



# TRUE STORY

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION  
AND DISCUSSION

JAMES CHOUNG

## SIX-SESSION STUDY

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### *Once Upon a Time —*

#### **PROLOGUE: A Crisis of Faith**

1. What makes sharing the gospel with your friends who are not yet Christians difficult for you? Think about a specific example.
2. If you were asked to share the Christian gospel, what would you share?
3. According to the author, where does the word *evangelism* come from? In what ways does the gospel feel like *good news*, and in what ways does it not?
4. In the book, Anna asks some pointed questions: "What good is Christianity if it makes people like that? What good is any religion if it just makes them angry, critical and narrow-minded?" In what ways do you sympathize with Anna's viewpoints? What about Anna's viewpoints do you disagree with?
5. Would you consider yourself an "evangelist"? Why or why not?
6. What parts of the Christian message, as he had been taught, does Caleb struggle with? In what ways do you relate to his struggle?

## PART ONE: Designed for Good

1. What are you thankful for in the past week? What in our world would you call good? Give examples.
2. Caleb felt that he had few people that he could approach to ask his questions about the gospel. How easy or difficult is it to ask the questions you have about Christianity in your faith community? Think of a specific example.
3. Caleb wondered about how to start a spiritual conversation with Anna. Think of someone with whom you would like to start a spiritual conversation. What are the obstacles that keep you from starting that conversation?
4. Caleb asks “What do you see on the news?” as a conversation starter. How do your friends respond to this kind of world?
5. According to Genesis 1, what does God call *good* in our world? What does he call *very good*? For what good purposes was the world created? What implications does this have compared to the kind of world we have today (see question 4)?
6. Shalandra talks about the word *helper* in the Genesis 2 account. What does the word *helper* mean in its original Hebrew language? What kind of implications does this have on relationships between men and women?
7. What were our relationships—humankind and the world, humankind with each other, and humankind with God—supposed to be like?
8. In what ways can you give thanks to God for the good things he has made in the world?

## **PART TWO: Damaged by Evil**

1. What have you grieved for in the past week? What in our world would you call damaged or broken? Give an example.
2. The world was designed for good. What, according to Caleb, went wrong? In a world of relativity, how can we say something is wrong?
3. According to Shalandra, why does God give us free will? What do you think about her answer?
4. How is each of us damaged by evil? How are our relationships damaged by evil? What effects does this damage have on the world today? Give an example.
5. According to Shalandra's understanding of Scripture, how are we supposed to look at gender, class and ethnicity? How do these things interact with our faith?
6. How is our relationship with the world and its systems damaged by evil?
7. In what ways do we need to ask forgiveness for the ways we have contributed to the mess in the world?

### **PART THREE: Restored for Better**

1. Think of something you owned that was damaged but is now restored. What did it take for the repairs to happen?
2. Where did the word *gospel* come from, and why do you think Jesus used this term to describe his core message? What does the gospel mean to you?
3. What is the gospel according to Jesus in Mark 1:14-15? What is the kingdom of God? What is the relationship between the kingdom of God and heaven?
4. In what ways does Jesus' version of the gospel line up with your understanding of the gospel? In what ways do they differ?
5. What do *repent* and *believe* mean? How can we apply these words to our everyday lives?
6. According to Shalandra, what are some of the things that happened on the cross and in the resurrection? (For a fuller treatment, please check out *A Community Called Atonement* by Scot McKnight.)
7. How are our relationships—us and the world and its systems, us and each other, us and God—restored for better in Jesus? Give examples.
8. In what practical ways can we die and live in Jesus each day?

## **PART FOUR: Sent Together to Heal**

1. When something is repaired, it can now live out its original purpose. As Christians, what are we supposed to do as we wait for the fullness of heaven in the future?
2. How does Jesus invite people to follow him? What does he say? How should that inform the way we invite people to follow Jesus?
3. How are Christians sent together to heal the world and its systems, our relationships, and our relationship with God?
4. According to Shalandra, what is the most consistent promise in the Bible? Why is this promise so important?
5. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian community? In what ways have you experienced the guidance or power of the Holy Spirit in your community? Give examples.
6. Christians, who have claimed to act in Jesus' name, have done much damage in the world. How do we need to repent for the ways other Christians have damaged the world?
7. Many people want to heal the world without Jesus. What would be far more difficult about healing the world without Jesus? How would being a part of a Jesus-led community help us be a part of healing the world?
8. In what concrete ways can you be a part of healing the world with Jesus and his community?

## *Behind the Scenes —*

1. Think about something great that you experienced in the past month. What was it? How many people did you tell about it? Why did you tell them about it?
2. Describe the three movements in the chapter titled, obviously, “Three Movements.” Why would they be important in sharing our faith?
3. In the chapter “Not a Quick Fix,” what are the four purposes of the Big Story? What are the four objections? In what ways does this help you understand the purpose of the Big Story?
4. In the space below, practice sharing this diagram with a trusted friend. Continued practice, as with anything, will help this feel more natural as you go along.
5. Who would you like to share this diagram with? Pray for that person to be open to Jesus’ good message, and begin to think about how you would share this message with your friend.

## ONE-SESSION STUDY

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