

# Invite Christ to Author Your Story

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Let your narrative be one of faith, following your Exemplar, the Savior Jesus Christ.

I begin by posing several questions, meant for self-reflection:

- What kind of personal narrative are you writing for your life?
- Is the path you describe in your story straight?
- Does your story end where it began, at your heavenly home?
- Is there an exemplar in your story—and is it the Savior Jesus Christ?

I testify that the Savior is “the author and finisher of our faith.”<sup>1</sup> Will you invite Him to be the author and finisher of your story?

He knows the beginning from the end. He was the Creator of heaven and earth. He wants us to return home to Him and our Heavenly Father. He has everything invested in us and wants us to succeed.

What do you suppose keeps us from turning our stories over to Him?

Perhaps this illustration will help your self-assessment.

An effective trial lawyer knows that on cross-examination, you should rarely ask a witness a question to which you do not know the answer. Asking such a question is inviting the witness to tell you—and the judge and jury—something you don’t already know. You might get an answer that surprises you and is contrary to the narrative you have developed for your case.

Although asking a witness a question to which you do not know the answer is generally unwise for a trial lawyer, the opposite is true for us. We can ask questions of our loving Heavenly Father, in the name of our merciful Savior, and the witness who answers our questions is the Holy Ghost, who always testifies of truth.<sup>2</sup>

Because the Holy Ghost works in perfect unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, we know that the manifestations of the Holy Ghost are reliable. Why, then,

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Perhaps it is because we don't have the faith to accept the answer we might receive. Perhaps it is because the natural man or woman in us is resistant to turning things *completely* over to the Lord and trusting Him *entirely*. Maybe that is why we choose to stick with the narrative we have written for ourselves, a comfortable version of our story unedited by the Master Author. We don't want to ask a question and get an answer that doesn't fit neatly into the story we are writing for ourselves.

Frankly, few of us would probably write into our stories the trials that refine us. But don't we love the glorious culmination of a story we read when the protagonist overcomes the struggle? Trials are the elements of the plot that make our favorite stories compelling, timeless, faith promoting, and worthy of telling. The beautiful struggles written into *our* stories are what draw us closer to the Savior and refine us, making us more like Him.

For David to overcome Goliath, the boy had to take on the giant. The comfortable narrative for David would have been a return to tending sheep. But instead he reflected upon his experience saving lambs from a lion and a bear. And building on those heroic feats, he mustered the faith and courage to let God write his story, declaring, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."<sup>3</sup> With a desire to let God prevail, with an ear to the Holy Ghost and a willingness to let the Savior be the author and finisher of his story, the boy David defeated Goliath and saved his people.

The sublime principle of agency does, of course, allow us to write our *own* stories—David could have gone home, back to tending sheep. But Jesus Christ stands ready to use us as divine instruments, sharpened pencils in His hand, to write a masterpiece! He is mercifully willing to use me, a scrawny pencil, as an instrument in His hands, if I have the faith to let Him, if I will let Him author my story.

Esther is another beautiful example of letting God prevail. Rather than sticking with a cautious narrative of self-preservation, she exercised faith, turning herself completely over to the Lord. Haman was plotting the destruction of all the Jews in Persia. Mordecai, Esther's relative, became aware of the plot and wrote to her, urging her to talk with the king on behalf of her people. She recounted to him that one who approaches the king without being summoned was subject to death. But in a tremendous act of faith, she asked Mordecai to gather the Jews and fast for her. "I also and my maidens will fast likewise," she said, "and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."<sup>4</sup>

Esther was willing to let the Savior write her story even though, through the lens of mortality, the ending may have been tragic. Blessedly, the king received Esther, and the Jews in Persia were saved.

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revelation through the Holy Ghost. And it is through the manifestations of the Spirit that we will feel the Master's hand writing our stories with us.

In April 2021, our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, asked us to consider what we could do if we had more faith in Jesus Christ. With more faith in Jesus Christ, we could ask a question to which we do not know the answer—ask our Father in Heaven, in the name of Jesus Christ, to send an answer through the Holy Ghost, who testifies of truth. If we had more faith, we would ask the question and then be willing to accept the answer we receive, even if it doesn't fit our comfortable narrative. And the promised blessing that will come from acting in faith in Jesus Christ is an increase in faith in Him as our author and finisher. President Nelson declared that we “*receive more faith by doing something that requires more faith.*”<sup>5</sup>

So, a childless couple suffering with infertility may ask in faith whether they should adopt children and be willing to accept the answer, even though the narrative they had written for themselves included a miraculous birth.

A senior couple may ask whether it is time for them to serve a mission and be willing to go, even though the narrative they had written for themselves included more time in the workforce. Or maybe the answer will be “not yet,” and they will learn in later chapters of their story why they were needed at home a little bit longer.

A teenaged young man or young woman may ask in faith whether a pursuit of sports or academics or music is of most value and be willing to follow the promptings of the perfect witness, the Holy Ghost.

Why do we want the Savior to be the author and the finisher of our stories? Because He knows our potential perfectly, He will take us to places we never imagined ourselves. He may make us a David or an Esther. He will stretch us and refine us to be more like Him. The things we will achieve as we act with more faith will increase our faith in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, just one year ago our dear prophet asked: “Are *you* willing to let God prevail in your life? ... Are you *willing* to let whatever He needs you to do take precedence over every other ambition?”<sup>6</sup> I humbly add to those prophetic inquiries: “Will you let God be the author and finisher of your story?”

In Revelation we learn that we will stand before God and be judged out of the books of life, according to our works.<sup>7</sup>

We will be judged by our book of life. We can choose to write a comfortable narrative for ourselves. Or we can allow the Master Author and Finisher to write our story with us, letting the role He needs us to play take precedence over other

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Write a story in which the path you are on is straight, on a course leading you back to your heavenly home to live in the presence of God.

Let the adversity and affliction that are part of every good story be a means by which you draw closer to, and become more like, Jesus Christ.

Tell a story in which you recognize the heavens are open. Ask questions to which you do not know the answer, knowing God is willing to make known His will for you through the Holy Ghost.

Let your narrative be one of faith, following your Exemplar, the Savior Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. 1. Hebrews 12:2; see also Moroni 6:4.
2. 2. See John 14:16–17; Jacob 4:13.
3. 3. 1 Samuel 17:37.
4. 4. Esther 4:16.
5. 5. Russell M. Nelson, “Christ Is Risen; Faith in Him Will Move Mountains,” *Liahona*, May 2021, 103.
6. 6. Russell M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 94.
7. 7. See Revelation 20:12.

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