

Flourishing in the Workplace – Part 4 Participating in God’s Story

Introduction

Who is writing your story? Are the successes you’re enjoying in your job defining the story of your life? Are the challenges or disappointments you are facing at work today writing the story of your life? Are you allowing a bully at work to write your life story?

Or are you writing your own story for your life, while mining the myriad of voices around you for snippets of wisdom?

Or are you hearing God’s voice of wisdom proclaim his story, and in obedience experiencing the joy of living in his story?

When you let your work define your story, you will find yourself one day holding an empty bag. When your work changes, or ends, the purpose and satisfaction you have found in your work will evaporate.

When you choose to write your story yourself, you have the privilege of defining your own way, you have the opportunity to choose to explore the path less travelled. When you write your own story, you have the choice to rise above the pettiness of the people around you. When you write your own story, you live alone - with the satisfaction of your accomplishments.

God’s story is the meta-narrative that all lives are lived in. Only in the context of God’s story does the universe and our lives have meaning. God’s story doesn’t start with a command, or demand. God’s story begins with love. The love of the Father who created this world, who lovingly created you and who lovingly created each person you work with.

God’s story is not just an abstract future concept. God’s story is the reality of God’s Kingdom of grace established in our hearts bearing fruit in this world today. God’s story is a story of hope. God’s story is the rich expression of the will of our Father in heaven who is infinite in knowledge, love and power.

Your story is a unique part of God’s story. God wrote the story for your life before the dawn of creation.

Entering into God’s story is to enter into a mystery. Things will happen in your work and in your life that won’t seem to make sense. From your perspective good things and bad things will happen. Participating in God’s story is to say in every situation to the author of the story, your loving heavenly Father, **“Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** And having proclaimed this truth, and claimed this promise, you can in quiet trust and obedience faithfully be the unique, wonderful person God created you to be in this place where God has placed you right now.

Study

1. **Matthew 6:9-10** – Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Jer 17:7-8 – Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit

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- a) The statement ‘Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ is countercultural. Do we really want this to be true? What are the implications of this statement with regards to our reputation, our ego, our way, the way we do our work, the way we relate to our manager, or our coworkers?
- b) There are three ways we can live our lives, we can let our life story be defined by our work and other people; we can write our own life story; or we can let God define our story as part of his perfect will. What are the blessings / benefits of letting God define our story?
- c) Why do we choose to allow our work, other people or ourselves to write our story?

2. God’s will is being accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

Read:

Phil 2:13 *it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

Rom 12:1-2 - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

John 6:38-40 - ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Matt 26:39 - *Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

- d) When we pray ‘Your will be done’, we are praying first and foremost that we would walk in accordance with God’s ways and see God’s will be done in our lives, transforming us to become more like Christ. What do we have to do before we can see God’s will being accomplished in our lives?
- e) Secondly this is a petition that God would open our eyes (in faith) to see God working through the people around us. What do we have to do before we can see God working through the people around us (particularly when they aren’t doing their work the way we think they should be, or are making decisions we don’t agree with, or behaving in ways we don’t agree with)? (e.g. what do you have to stop doing or start doing? – **Note:** while there may be similar principles, the specific behavior is different for each person).
- f) What did Jesus know about the character of God, his Father, that gave him the confidence to pray “not as I will, but as you will”?
- g) What keeps us from being able to pray “not as I will, but as you will”?

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3. God’s Kingdom is a future hope and a source of hope

Read 1 Peter 3:1-9

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

h) Why does Peter say in these verses that we can be filled with hope?

i) How does knowing that God’s Kingdom will come inspire you to press on?

Conclusion

- God’s kingdom has come – this gives us confidence to face today
- God’s kingdom keeps on coming – this gives us expectation in our prayer
- God’s kingdom will come completely how and when God decides – this gives us hope to face today

Application

j) Share with your partner one area in your life where you need hope. Pray for each other Phil 2:13 – That God would continue to work in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.