

MODULE 2: STORY

MODULE OBJECTIVES:

Explain why the concept of story is so prominent and how it relates to discovering our purpose.

Unpack the overview of God's story, as told in Ephesians 1-3.

Introduce the Purpose Storyboard tool.

Seed Tools: The Purpose Storyboard

Seed Videos: "God's Story Shapes Ours"

Selected Readings: Chapter 1 of *The Drama of Scripture* by Bartholomew & Goheen.

MODULE OVERVIEW:

This module explores God's story as told in Ephesians 1-3. These chapters offer a snapshot into God's story and provides a foundation to then frame our own story within the larger narrative of God's purposes. After the study section, the first Redemptive Design tool is introduced: The Purpose Storyboard.

MODULE BREAKDOWN:

- 2.1 Why Story?
- 2.2 My Story in God's Story
- 2.3 God's Story
- 2.4 Ephesians Study: A Snapshot of God's Purposes
- 2.5 Introduction to the Purpose Storyboard
- 2.6 Prayer and Reflection



2.1 WHY STORY?

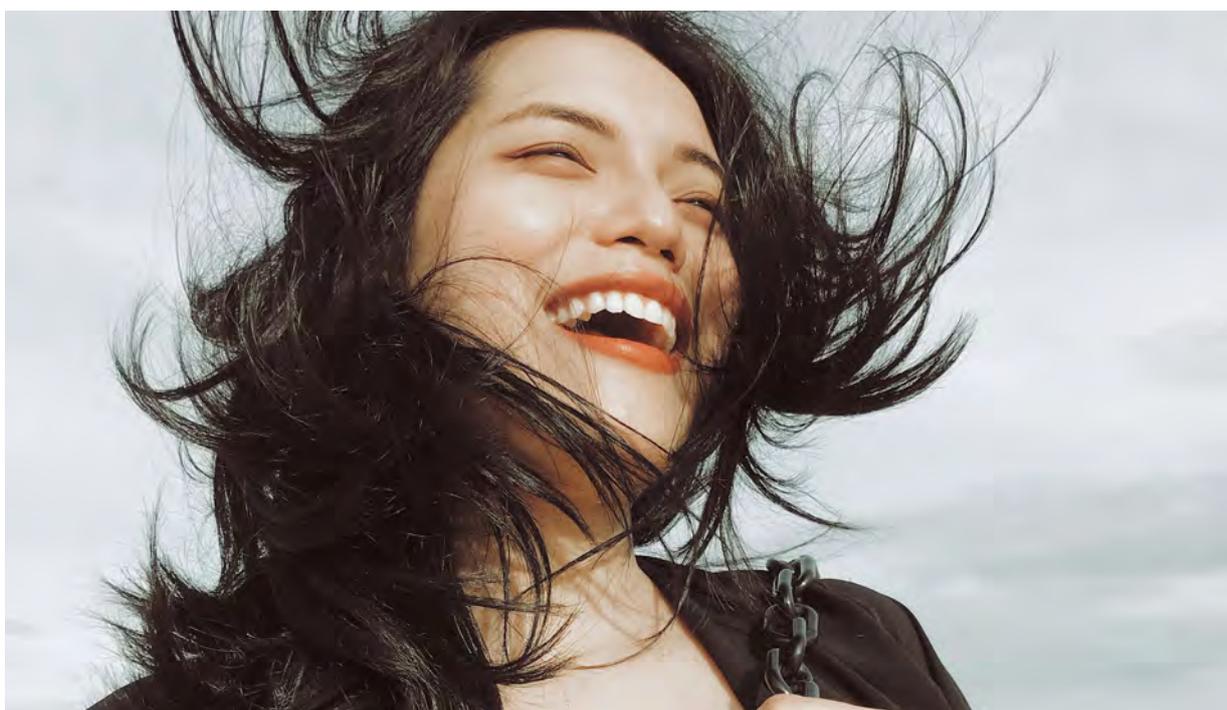


Stories help us make sense of the world and our place in it. Whether consciously or sub-consciously, we understand ourselves and our place in the world through the stories we tell about ourselves, our communities, and our cultures. Such stories have the power to *form* our identity. Stories are also powerful vehicles for bringing insight into who God made us to be, and what God is leading us to do in the world.

But when we tell our story, we can tend to see ourselves as the author or main character. We're easily drawn into the precarious position of trying to control the narrative and outcomes of the story.

