



Stories are the fabric of our lives. God loves stories. The Bible is made up of true stories of success and failure in life. God uses the stories of failures of people to show the fall of man, but also the redemption of man. He shows how those destined to create better stories follow Him to their destinies or their demise.

He also shows us how when He appears in our lives, things change. A former killer turned shepherd turns into one of the greatest leaders and freedom fighters for an entire nation of enslaved people. A lowly shepherd boy is anointed king but becomes one of the greatest leaders after deep heart-felt repentance for the sin of adultery and murder. A former head-hunter of Christians turns into the author of the majority of the New Testament.

Right now whatever is happening in your life is a direct result of the story you have been telling yourself. This is based on your interpretation of what is occurring right now in your life. It is also what you truly BELIEVE is possible deep down in your core.

If you don't believe you can lose weight, then that will be born out in how you are living your life right now. What you tell yourself, the input you give your brain, is what will result in your life. What you tell that subconscious mind of yours is what you believe you deserve.

Here are some examples:

1. I deserve to eat what I want
2. I deserve to lose weight without changing anything
3. I deserve to lose weight without exercise
4. I deserve to lose weight quickly
5. I have to stay fat to protect myself
6. I have to be fat and happy
7. I have to be fat because all my family was fat

We each have a story. It began the moment we were born. No, it really began further back than that with the moment our parents were born and got married. And of course we could continue back through the generations to discover why our parents raised us like they did.

We interpret each additional page of our story, each new entry, through a generational lens. Will the outcome of what is happening right now in the story we are writing be life-giving or life-limiting?

We also have the power to choose what story we will tell ourselves. This does not mean we tell ourselves a lie. Our story has to be a true story of what we want to happen in the future and it must be in accordance with what story God has already written for us.

When we change the life-limiting stories we tell ourselves, we are able to effect change on our lives in accordance with our new life-giving stories. Those who lose weight and keep it off have learned they have to tell themselves a life-giving positive story and believe it.

Changing what you tell yourself, changing the thoughts you partner with, changing the things you allow to take root in your mind, eliminating negative self talk will help change your life-limiting story to one that is empowering. So let's talk about how to do that?

Focus on God

This is always a step we have to take. God want us to tell ourselves a life-giving story, not one of condemnation and shame but one of forgiveness and victory.

Romans 8:1 TPT—“There remains no accusing voice of condemnation against those who are joined in life-union with Jesus, the Anointed One.”

Many times when we face a difficult situation like a temptation, craving or even a health challenge, we immediately feed ourselves a story about what we will do, a worst case scenario. We condemn ourselves and blame ourselves or others. We expect the worst to happen, the other shoe to fall, our “luck” to run out.

This is a huge mind game we play with ourselves and then we pray and ask God for the bad things we are imagining not to happen. This doesn't make sense. When we pray we pray with God's will and work with Him to do whatever He wants us to do to help the situation.

We are not immobile in our difficulties and especially not in our weight loss journeys. We don't just sit back and ask God to magically make things happen. We ask Him to reveal to us what we should be doing next and then we allow Him to cause situations to happen that will reveal to us what we should do.

Romans 8:7-11 TPT—“The mind-set focused on the flesh fights God's plan and refuses to submit to His direction because it cannot. For no matter how hard they try, God finds no pleasure with those who are controlled by the flesh.

“But when the Spirit of Christ empowers your life, you are not dominated by the flesh but by the Spirit. And if you are not joined to the Spirit of the Anointed One, you are not of Him. Now Christ lives His life in you!

“And even though your body may be dead because of the effects of sin, His life-giving Spirit imparts life to you because you are fully accepted by God. Yes, God raised Jesus to life!

“And since God's Spirit of Resurrection lives in you, He will also raise your dying body to life by the same Spirit that breathes life into you!”

We are way to focused on our natural desires, craving, temptations, that is the human existence we are living in. And when we have a mind-set of taking care of self, it is likely that we give God lip service, but not much else.

In other words, we know what to do, we know the story we'd like to tell ourselves, but instead we tell ourselves what gloom, despair and agony tell us. And then that becomes the story we live on a daily basis. Notice that God finds no pleasure in this mind-set.

