



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Summer Reading Series – Part 3

Between the Lines

Bob Sorge

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**Main Idea** – Your life is a story that – if you embrace it – is being authored by Jesus. God is not focused on the ups and downs of daily living, but rather, with the overall upward trajectory of your faith.

### The stories of the heroes of faith

- Hebrews 11 references the faith of many of the great heroes of the Old Testament.
- Hebrews 12 begins by explaining that those stories are witnesses to God's grace and faithfulness; that He fulfilled His promises to all the great heroes.
- God will also fulfill His promises to each of us.
- **Hebrews 12: 1-3 – (v.1) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (v.2) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (v.3) For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.**

### Jesus is the author

- Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith (and of all faith itself.)
- Four times in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1:8, 1:11, 21:6, and 22:13), Jesus refers to Himself as “the Alpha and the Omega” (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)
- Jesus is the author of the first letter, the last letter, and all the letters in between.
- Jesus is the essence of words, the essence of sentences, paragraphs, and entire stories.
- Jesus is the Word.

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## **Biblical examples of Jesus as author**

1. **The Book of Revelation** is a vision authored by Jesus that was given to the Apostle John near the end of his life.
  - a. This was the first evidence in John's long life of ministry that God had given him the ministry of prophecy.
  - b. John was over 90 years old and imprisoned, but was being introduced to a new chapter in his life.
  - c. We are never too old for Jesus to write a new chapter.
  - d. It is our responsibility to strenuously pursue Jesus the author of all the chapters in our life's story. Our life's story is written by the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end). Pursue Jesus and lay hold of every chapter He is writing.
  - e. **Philippians 3:12 – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**
2. The story of Jacob's family going into Egypt – and eventually into slavery – is told in **Genesis 47-50**.
  - a. There are times in our lives when it seems nothing is happening: that we are going nowhere.
  - b. Jacob's family spent 400 years as slaves in Egypt. It may have seemed they were in a bad situation, but God was actually protecting them.
  - c. Jesus was writing a story where the family was growing as it was protected by the government of Egypt. For example, during this time no Israelite was a casualty of war.
  - d. Similarly, God will put us into captivity to grow us; to enlarge us.
3. Abraham had ups and downs in his later life, but the overall trajectory of his faith was upward.
  - a. **Romans 4: 20 – He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.**
  - b. Even though Abraham displayed continual ups and downs in his daily performance in life, his faith was getting stronger all the time.
  - c. The longer the answer of God's promise was delayed, the stronger became Abraham's faith.
  - d. God is not confused. He is not so concerned if we have a bad day. God is focused on the long term.
  - e. He is not measuring the details of your present performance. He is measuring your spiritual journey over the longer term.
  - f. Ask yourself, "Where will I be next year at this time?"

### Lay hold of your story that Jesus is writing

- Lay hold of the story of your life. Stay in your story. Regardless of a present circumstance, don't back out.
- The ups and downs of our lives are what actually qualify us for Jesus' authorship of our stories.
- It is to be expected our life's story will have ups and downs, but God is always there to help us in the tough times.
- **Hebrews 2:16 – For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.**
- It is as if God is saying, "Give me your heart and I will finish the story I started with your life. I love you. I am for you. I am with you."
- Each of us is a living epistle that Jesus is writing. Offer yourself to Jesus; take hold of Jesus as He writes the story of your life.
- Watch the YouTube video "Bob Sorge – I Am With You" about one of Jesus' chapters in Mr. Sorge's life's story.

### Reflective Questions for Between the Lines

1. Jesus is using your life to write a story that will give glory to God. Think about your life. What are some of the major chapters in the story? What, do you suppose, is the reason for those chapters in the bigger meaning of your life?
2. Regardless of the ups and downs of your daily performance, do you feel your faith is on an overall upward trajectory? Is there evidence to support how you answered that question?
3. Bob Sorge provided a useful application of **Philippians 3:12 – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.** Can you explain what that verse is talking about in your own words?
4. As Jesus writes your life's story, why is it important to continually "take hold of Him" and to seek His aid?