How can we make meaning of our lives and the events happening to and around us, without falling into the trap of assuming authority over the world and the change we want to see in it?

In this module we are going to consider how we can gain clarity of purpose and, with that, a confidence to participate in God's purposes when we reframe our story in God's story, know God's story more intimately and practice articulating our own stories.

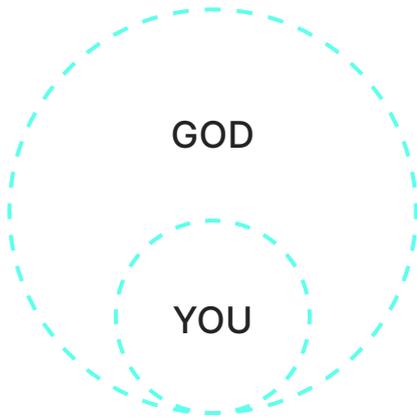
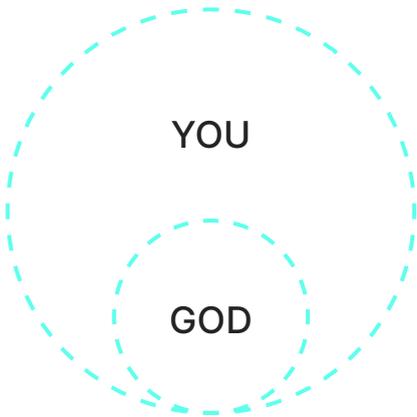


2.2 MY STORY IN GOD'S STORY

A sense of purpose can bring incredible clarity and action to people's lives. But many people assume that purpose is about self-determination and most pursuits of purpose seek to fit everything (including God) into a story we control.

As Christians, we find our purpose by first examining the purpose for which we were created. God's purpose is the central foundation for finding our purpose.

These two approaches are illustrated below.



Finding your purpose is not a process of self-determination. Rather, it is a process of aligning yourself and what you do in the world with God's purposes.

Which side of the illustration above best describes your Christian life currently? You may be a mixture of both, depending on the area of life.

This can be a mindset shift for many of us.

A large empty rectangular box for writing, with a document icon in the top left corner.





NOTES / COMMENTS



▶ 2.3 GOD'S STORY

Knowing we were created for a purpose can be a great comfort, but it can raise more questions. If my purpose is connected to God's, how do I understand God's purposes? Do I have a particular part to play in God's purposes that is unique to me?

In this module we want to create space to explore these questions and we want to adopt a posture of discovery to approach these questions with curiosity and openness while simultaneously accepting that there will never be an end point to our discovery. We will never fully understand God's purposes, we may never reach a point of total confidence in our part in God's story. But we can come closer to God, gain clarity of our purpose and grow deeper in our knowledge of God. After all, this was the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians, that they would "know him better" (1:17), may it be our prayer too. "

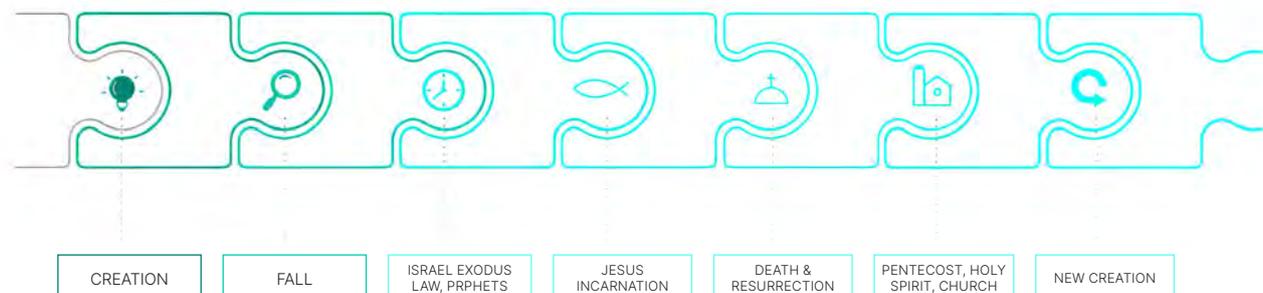
Confidence builds as we know God more and when we are more confident in who God has made us to be, by his grace, even when we fail, face difficult decisions or make choices that are not aligned with the Spirit, we won't be overly shaken by the rebuilding, faith leaping, Spirit convicting disciplines that we are all bound to face in life.

WHAT IS GOD'S STORY?