So how do we tell ourselves a life-giving story, the story God wants us to live. First, we have to fully believe that God wants to help us write the story He has in mind for us. He will empower us so that our lives are not bound to earthly gain, but reaching for heavenly things.

Do What Jesus Did

It's exactly what Jesus did while He was here. He didn't focus on whether or not he ticked off the spiritual and political leaders, He didn't care if He pushed the limits of the law and healed folks on the Sabbath, He didn't even care if He made outlandish claims about Himself such as I and the Father are One. None of that mattered to Him.

Jesus saw earth as a training ground, a place to train disciples to carry out His ministry after He was gone. He had no fear of what man might do to Him because He knew death was His intended fate that would bring His victory.

He believed in something that had never taken place before. He believed He would not only be resurrected but He walk on the earth again and then, would ascend to the Father. He trusted the story God the Father had told Him.

That's the reason Romans 8:10 TPT says, "Even though your body may be dead because of the effects of sin, His life-giving Spirit imparts life to you because you are fully accepted by God." We are fully accepted by God because of the debt Jesus paid for us to be able to follow God in obedience. We can do this. It's part of our story that we would see everything in light of eternity.

God's building a story in us through every day we are here on earth. We don't want to miss what He's doing in our lives and we won't if we are tuned in to Him.

The very cool thing to me is that Jesus promises to raise our dying bodies to life by the same Spirit that raised Christ. He will breathe life into us, real life, abundant life as John 10:10 says.

Write A Better Story for Yourself

In order to write a better story for yourself you have to believe one huge truth about God. He is the Author. Every story He writes, especially yours, has a plot twist that you never in a million years saw coming.

Romans 8:28-29 TPT—“So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually woven together to fit into God’s perfect plan of bringing good into our lives, for we are His lovers who have been called to fulfill His designed purpose. For He knew all about us before we were born and He destined us from the beginning to share the likeness of his Son.”

I love Romans 8:28 in any version but especially in this version. Most of us know the end of our stories is that we go to Heaven, a place none of us can fathom, but all of us should long for.

Still, there are times here on earth when things happen and maybe you get a promise from God like that wayward child will come home, a marriage will be restored, you will find that perfect job, you will discover that thing that God wants us to do in this life, God will deliver you from an impossible situation, you will lose 250 or however many pounds you want to lose.

At the time you are sure that will happen, but then life gets in your way and you can’t see the rainbow at the end. It’s obscured and you aren’t sure where you are headed. Romans 8:28 says relax. God’s got this. He will take even the darkest details of your life and weave them together to somehow fit into His plan.

When I was in the midst of gaining weight faster than a bullet train, I couldn’t see how God could weave that failure into something that would fit into His plan or much less be good for me. It was only when I allowed Him to help me turn it around that He did just that.

Many times we stop at end of verse 28, but verse 29 tells us the back story. He called us. He knows all about us because He saw us before we were born and every day of our lives. He knew we would become the likeness of His Son. He wants us to make the choices that help us write the story He has in mind for us.

What Story Are You Telling Yourself?

The stories you tell yourself must be the stories God wants you to tell yourself. This is because whatever story you are telling yourself is the story you will live.

Your brain is wired to take commands from you. It will begin to help you live out your better story when it understands that your actions and behaviors are beginning to coincide with story you are telling yourself.

One of your first steps is to determine the story you are telling yourself. Here are a few life-limiting stories you might be telling yourself. Add to these any that these thoughts may bring up. Also look at the stories listed earlier about what you tell yourself you deserve or have to do. Circle or make a note of the ones that speak loudest to you or add others you know apply to you.

1. I'll never lose weight.
2. I always fail so I will this time, too.
3. It's too hard.
4. I have to reward myself.
5. I will starve if I don't eat some comfort foods.
6. I can stop anytime I want to.
7. One bite won't hurt.

When you tell yourself these things and others like them, then your brain has to act accordingly. If you don't give your brain new input, it will continue to tell you to do what you've always done. You will be stuck in a loop of your own making until you tell your brain a different story.

