

# Telling A Better Story: Seeing Your Spouse in Light of God's Story

💡 We do not live according to the facts of reality but according to our interpretation of the facts.

💡 In our life and relationships, we are constantly constructing our story and the stories of others and reinforcing those stories as we rehearse them to ourselves.

💡 As we bring God and His Word into the picture we start to see the way He sees and align the stories we tell ourselves with the stories that God is working out in our lives.

## A. How We See Others (Over Time)

## B. Main Question for Today

Q: How do we tell a better and more accurate story – God's story – for our lives, for our spouse's lives, and for our marriage?

## C. Difference Between Our Story and God's Story

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” ~ Apostle Paul, *Philippians 1:6*

## D. What Keeps Us From Telling A Better Story

Because of our self-centered hearts, we can easily reduce our loved ones to either vehicles to help us get what we want or obstacles who are in the way of what we want. Our warped vision is a result of our warped hearts.

## E. How The Gospel Transforms Our Sight

**Sin ruins our sight by ruining our hearts. The gospel transforms our sight by transforming our hearts.**

## F. Telling A Better Story Heartwork #1 & 2

## G. Prayer Points

1. to identify and combat the false narratives that we tell ourselves about our spouse and our marriage (interpreting life through the lens of “our story”)

2. to see, understand, and rehearse the true, redemptive narratives that God has promised to His children (interpreting life through the lens of God's story)

# Telling A Better Story (Saint, Sufferer & Sinner) Heartwork #1

## Assignment

Look up the Scripture references and reflect and list out the ways **YOU** are a saint, sufferer, and a sinner. You do not have to answer all the questions as they are listed to help you brainstorm.

**SAINT:** What does it mean that my identity is in Christ? Who does God say that I am? What are the evidences of God's grace in my life? How has God grown me in Christlikeness? How has God used me to bless others? What are ways that God has equipped me (talents, resources, time, relationships, personality) so that I can love others? How have I grown in my faith and love in this season? (cf. Eph 1:1-11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:22-23; 1 Cor 13:1-7)

**SUFFERER:** What are the physical/spiritual/emotional struggles and losses that I am currently experiencing? What are the external and internal pressures and stress that I am facing (financial, relationships, work, health)? What hinders my ability to live for God the way that I desire? (cf. John 16:33; Rom 8:22-23; 2 Cor 1:5; 1 Pet 4:12-13)

**SINNER:** What do I worship instead of Christ? What are the patterns of sin that I struggle with (both sins of commission and sins of omission)? What are the ways that I seek to live my own way instead of God's way? What are the ways that my thoughts/words/actions dishonor Christ and harm and injure others? How am I acting selfishly in my relationships? (cf. Rom 7:19-25; James 4:1-2)

Reflect and list out the ways **YOUR SPOUSE** is a saint, sufferer, and a sinner.

**SAINT:** What does it mean that my spouse's identity is in Christ? Who does God say that he/she is? What are the evidences of God's grace in his/her life? How has God grown him/her in Christlikeness? How has God used my spouse to bless others? What are ways that God has equipped my spouse (talents, resources, time, relationships, personality) so that he/she can love others? How has my spouse grown in his/her faith and love in this season? (cf. Eph 1:1-11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 5:22-23; 1 Cor 13:1-7)

**SUFFERER:** What are the physical/spiritual/emotional struggles and losses that my spouse is currently experiencing? What are the external and internal pressures and stress that he/she is facing (financial, relationships, work, health)? What hinders my spouse's ability to live for God the way that he/she desires? (cf. John 16:33; Rom 8:22-23; 2 Cor 1:5; 1 Pet 4:12-13)

**SINNER:** What does my spouse worship instead of Christ? What are the patterns of sin that my spouse struggles with (both sins of commission and sins of omission)? What are the ways that he/she seeks to live their own way instead of God's way? What are the ways that my spouse's thoughts/words/actions dishonor Christ and harm and injure others? How is my spouse acting selfishly in their relationships? (cf. Rom 7:19-25; James 4:1-2)

