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WHY JESUS MATTERS

**RATION**

IN A BROKEN WORLD

**STORY**

**// ROBERT K. CHEONG //**



“The best thing about *Restoration Story* is that it is both biblically faithful and gospel-centered. But that’s not all that excites me; this book is field tested by men and women with a wide range of ages, ethnicities, and Christian experiences. Moreover, Dr. Cheong has created a reproducible model that doesn’t require experts to lead. This work will help pastors and leaders disciple people to care for one another how Jesus and the apostles envisioned. I highly recommend you reading, learning, and reproducing what is taught in this book, as I’ve seen firsthand the profound impact that it has had on our church members.”

**Jamaal Williams**, Lead Pastor, Sojourn Church Midtown;  
president, Harbor Network

“*Restoration Story* is a gospel feast and will prove to be a most helpful aid in discipling believers, equipping leaders, resourcing cohorts, and aiding counselors. Robert Cheong invites us to find our place in God’s story as both characters and messengers—doing the heart work of spiritual formation. He understands the narrative nature of growth in Christ, taking us through the four-fold plotline of the Bible: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation. So well written and creatively illustrated, I will look forward to using this resource in my coaching ministry.”

**Scotty Smith**, Pastor Emeritus, Christ Community  
Church, Franklin, TN; teacher-in-residence, West End  
Community Church, Nashville, TN

“Forged in the trenches of pastoral ministry and written from a deep belief in the power of Christ for personal transformation, *Restoration Story* is a fresh resource for pastors and ministry leaders to use in their local churches as they work with men and women desiring to see God, his Word, and his people transform their lives. I’ve seen the fruit of this firsthand as a pastor at Sojourn Midtown and throughout our network of churches.”

**Dave Owens**, Executive Director, Harbor Network

“I have always been sharpened from co-laboring with Robert and find his teaching to be clear and deeply rooted in an abiding love of God, his Word, and the people of God found in the church everywhere. As one who works with the church on a global level, I have seen that Robert’s insights, being from the Word, transcend cultural boundaries and are accessible and revolutionary to people everywhere. I heartily recommend Robert’s book as an invaluable resource for anyone desiring to lead communities of faith into greater love of the Savior.”

**Paul Athanasius**, Cross-cultural worker and trainer

“As a Christian and a pastor, I’ve been so encouraged by how many people have benefited from Robert’s work. Personally, it has blessed me as I have learned what it means to be cared for by God and his church. As a pastor, it has transformed the way I preach to my church and how I engage in personal counseling. The beauty of it all is that I see people truly experiencing God.”

**Moe Hafeez**, Family Pastor, Cornerstone Church,  
Atlanta, GA

“As a writer, I know firsthand how God has used the process of storytelling to challenge, heal, and cultivate my relationship with him. But for some shortsighted reason, I never thought how significant it might be for others. With *Restoration Story*, pastor Robert Cheong taps the power of storytelling for discipleship, inviting participants to find their personal stories in God’s larger one. So pick up this book and discover a good, gracious Author, who’s writing the story of his people even now.”

**Hannah Anderson**, Author of *Humble Roots: How Humility Grounds and Nourishes Your Soul*

# RESTORATION STORY

WHY JESUS MATTERS IN  
A BROKEN WORLD

Robert K. Cheong



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# INTRODUCTION

NO MATTER how many acquaintances we have, few relationships go really deep. People may know what we do for a living, how we tend to dress, what we like to eat, and maybe even where we just went on vacation—but that’s all they know.

When it comes to being known, we feel a strange mix of need and fear. We may resist sharing with others what is going on in our hearts and lives, but we still long to be known. Often, we pull away from others because we feel like we’re not like them; we isolate ourselves when others hurt us. Nevertheless, we still want to belong to a community. Even though we barely have enough time or energy to simply pay bills, eat and sleep, and engage at some level with friends and family, we still want a larger purpose in life.

Where do we go to find out who we really are? Where do we find satisfaction for our deepest longings?

## **You Aren’t Alone: We All Have A Story**

When you’re struggling with self-doubt and loneliness, lacking direction and purpose, you may believe everyone



else is doing better than you. You might think you're the only one who is struggling. Even if you are aware of others battling through life in similar ways, it doesn't make your life any easier. The fact that others are dealing with similar issues doesn't relieve the weight of your weariness or mend the brokenness in your soul. In fact, being aware of others who are in the same boat as you can leave you feeling hopeless.