Here are some possibilities. Feel free to add your own.

1. I can lose weight because I can do all things through Christ
2. I learn best by seeing what my failures teach me
3. If it was easy everyone would be doing it
4. I can reward myself by becoming healthy
5. Eating healthy will fuel my body better than eating junk
6. I need to establish God given boundaries with my eating
7. Accepting my limits frees me from bondage to food

When telling yourself a different story it's good to support yourself with facts. Understand that the negative life-limiting story is a lie and the positive life-giving story is the truth. Seek always to follow the truth.

Support yourself by working on your emotions. Prayer, journaling, Bible study, resting in God's presence, reading Christian books, listening to life-giving podcasts, playing good worship and music that lets you soak in the presence of God are all ways to distress and allow your emotions to quiet.

Faith Needs Action

None of this planning works without taking action. Our actions really show whether we are trusting God with our new story or not.

When you read a book and the main character makes a change you can tell she is changing by the actions she is taking. You are the main character in your story. You have to take actions that align with the new story you are telling your brain.

If you have begun telling yourself a different story, but then you aren't living that story, your brain is going to have some cognitive dissonance. That is defined as "the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change."

If what you are telling yourself doesn't jive with the actions you are taking your brain is either going to help you change or force you to abandon your story. Either you take action and change your behaviors in line with what you are claiming or you kill the story.

Rewriting My Story

Back in 1994, I went to a workshop that helped me rewrite my story. I went in with the story that said, "I am a broken, fat, unhappy woman." I left with my new story, the one I desperately wanted to have happen. I said, "I am a whole, healthy, happy woman."

Several times during the workshop I had to introduce myself with "Hi, I am a whole, healthy, happy woman." I struggled with even saying the words. The devil was screaming in my ear, "Liar, liar. You are a broken,

fat, unhappy woman. You are so far away from that it isn't even funny. Thou shalt not lie!"

My brain was agreeing with this. I actually felt like my brain was sitting on the sidelines thinking that I had gone insane because at approaching 430 pounds I knew I was not where I wanted to be and I was certainly not whole, healthy and happy. However, I desperately wanted to be.

This was about 10 years before I actually went on a total lifestyle change, but I never abandoned that story. Even back then I was making subtle changes, fixing healthier meals for my family, exercising every once in awhile. It wasn't much, but it was enough to make me want more change.

That new story was the beginning of a journey that is still continuing because we never end our new stories, we just keep writing them until God writes our endings.

Things may not change immediately. However, as you keep telling yourself this different story, you are writing new sentences in your story. It's sort of like everything leading up to this point of your life was headed towards death and then a plot twist happens and you begin walking towards the abundant life that Jesus promised us in John 10:10. He promised us a different life than the very burdensome life of food addiction and overeating.

Small steps of change is what you are after. We have several stories of that here in our group. These are ladies who finally began to believe that if they would make small lasting changes it would one day create big lifestyle changes and weight loss. Small successes are great motivators. We have one and we want another. These small personal victories that we know are building in us lifestyle habits become addictive. We want more and more success.

This whole journey is really all about consistently telling yourself a new story that includes the abundant strength, provision and protection God brings to us when we get on board with His plan for our lives.

Telling Yourself A Better Story

Once you know the story you have been playing on repeat or even telling yourself out loud, you need to discover a different life-giving story. It needs to be the story God wants for you. Of course it will be the opposite of the story you've been telling yourself.

Action Steps

1. Look over the seven negative story statements and seven "deserve" statements from above (or others that you might write. Write the one life-limiting story that you are telling yourself. Make it the one that you feel is playing on repeat in your mind.
2. Dismantle this one life-limiting story by putting it in the middle of the page and then around it write all the negative things that have or could happen when you believe that story. This will help you see the fallacy in that story.
3. Now you are ready to choose or write a positive life-giving story statement to counter act the life-limiting one. It should be one that you know God desires for you. You can use the positive story examples I gave or come up with your own with God's guidance.
4. Post your new life-giving story where you will see it the most often. Practice repeating this out loud at least 3-5 times a day. It is important for your brain to hear you speak your new story.