# Telling A Better Story (Saint, Sufferer & Sinner) Heartwork #2

## Growing to See God's Story in Our Spouse

1. **Identify.** Write out a frequent “story” that you tell yourself about your spouse (e.g. they are unorganized, they are selfish, they are lazy, they are too sensitive, etc.).
2. **Prayer.** Take time to ask God to help you see our spouse the way He sees them – in a way that is hopeful and redemptive (Phil 1:6; Eph 1:1-11).
3. **Rehearse the Good (Saint) & Hard (Suffering).** Zoom out from the issue you are focused on and thoughtfully answer these questions.
  - Q: “What is the good that I can identify in my spouse?”
  - Q: “What is the hurt that my spouse is experiencing underneath the anger, frustration, disappointment that they are expressing?”
  - Q: “How can the first words from my mouth affirm the good and/or recognize the hard?”
4. **Retell Your Spouse's Story with God in the Picture.**
  - Q: “What is God doing in, around, and through my spouse's life?”
  - Q: “How can I reframe the story with gospel hope?”
5. **Move Towards Your Spouse.** Take time to affirm your spouse with the good that you see in them. Take time to comfort your spouse by asking how you can help them in their suffering.


***\*Important Note:** We are not saying to excuse or minimize clear sin that needs to be addressed. We are simply pointing out the need for us to accurately see the good and the hard in our spouse's life so that we can lovingly and redemptively partner with the Spirit to grow our spouse's love for Christ.*



**Telling A Better Story:  
Seeing Your Spouse in Light of God's Story**

Marriage Seminar  
Lighthouse Retreat  
2022

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**The Stories We Tell Ourselves**


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**Our Question For Today**

Q: How do we tell a better and more accurate story – God's story – for our lives, for our spouse's lives, and for our marriage?

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### My Story



what I want  
what has happened to me  
what I am doing

OR

### God's Story



what God wants  
what God has promised  
what God is doing

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### Philippians 1:6

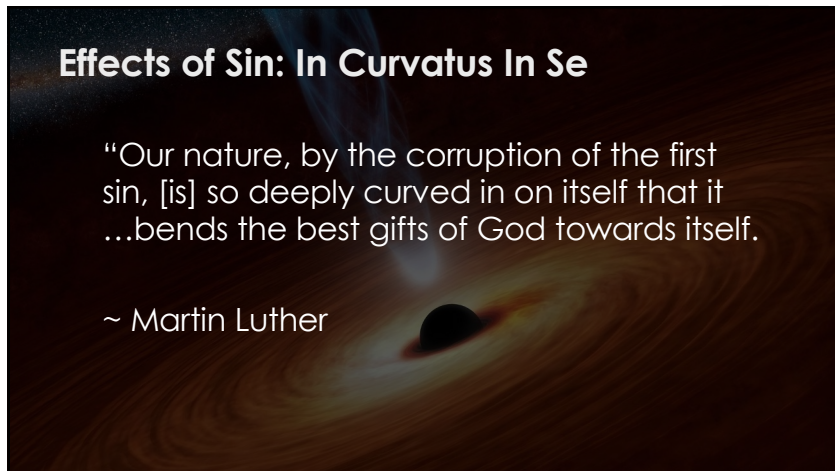
“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” ~  
Apostle Paul, *Philippians 1:6*

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### Effects of Sin: In Curvatus In Se


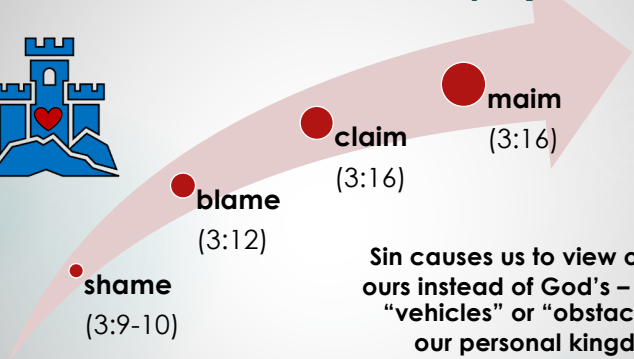
“Our nature, by the corruption of the first sin, [is] so deeply curved in on itself that it ...bends the best gifts of God towards itself.