But the truth that our struggles are common does matter. When you understand that other people face difficulties like yours—when you grasp the reality that you are not alone—you should feel some relief. Knowing that others experience life in comparable ways can help you believe you are not alone. Such knowledge counters the lies you may believe in your fears and despair—the lies that have convinced you that there is something wrong with you or that you are different from other people.

## **Your Story Matters**

Often, we don't stop to consider life beyond our daily routines, challenges, joys, disappointments, and longings.

Some may view life as an ever-unfolding series of unavoidable situations, feeling subject to fate and whatever the universe has in store. These people picture themselves caught in a river current that dictates where they go and how they live.

Others see themselves as the author of their story. They approach life like a mountain to be scaled, where they plan every move, preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. These people know they can't make the hike alone, so they surround themselves with trusted friends.



Everyone sees and approaches life somewhere along the spectrum between the river and the mountain.

As you face your own struggles, you can look for answers in your story, or you can seek direction apart from your story. Regardless, your story matters to God. He wants you to find answers, direction, and hope as you look at two very special, interconnected stories—your own story and God’s story.

## **Your Story and God’s Story**

Whether you realize it or not, your story is lived out within God’s bigger story. God knows every detail of your story. He knew every aspect of your life before you were born (Psalm 139:16). And he wants you to know him more fully through your story—not despite it.

God is the divine author of your story, but this doesn’t mean that you have no choices. Instead, God creatively involves himself with your life, shaping it along the way.

But God’s story is not only true beyond our imagination, it is different from all other stories. It is a story not only to be *told*, but a story to be *lived*. It doesn’t just entertain us for a minute—it shapes how we live, how we love, and reveals to us God’s plan for us. God’s story reveals the most intimate relationship that we can ever know. Through our union with Christ, we can experience a perfect love that satisfies the deepest longings of our soul. It’s only through knowing God and his story that our distorted understandings of love and relationships can be untangled. God invites us to abide in Christ through the school of life, as we journey through the dark valleys, the mountaintop experiences, and everything in between.



The Bible reveals a tapestry of real stories woven together to showcase the beautiful and redeeming narrative of God's story. God uses these stories to show us how he works through the details of our lives today. Through our own stories, he wants us to grasp the intangible realities of his comforting presence, the sustaining peace of his faithful promises, and the safety of his incomparable power. As we experience God in these ways, the life-giving dimensions of his love will compel us to no longer live for ourselves but to live for him.

## **What Journey Is God Inviting You to Take?**

Understanding your story matters. God is not inviting you to endless introspection, to reexperience your past, or to relive your pain. Instead, God wants you to know and experience his nearness and goodness in the seemingly insignificant parts of your story. He wants to show you his tenderness and power in the significant moments of your story. God delights in restoring broken souls. He does this in his own time and ways as people live more and more from the reference point of his story. God wants you to understand the gospel story as a restoration story, where he restores your soul, your relationships, and ultimately, your God-given humanity.

## **His Story Informs and Transforms**

God's story from Genesis to Revelation serves as a never-changing framework that will help you navigate life's storms. When it feels like you're drowning, God guides you through the chaos. When you find it easy to drift, he



sets you upon his intended course. God's story not only captures the reality of life in this fallen world but, more importantly, reveals his reality and his heart for his people.

We can interpret reality based on our experiences and situation, but God invites us instead to live our story based on his. The goal of this book is to help you see how your story is embedded in God's story of restoration. God knows every twist and turn of your story, and he desires that you come to know him more intimately and experience his love more deeply as you live with him in his story. God wants to lift your eyes to him and his story as you follow Christ by faith and obedience. When we live out of God's story, he transforms how we love him and others.

As we journey through the stories of four individuals, you'll see how God's story reframes how they see their realities. As they learn to abide in the love of Christ, you'll see how he restores their souls, freeing them to love God and others in ways that reflect Christ. You'll also see how God redeems their stories despite unexpected twists and turns. Their stories will help you to apply God's story directly to your own and help you love and live differently.

## **God's Invitations**

At the end of each chapter is a prompt to respond to God's invitation to draw near to him by reflecting on an assigned Bible passage. Spending time with God and reflecting on your story in light of God's story is an essential part of each chapter. This time of abiding in Christ will allow you to find rest for your soul and also learn to trust and obey him. Though these activities will take time and thought, participating in them will help you get the most out of this

book and apply the concepts in each chapter to transform the way you view your reality.

