

The Story

Deal or No Deal?

John Quiñones hosted, "What Would You Do?" In the TV show, actors play out real life situations in which observers become participants. Here are a couple of scenarios:

You are in a restaurant and see a party of ten people who have run the waitress ragged. After paying the bill, one person leaves a very large tip on the table – four twenty dollar bills. Then as you are watching, another person walks past the table and picks up the tip. What would you do?

You walk into an office and see a boss berating a pregnant woman? He tells her she is not doing her job. He says that when he hired her she was not pregnant but now her baby is in her way. He says he is thinking of firing her. Then he asks if she ever considered an abortion? What would you do?

What if you were part a story and did not know it?

God wants us to know we are part of the story – His story! In fact he tells us in Ephesians 2:10:

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (ESV).

Long before we were born, He wove us into His divine story. The reason we are doing *The Story* is to help you understand how you can be a part of God's Story!

The Bible, The Best Deal of All

If there is a book we should take the time to get acquainted with it is the Bible. The Bible is the most important book in the world!

The Pony Express was created in 1860 to move mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California (2,000 miles). It was set up in 10-mile legs, as far as a horse can gallop at full gallop. A rider rode his horse for 10 miles. Then he got on another horse and rode another 10 miles until he completed seven to ten of those legs before a different rider took over. The mail could get across the country in about 10 to 14 days.

To conserve weight, the riders had to weigh less than 125 pounds. Saddles had to be very small. Each piece of mail had to be very thin. Riders were allowed to carry only a few small provisions. Yet for all of the concern the Pony Express had for weight conservation, every rider was sent out with a full-sized Bible.

The Pony Express valued the Word of God as absolutely essential for journey on the trail. How do you value the Word of God?

The Bible is important because it provides what we need to survive in this world!

If the Bible seems a little bit intimidating to you, you're not alone; many are. And no wonder,

- It is filled with all kinds of odd customs and odd names like Jehoshaphat and Nebuchadnezzar.
- It contains accounts from places you probably never heard of, like Ramoth-Gilead or Jezreel.
- It seems to be made up of a lot of different, seemingly unrelated stories.

But it really is one big, exciting story – The Story of God! The Bible is one seamless story – one continuous story that runs through history.

I am excited about what's coming in the next 7½ months. I believe the opportunity for spiritual growth is going to surpass what we've imagined. We are going to look at the condensed version of the Bible over the next 7½ months.

Deal or No Deal?

I will share with you a number of things you can do to get the most out *The Story*. I am going to ask you what you are willing to commit to so you can maximize your learning experience. You will check “Deal or No Deal.” The goal is not just checking boxes, it is to be honest and decide if you will do it!

DEAL #1 – Personal Reading

I am asking you to read one chapter each week’ on average it is only 12 pages. It will only take you about 20 minutes a week. To help you reflect on what you have read, you will find 6 or 7 questions for each chapter at the end of the book.

Will you read *The Story* and study the Bible each week?

QUESTION: Deal or No Deal?

DEAL #2 – Family Time

I am asking you to read *The Story* with your family, out loud. Then to have a simple discussion about what you have read. If your child asks a tough question you can not answer, say: “We will go to church and ask someone for help.”

So , I encourage you to have family devotional time each week.

- One evening week, turn off the TV and gather your family together.
- Keep the time short – 20 or 25 minutes – once a week.
- Make it a time to read and pray together.
- Make it an encouraging time!
- Have a set time and a back up time.
- After reading, you can ask the questions for the chapter you have read at the end of the book.

Studies indicate if you as a parent engage your children in the experience of reading and discussing the Bible, chances go up astronomically that they will remain strong in their faith after leaving home.

You don't have to be an expert or have all the answers. You just have to be willing to experience it with them.

Will you get involved in *The Story* with your family!

QUESTION: Deal or No Deal?

DEAL #3 – Small Groups

Small groups will greatly enhance your experience. Your group will give you encouragement and accountability to start; to get most out of; and complete the journey! You maximize your spiritual potential best when you are exposed to similar people who have similar beliefs.

If you want to understand how you can put God's story in to daily practice, get involved in a small group. Studies have shown again and again that people need to 6 to 8 friends to stay faithful. Small groups provide that for us!

Will you be involved in one of our small groups?

QUESTION: Deal or No Deal?

DEAL #4 – Sunday Gatherings

Each Sunday the Bible class, worship service and the sermon will be drawn from of the scriptures that we have read in *The Story*. We will be teaching our hearts out – in both Bible classes and sermon. We want you to be here to really get the most out of the Story each Sunday.

Will you do your best to attend each Sunday for the next 31 weeks?

QUESTION: Deal or No Deal?

Deal #5 – Invite Others

People are interested to learn what the Bible says. So I encourage you to Invite others to read *The Story* with you. Invite others to attend with you each week! Especially over the next month as we are in the early stages of the Story!

So will you invite others to attend with you to participate in the Story? Deal or no Deal!

QUESTION: Deal or No Deal?

Find Your Story in God's Story

The Bible is an amazing story, but it is more than a history book. It is not hundreds of unrelated stories. Actually it is one story – the story of God pursuing us! It is a story which teaches, encourages, exhorts and commands us to get involved in the story of God. The story is God's pursuit of you and me.

When I think about *The Story*, I think about our stories. My goal is to help you find your story in God's story. My goal is not to help you answer trivia questions. I want you to understand His plan so you can live life abundantly.

I am committed to helping you do that!

Like Joshua (24:15), I have decided to align my life to God's story! I invite you to align your life story to God's story. Deal or No Deal?