The big picture of God's story can be summarised as a four-act story of creation, fall, redemption and renewal:

- **Creation tells** the story of beginnings in which we see God's ideal for what He has created. In Genesis 1:26-27, we find that humans are made in the image of God. As image-bearers, a key part of our purpose, is to get to know God, then bear God's image in the world.
- **The fall** (Genesis 3) introduces the problem of sin. Through human sinfulness, we find that our relationship with God, and therefore our ability to fulfill our purpose as image-bearers of God in the world, is broken.
- **The solution** is the good news of what God has done to bring redemption through Jesus Christ. In response to this good news, followers of Jesus repent and believe (Mark 1:15).
- **It is from** Jesus Christ that the final act of renewal of all things flows. As fallen yet redeemed image bearers who follow Jesus, we participate in God's purpose for the renewal of all creation (2 Cor 5:17-6:1).

All the acts are vital and are interwoven within the storyline of the Bible:





NOTES / COMMENTS



2.4 EPHESIANS STUDY: A SNAPSHOT OF GOD'S PURPOSE

The start of Ephesians is a profound snapshot of God's story. In chapter one, we see God's mysterious will unfolding in the story, then chapter two emphasises our own purpose and place in this story, in chapters three and four we find the purpose of God highlighted again and if we were to

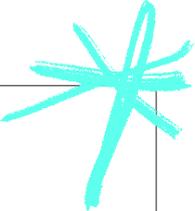
summarise the end goal of the story it is this: community and unity among us, the church.

Together, we're going to explore the incredible revelation of God's purposes and what response we can offer God considering this unfolding story.

GOD'S PURPOSE & WILL – EPHESIANS 1:1-14

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. What stood out to you in these verses?



2. From these verses, what would you say God's will or purpose is?



A NEW IDENTITY — EPHESIANS 2:1-10

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

3. What are some ways that God's purpose affects you? What is God inviting you to do or consider?

FOR RECONCILIATION — EPHESIANS 2:11-22

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

4. Paul is explicit about God's purposes in verse 15 but what can reconciliation look like for us today?

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH — EPHESIANS 3:8-13

Read Ephesians 3:8-13

5. What else is Paul revealing here about God's purposes?





NOTES / COMMENTS



2.5 INTRODUCTION TO THE PURPOSE STORYBOARD



The Purpose Storyboard Tool was developed to help you reflect on the stories and experiences that God has used to shape you. This includes how your identity, and your sense of purpose are being formed by God's story and shaped by God's grace. The tool also provides opportunities to identify your context (where you've been placed), giftings, and passions which together provide a basis for discerning your own sense of God-given purpose.

This tool comprises of six primary sections:

- **History:** Who or what has God used to shape you?
- **Context:** This can comprise of two distinct elements, place -where has

God placed you now; and people – who are you serving now?

- **Gifting:** What are you 'naturally' good at? How do you use those gifts?
- **Passion:** What do you loving doing and who do you do this with?
- **Causes:** What tensions do you feel? What problems do you want to solve?
- **Vision:** God willing, what do you dream your life and impact might look like in the future? What do you long for?



The Purpose Storyboard is on the next page. There is also an electronic copy available on the Seed website.





NOTES / COMMENTS





SEED

Purpose Storyboard (a story within a story)

HISTORY (storyline)	CONTEXT	PASSION (character profile)	VISION (ending)
	GIFTING (character profile)	CAUSES (plot)	

Purpose Statement:



2.6 PRAYER & REFLECTION



Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16-21 is an incredibly powerful prayer. Take a moment to read it as a prayer over one another and over your journey together.

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and

high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:16-21 (NIV)



MODULE 2 STORYBOARD EXTENSION EXERCISES

This exercise is intended to deepen your understanding of your story and identity by involving others in the process.

It would be great to go through this exercise before you meet for the next Module!

TO START:

- Identify someone who knows you well (or you may want to do this in a small group of 2-3).
- Ask them if they would be happy to listen to you tell your story? This may take 1-2 hours in total.
- Give them a copy of a blank Purpose Storyboard (another copy is available on the following page).
- Tell them your story and ask them to fill in the Storyboard while they listen to you. Allow 30-45 minutes for this.
- Once you finish, spend another 30-45 minutes allowing them to reflect back to you what they heard. This is essentially a retelling of your story back to you. Ask them to highlight the elements that stand out to them.
- Discuss together the different bits that stood out to them and explore the question, **who has God made you to be?**





SEED

Purpose Storyboard (a story within a story)

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