As you read this book, I pray you'll begin to see how abiding in Christ enables you to know and experience God's love and how this intimate relationship serves as God's primary means of restoring your broken and weary soul. I pray that you'll experience firsthand why you need to draw near to God, not only during your time of need but as a way of life. My prayer is that you will grow more confident in Jesus Christ and that your joy in him would grow more and more full. God doesn't answer every question on this side of heaven, but instead, he gives you himself. Will you join him on this journey?



# CHAPTER 1

## **REFRAMING OUR REALITY THROUGH THE LENS OF THE FALL**

STEVE AND Emma bumped into each other in a crowded store. A quick apology led to a lingering look, which led to a long, enjoyable conversation over coffee. Through their daily phone calls and time spent together almost every weekend, they shared things about themselves that they rarely shared with others. Their relationship deepened over the next year, and they found themselves dreaming about a life together.

One day, Steve and Emma strolled through a park where they'd spent countless hours reading and relaxing together under their favorite tree. Just as he had rehearsed a hundred times in his mind, Steve stopped, got down on one knee, and said, "Emma, you are the love of my life. In the last year, you've taught me how to slow down and enjoy life. I've never laughed so much or felt so deeply loved. I can't imagine life without you. Will you marry me?" Emma squealed and jumped up and down as she shouted, "YES!"

Before long, the wedding was over and the newlyweds learned they both brought different expectations and relational baggage into their marriage. Their individual family

upbringing and past experiences had combined to shape what each thought marriage would be like. Yet even though they argued like other couples, they seemed to be able to work through the issues one at a time, and this brought them closer.

The most painful challenge Steve and Emma faced during their first six years of marriage was infertility. In every other area of their marriage, they were growing, but in this one aspect they seemed to be sinking deeper into hopelessness. This wasn't what they had hoped for; this isn't how they saw their story going. Then, one bone-chilling winter evening, Steve arrived home from work, hung up his coat and scarf, and walked into their living room where Emma fell into his arms. With tears running down her cheeks, she whispered, "I feel like such a failure. We've tried for years and I still can't get pregnant."

Confronted with Emma's pain, Steve was speechless. He had no idea how to respond. They embraced and cried together.

## **Life and Relationships Are Hard**

Fears and disappointments make life hard. In spite of our different circumstances, many of us struggle in similar ways. We want to be known, to belong, and to have purpose and identity, but our thoughts, emotions, and desires can serve as our frame of reference. When we are disappointed, those thoughts and emotions cause us to doubt our purpose and identity.

So we can turn to other people to affirm that identity. Whether we're outwardly boastful or inwardly insecure, we seem wired to look to others to give us what we think



we need based on how we feel. We use others to advance our careers, manipulate others to win their affections, offer “love” as a ploy to be accepted and to be loved in return, or pull back from others for fear of being found out or being hurt again. When we relate to others, it is for the primary reason of self-interest or self-protection. But we will disappoint ourselves and others every time.

It’s no wonder that relationships are hard. Almost everyone has experienced frustration and hurt in their relationships. We have been mistreated or unloved, ignored or neglected, lied to or wrongly accused, betrayed and belittled. When we experience these things again and again, we wonder, *Is it me?* or *Did I do something to deserve this treatment?*

Some of us have been abused or have witnessed unimaginable evil. Such experiences can leave a person traumatized, filled with fear and anxiety, and easily triggered by whatever may cause a flashback to these horrific encounters. For these reasons, life and relationships are not only hard, but they can be terrifying.

We need to be aware of the reality of evil in the world. But we also need to understand such realities within a larger story, a story filled with hope.

## **Our Realities Can Overshadow God’s Bigger Reality**

We often struggle with fixating on the most pressing, persistent, or painful realities. As a result, we can forget that there is more going on in life. You have an urgent deadline, so you spend all your waking hours evaluating the details, considering the different scenarios, preparing a proposal,

and getting ready for the presentation. Or you may live in persistent pain. Some days, it's all you can do to get out of bed and get dressed. You can spend countless hours researching new treatments and listening to podcasts from those who claim to have alleviated the pain altogether. Or perhaps your mother's death has left you devastated. Your heart throbs with grief, and you find yourself sitting in regret, wishing you had spent more time with her, or, as you remember your last conversation, you wish you had said things differently.