~ Martin Luther



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### Effects of Sin on Relationships (Gen 3)

- shame (3:9-10)
- blame (3:12)
- claim (3:16)
- maim (3:16)

Sin causes us to view others as ours instead of God's – as either “vehicles” or “obstacles” for our personal kingdoms

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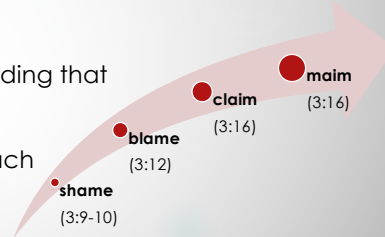
## Effects of Sin on Relationships (Gen 3)

**We shame** – making each other feel worthless and dirty, weak and small

**We blame** – making the other person feel like everything is their fault

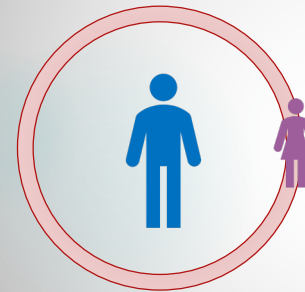
**We claim** – manipulating demanding that my spouse meet my needs

**We maim** – retaliating against each other and hurting each other



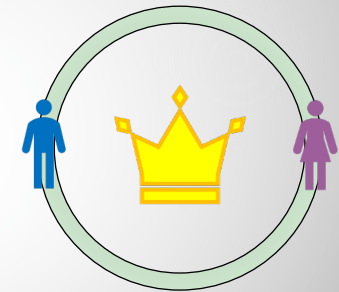
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## Part of My Story



OR

## Part of God's Story



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## Our Warped Vision & Our Warped Hearts

Because of our self-centered hearts, we can easily reduce our loved ones to either vehicles to help us get what we want or obstacles who are in the way of what we want.

**Our warped vision is a result of our warped hearts.**

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## The Need for Supernatural Help

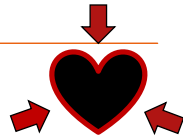


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## How the Gospel Transforms Our Sight

Sin ruins our sight by ruining our hearts.

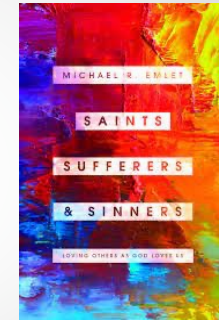
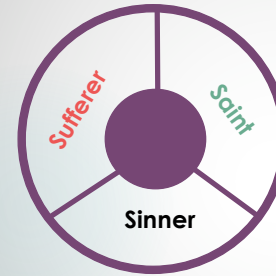


The gospel transforms our sight by transforming our hearts.



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## Our Identity as Saint, Sufferer, Sinner



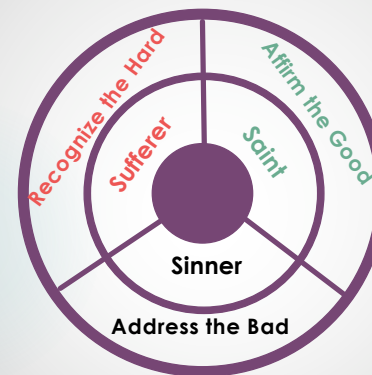
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## The Priority of Affirming Our Identity as Saints



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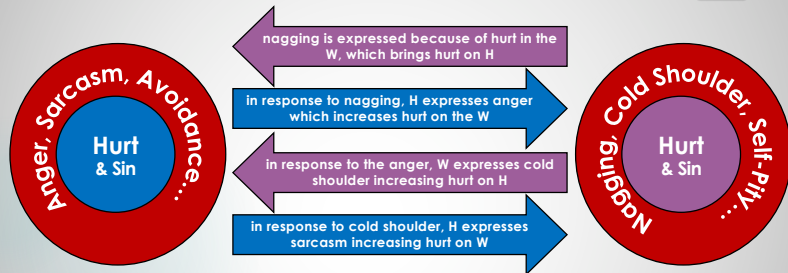
## Understanding & Ministering To Our Spouse



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## Internal Issues & External Symptoms



In conflict we see, hear, feel, and respond to external symptoms instead of addressing the deeper internal hurt and struggle

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## Telling A Better Story In Everyday Scenarios

Affirm the Good ➡ Recognize the Hard ➡ Address the Bad

- Q: What is the **good** that I can identify in my spouse?
- Q: What is the **hurt** that my spouse is experiencing?
- Q: How can my **first words** affirm the good and/or recognize the hard?

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## Prayer Points

1. To identify and combat the false narratives that we tell ourselves about our spouse and our marriage (interpreting life through the lens of "our story")
2. To see, understand and rehearse the true, redemptive narratives that God has promised to His children (interpreting life through the lens of God's story)

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