

DO YOU WISH TO LIVE A GOOD STORY?

Hebrews 11:8-10; Luke 9:23-24, Romans 8:28-29

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR A GOOD STORY?

“Essentially, a story expresses how and why life changes. It begins with a situation in which life is relatively in balance. But then there’s an event that throws life out of balance—in screenwriting, we call it the “inciting event.” The story goes on to describe how, in an effort to restore balance, the protagonist’s desire collides into an uncooperative reality. A good storyteller describes what it’s like to deal with these opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper, work with scarce resources, make difficult decisions, take action despite risks, and ultimately discover the truth. All great storytellers since the dawn of time—from the ancient Greeks to Shakespeare, up to the present day—have dealt with this fundamental conflict between [desire] and cruel reality.” —Robert McKee

McKee’s Principles of Story-telling:

1. Desire. The story begins once the protagonist wants something.
2. Conflict. As the protagonist pursues his/her desire, s/he is opposed by conflict (or reality).
3. Fear. The protagonist has to make a choice to push forward or admit defeat. Needs courage.
4. Resolution. How does the story end? Does the protagonist win or does it end in tragedy?

DOES YOUR LIFE CONTAIN THE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD STORY?

The elements that make for a good story are also the elements that make for a good life.

“A general rule in creating stories is that characters don’t want to change. They must be forced to change. Nobody wakes up and starts chasing a bad guy or dismantling a bomb unless something forces them to. This rule exists in story because it’s a true thing of people. Humans are designed to seek comfort and order, and so if they have comfort and order, they tend to plant themselves, even if their comfort isn’t all that comfortable.” —Robert McKee

WHY FOLLOWING HARD AFTER CHRIST MAKES THE BEST STORY

Apologetic = a formal defense or justification of a theory or religious doctrine.

The Christian’s life of following Christ includes:

- A moment of conviction when one realizes that his/her life must be lived differently.
- Willing to make personal sacrifices for the ultimate good.
- Presses forward with determination, courage, commitment, teamwork, faith
- Adventure: A bold willingness to venture into the unknown, trusting in the Guide.
- Character-development. Becomes more Christ-like throughout the process
- An unexpected and great reward

John 5:24 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

Luke 9:23-24 *“Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.”*

2 Corinthians 5:15 *“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”*

Galatians 2:20 *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”*

Hebrews 11:8-10 *“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

Romans 8:28-29 *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”*

SOME QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DEVOTION:

1. Jot down a list of your top 5 stories. As you think through the narrative flow of these stories, do they all contain Robert McKee’s elements of good story-telling? How so?
2. The elements that make for a good story are also the elements that make for a good life. As you think of your life, how might this be true of you? What obstacles have you had to overcome and how did your character develop in the process?
3. Take some time to read and meditate on the Bible verses above. In your own words, what do these verses say to you about the Christian life? If the Holy Spirit were to “incite” someone with these words, how might she or he respond in obedience? What obstacles might she or he have to overcome and what changes might that person experience by following hard after Jesus?
4. Romans 8:28-29 says for those who love God, like a Screen-writer He uses everything that we experience in life to work towards our ultimate good. Think about what you’re going through during this season, including your fears and short-comings. How might God want to use those areas of your life as a part of His good story for you? How can you give these areas and yourself to God today?