It's good and right to have a full experience of what is going on in life, but these in-your-face realities can dominate our hearts and minds. They give us tunnel vision, where we cannot see anything else. It doesn't take long for us to forget about our families amid deadlines. It doesn't take long for chronic pain to define our lives. It doesn't take long for grief and regret to consume and drown us in despair. So how are we supposed to live in this fallen, broken world?

We need to understand there is more to our story than the most pressing and tangible realities.

On the one hand, this is something that comes naturally to us. As normal human beings, we instinctively seek to find meaning and purpose in life beyond our circumstances and relationships. But the problem comes when we seek that meaning in the wrong places. Even when people can see the forest in the midst of the trees, they miss recognizing that it is a forest in God's world.

In 2 Corinthians 4:4, God reminds us, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ." Addressing our human blindness is essential. Seeing our realities within God's bigger story makes a difference. The rest of



this book examines how God’s story impacts the way we live and love, but for now we will focus on how God’s story helps us reframe our struggles within this fallen world.

## **We Experience Life Uniquely**

During his forty-five-minute commute home on the train, Mark keeps to himself. The people around him are engrossed in books or phone conversations, working on their laptops, or relaxing with the music from their headphones drowning out the noise of the world. Mark takes the same route each day. He sits in the same seat, surrounded by mostly the same people. But he doesn’t know anything about them, and no one knows what makes him unique either. No one else shares his exact DNA; no one else has his fingerprints; and no one else has the same biometric facial features.

Even beyond these differing physiological markers, each person encounters life in unique ways. People are distinct in the ways they perceive, interpret, and respond to various life experiences. When you’re comforting a friend grieving the death of her father, it might not be helpful to say, “I know exactly how you feel, since I lost my father years ago.” You do share a common experience, the death of a parent, but you don’t necessarily know your friend’s relationship with her dad. You don’t know how her dad expressed, or didn’t express, his love to her. She could be experiencing deep anger and sadness over a father whom she could never please. Or her father may have been an alcoholic who was belligerent towards everyone in the house when he was drunk. Or maybe her story with her father was good, while yours is different—your father was never around, and even when he was, you could always find him in the recliner watching sports on TV

and clueless about what you were going through in life. So, in his death, you grieved, but not in the same way you would have if he had been more loving through his words and actions, and not in the same way your friend may be grieving.

As the cliché implies, no one can truly walk in your shoes. Your life can't be lived by anyone else, since you alone have experienced it. Only you can live and relive the glorious and the painful parts of your story.

## **Yet What We Experience Is Similar**

Despite our unique physiological traits and personal experiences, we do share some similar realities with the other seven billion people who live in the world.

Nikki shares physiological and anatomical commonalities with other women in the world. Growing up in the United Kingdom, she shared the same school systems, a love for fish and chips, and some of the same seaside holiday destinations with her family and friends. Nikki has also discovered that many of her friends, whether Brits or Americans, enjoy hanging out at pubs or bars to relax and have a good time. She's noticed that regardless of what country she is in, she will see people glued to their phones, scrolling through their social media feeds. She has also realized that people are people regardless of where they live; and they share the same anxieties about dating, careers, and navigating life's uncertainties.

We are unique, yet we share common traits and experiences, regardless of who we are and where we live. This reality points to something that King Solomon wrote some three thousand years ago: "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9b).

Do you agree with Solomon when you consider things like the technological advances of the internet, cell phones, planes, self-driving cars, and artificial intelligence? What about the cutting-edge medical research that has pushed back the borders of various diseases? These seem like radically new things—but aspects of life such as birth, work, marriage, and death, never change; and humanity’s fundamental struggles remain the same.<sup>1</sup> The apostle Paul wrote, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The good news is that Jesus Christ has been, and always will be, the ultimate source of hope and relief for the repeated problems of humankind throughout generations. Everything else will come and go, rise and fall, but God remains the same in the past, the present, and future, even into eternity.

If it is true that there is nothing new under the sun, then we can reframe how we see and understand our struggles. They aren’t something new. But why are these struggles so common? God’s story shows us the answer.

## **Common Struggles Emerge from the Fall**

God’s story reveals the gospel of Jesus Christ through four major movements—*creation*, *fall*, *redemption*, and *consummation*—each of which will be unpacked in subsequent chapters. God’s story serves as an invaluable framework to help us understand the world, ourselves, and God. This story is revealed in Scripture.

