

## **“The Story Begins” – A Summary of Chapters 1-6”** **For the week of October 28, 2012**

### **Chapter 1: “Creation: The Beginning of Life as We Know It”**

**KEY POINT:** From the creation story we discover the value of all human beings. God wants to be with you. Think about that. You. God wants to personally be with you. At great cost to God, God has done everything possible to get you back. You are valuable. True, lasting self-esteem begins by believing what God says about you.

**DISCUSSION:** The story of the fall indicates that every part of God's good creation was fractured by Adam and Eve's rebellion. As you observe our world, what evidence do you see that the world was created to be a good and beautiful place? Where do you see evidence that it is broken by sin?

### **Chapter 2: “God Builds a Nation”**

**KEY POINT:** In choosing Abraham and Sarai to begin the new nation, God reveals a pattern. God chooses unlikely people who are not the smartest, the most beautiful and handsome with the best resumes. God chooses ordinary people like you and me. You are not disqualified to be used greatly in God's great Story. You can be used to reveal God and reflect His plan to win us back.

**DISCUSSION:** Sarah didn't think God was moving fast enough with the whole “nation building project.” So, she decided to help God by giving her handmaid to Abraham to bear a child for her. Give some examples of ways we jump ahead of God's timing for our lives in an effort to “help” God.

### **Chapter 3: “Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh”**

**KEY POINT:** God is at work in the midst of the details of our lives accomplishing His good purposes. Knowing that God's story line is unfolding, even in bleak and confusing times, allows us to live freely and be able to forgive those who sin against us. God tests us in order to build our faith in Him and strong character in us.

**DISCUSSION:** At the end of chapter 3 of *The Story*, Joseph was reunited with his brothers twenty-two years after they sold him off as a slave. What strikes you about Joseph's attitude toward his brothers and the way he treats them? What does this teach us about the condition of his heart and depth of his faith?

## **Chapter 4: "Deliverance"**

**KEY POINT:** The story of the Passover sacrifice lies at the heart of the Old Testament story. The blood of the lamb made God's people safe from His judgment. In this story of deliverance, God reveals himself as the mover of empires with authority over the kings of the earth. This story of redemption lays the foundation for an even greater story of redemption and deliverance yet to come through the sacrifice of God's firstborn Son on a cross.

**DISCUSSION:** While God saw Moses as the perfect person to face Pharaoh and speak the word of the Lord to the leader of Egypt, Moses saw himself as a political fugitive and a poor communicator who had no business facing the king. What is one area of your life where you tend to focus more on your limitations than God's ability to work through you? How can your group pray for you and encourage you to seek God's leading in this area?

## **Chapter 5: "New Commands and a New Covenant"**

**KEY POINT:** Jesus is our great High Priest and His blood once and for all atones for (covers) our sin. With the blood of Jesus on the door frame of your life, you are forgiven and given direct access into the Most Holy Place. We are the place where God dwells. We are the new tabernacle. The church is not a building, the church is us and we are the place where God resides.

**DISCUSSION:** a) God no longer dwells in tents or temples; He lives in us (Acts 7:48-50; 1 Corinthians 6:19). How does recognizing that God dwells in us help connect His Upper Story to our Lower Story on a daily basis? b) God promised that His presence would be with the people and they would stand out in the world because of it. This is still true today. What are some ways Christians should stand out in our world?

## **Chapter 6: "Wandering"**

**KEY POINT:** God's GPS is instructing us on how to live life in the upper story where we find blessing and purpose. God has the whole journey mapped out, from beginning to end, and He knows the best way to get us to our destination. He is with us every step of the way, whether we are aware of it or not. From our standpoint we must trust Him. When we do, we align with God's plan. When we don't... well, we know what happens when we don't!

**DISCUSSION:** God's vision for His children is to be responsive to His leading. When God says to go left or right, we should turn and go. When He says stop, we are to hit the brakes. What kinds of things can get in the way of us responding to God?

## **Prayer**

- Pray for Cary Nack and family as they make the transition to RiverLakes. Pray that our church family receive the Nacks with open arms.
- Pray for our church body to reflect on the first six chapters of *The Story*. Pray that families are having regular discussions about God's story.
- Pray for continued commitment to reading *The Story* as we start on the next series called "Victory Against All Odds."