it, believing that they could be like God. Immediately, their eyes were opened—but not to greater pleasure and happiness. The serpent had lied. They saw their shame, nakedness, and sin. Adam and Eve were embarrassed, so they tried to hide from God.

part 3: REDEMPTION

Without the fall, there would be no need for Act Three in God’s story—the story of redemption. It is here where we see resolution take place. It is the “happy ending” of this unfolding drama.

- + What was so bad about the fall? Answer this question based on the verses below:

ROMANS 5:12

ROMANS 6:23

EPHESIANS 2:1-3

These verses show that the relationship between humanity and God had been broken, making us desperate for a reconciled relationship with Him. Just when we thought that there was no possible way things could get better, God crashed into the middle of the problem to rescue us from sin and destruction through His Son, Jesus Christ. He redeemed us.

- + Explain *redemption* based upon the following verses:

EPHESIANS 1:6-8

COLOSSIANS 1:13-15

HEBREWS 9:14-16

- + Why do you think that redemption is a common theme in most stories? Why would a story seem to be incomplete without it?

part 4: RESTORATION

You may think that redemption marks the end of the story, but you would be wrong. God's intent is not just to spare us from hell; He has a much bigger plan for all of His creation. He never gave up on the world that He started in Eden. He wants to restore us to the place He originally intended us to be—with Him, in loving fellowship, living together in a world created to sustain life and joy.

- + Revelation 21:1-3 paints a picture of future restoration. Summarize this passage below.


Complete restoration will occur in the future when Jesus returns to put a final end to sin and death. However, restoration is also available right now because of Jesus' redemption. If you belong to Jesus, He is already doing a work of restoration in you.

- + How has Jesus changed parts of your life to reflect more of Him?
- + When you recognize Jesus as Lord, you will grow more and more like Him. How will this change the way you view sexuality?

Restoration will touch every part of your life, including your perspective on love and relationships. Remember that God began creation with a man and a woman who reflected the image of God together. While the fall altered God's perfect design, Jesus stepped in to restore all things. His presence will change how you see your sexuality, your desires, your body, and your craving for attention. He has the power to transform your expectations about relationships, showing you how to serve and sacrifice for the person you love. His restoration means that you don't let sexual cravings, emotional loneliness, or past mistakes control you. Instead, you are controlled by the Holy Spirit who is living and working in you.

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+ Notes on interview with Mark Batterson:



CONSIDER THIS

- + Why is it important to begin this study by focusing on God rather than on the topic at hand?
- + Why do the topics of sex and purity make more sense in the context of God's larger story? Why is it important to know that our lives are part of something much bigger than ourselves?
- + What is the difference between the third and fourth act of God's story?

HIGHLIGHTS

From Clayton's teaching, your personal reflection, and the interview, what impacted you from this session?

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ACTION POINTS

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