The Bible tells us that God didn’t create us to struggle with life, but to live in peace with him. God didn’t create us to be driven by our work, but by his love. God didn’t create us to experience loneliness and to live without a sense of



purpose, but to live for him. God didn't create us to experience the pain and sorrow of infertility but to be fruitful and multiply.

So, if God didn't create us for such struggles, why do we struggle in these and so many other ways?

The Bible tells us that God's perfect creation was distorted and disordered when the first man and woman sinned against God. Humanity's sin and rebellion against its Creator unleashed the never-ending destruction of evil upon God's good world. Disasters like earthquakes kill thousands in crumbling buildings, and tsunamis drown countless others, plunging families and friends into deep despair and anguish over the loss of life and property.

Evil also disorders our souls and our relationships in a particular way through common struggles. We see these common struggles rooted in the story of the fall when the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God.

In Genesis 3, the devil, disguised as a serpent, tempted our first parents through *fantasy*, enticing them to envision a life where they did not have to trust or obey God or his Word. He also planted the idea that by eating the fruit, they could be like God. Fantasy means refusing to accept or address your actual situation, instead seeking a different reality that offers an imagined escape or hope. Adam and Eve were deceived into believing the serpent's lies, and they trusted in their own understanding rather than the wisdom of God.

As soon as their desire to please themselves overpowered their desire to please God, they bit the forbidden fruit and experienced *guilt* before a holy God. Guilt is pain that comes from something you've done wrong. Our first parents knew they had done evil in God's eyes.

Before their disobedience, Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed; but in their sin, they were filled with *shame* in God's presence and tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. Shame is pain that comes from who you are or who you think you are. The man and woman sensed they were different from how God created them to be.

As soon as they heard God approaching in the garden, Adam and Eve hid; they were afraid because of their nakedness. Their *fear* caused them to hide from God rather than draw near to him. Fear is an anxious anticipation of something perceived to be threatening or dangerous. Adam and Eve saw God as a threat rather than as a refuge.

When God asked the man what had happened, the man responded with bitterness and blame: “The woman *you* put here with me—*she* gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (Genesis 3:12, emphasis mine). You might say his response reflected *anger* against God and the woman. Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure or hostility in response to someone or something that opposes what you value.<sup>2</sup> Adam saw God and the woman standing in the way of what he valued, and he responded accordingly.

The last common struggle is *sorrow*, which is a deep sadness or despair, usually resulting from loss. The man and woman experienced sadness when they lost their right relationship with God in their sin. They also experienced despair when God declared his punishment to each of them. But the ultimate sorrow they experienced was when God banished them from his presence and placed cherubim with a flashing sword to keep them from reentering the garden to reach the tree of life.

Every person in this world struggles in these and other ways for one significant reason: *We were not created to know*

*and experience evil.* How do we know this? Because the one thing that God prohibited the first man and woman from doing was eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Ever since their personal disobedience exploded into a global pandemic of sin, evil has overwhelmed and overpowered us in every aspect of life. This includes both our body and souls.

## **Common Struggles Are a Response to Evil**

Common struggles—fantasy, guilt, shame, fear, anger, sorrow, etc.—should not be understood as our core sins. God created us with the ability to dream and imagine possibilities beyond our current realities. But those dreams can be twisted when we struggle with false guilt for thinking we should have or could have done something differently. We can experience shame not from our own sin, but from how others treat us, like Jesus when he was shamed on the cross. God not only created us to fear him but also to be alert and avoid danger. Jesus experienced righteous anger, and so can we, even though, for us, such anger can quickly morph into sinful anger. It's natural to experience sorrow over loss, so much so that Jesus was called a “man of sorrows” (Isaiah 53:3 ESV).

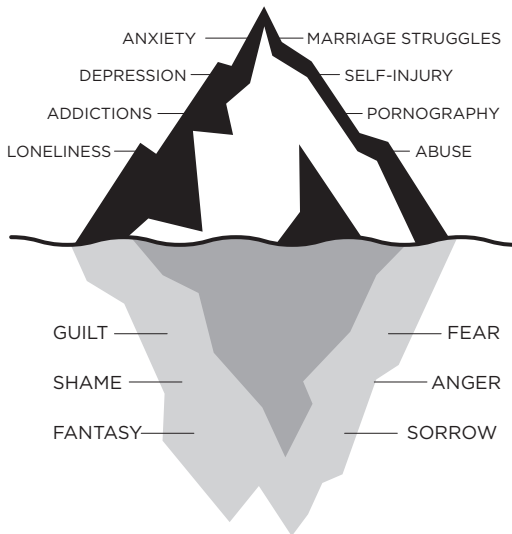
Common struggles are my way of describing how we respond to the evil in and around us that has resulted from the fall. Such struggles can be both passive and active; the responses flow from our thoughts, emotions, and desires as we relate to the people and circumstances around us. These common struggles are not sinful, but they become sinful when they drive us more than faith, and when they keep us from loving God and others. Our common struggles



become sinful when they overshadow God and compel us to live in ways contrary to how God created us to live.

## Common Struggles Coexist

Nikki finds herself *fantasizing* about becoming a partner in her growing marketing firm. She has sacrificed her personal life in an attempt to gain an edge over her peers. Whenever Nikki is between projects, she will take time off to catch her breath and rest her worn-out body and mind. However, in these slow times she is often plagued by *guilt* for not traveling to see her mom, whom she hasn't seen in three years. When she sits in silence at home, Nikki struggles with a sense of inadequacy, or *shame*, as she compares herself with those around her. She can be overcome by *fear* and *anxiety*, believing she is all alone. This constellation of struggles often drags her into a deep, lingering *sorrow*.



Mark seeks to counter his loneliness by escaping into *fantasy* through video games. He has bragging rights with his teammates around the world—some of whom admit they spend hours playing to avoid the sad and hard realities of life. Mark finds some comfort in knowing that he is not the only one who struggles with loneliness and purpose in life. Still, such knowledge doesn't ease the *sorrow* and *shame* that comes with those struggles.

It's important to know that common struggles coexist. We can think about them like primary colors that mix together to make all the different colors. Each of these common struggles can combine with others to create distinct difficulties in your life. As these struggles combine, they can create surges of pain and confusion that toss us back and forth, pushing us underwater like the ocean waves.

## **Common Struggles Lead to Relational Struggles**

Because God created us for relationships, everything that impacts us also impacts how we relate to others. Emma's *shame* and her insatiable desire to be a mother has made her quieter around her coworkers, especially when they talk about their children. She finds it hard to rejoice when friends share they are pregnant. Emma finds herself dwelling more on the *sorrow* of her infertility than on the exciting news of life. She can even judge those around her as she tries to justify that she is just as good as those who have babies. Her close friends, who have grieved with her, have shared with her that they feel like they are walking on eggshells when they're with her, to the point where they hesitate to talk about their children. Emma's friendships have suffered.

Steve and Emma's struggle with infertility has put a strain on their marriage as well. Sexual intimacy feels more like an obligation than a pleasure. Steve struggles to know how he can help Emma. Month after month, pregnancy tests are negative, and she is *sorrowful* and depressed for days afterwards. Steve and Emma often find themselves impatient, *angry*, and harsh with one another when they try to have meaningful conversations. Steve is exhausted. Emma is not the woman he married. He finds himself *fantasizing* about a coworker who makes him laugh. At least he can talk about anything with her.

Our common struggles not only make our individual lives difficult, but they also make relationships complicated. With Emma and Steve, we see how these struggles are straining their relationship. We also see how the struggles have affected their relationship with God and given birth to sin. The sorrow and fantasy that Emma and Steve are engaging in are causing them to withdraw from God.

## **Reframing Our Struggles**

It is helpful to reframe our struggles in light of the fall. If we are convinced that our common and relational struggles are the result of the fall, then we can have hope.

Why? First, the fall is not the end of God's story. Second, since our story is part of God's story, our struggles can be explained as being the result of evil defiling and distorting everything God made for good. Third, if our struggles can be reframed within the fall, then Christ's life, death, and resurrection are relevant to our struggles. We will see later how Christ came not only to reconcile us to God, but also to restore our souls damaged by evil. If we don't see our



struggles in light of God's story, we can be confused about their cause, and discouraged from thinking that God can even help.

In the next chapter, we will look at why we need to work through our stories. We will see that a practical way of engaging in spiritual warfare is understanding how the various events and experiences in our lives have shaped how we see our lives. And we'll discover that such understanding comes primarily from the intentional work of discipleship.

### **God's Invitation**

Spend some time in God's Word. Open your heart to God about your own experience with listening to and obeying his Word.

Read Genesis 3 and reflect on how you can see yourself through the thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions of the first man and woman. Can you relate to the common struggles they faced? Where do you see God's mercy and grace amid the first man and woman's sin against him?