

## SESSION 6 · PARTICIPANT GUIDE

# Read My Story

## Redemption & Continuity

Deck Session\_6\_Read\_My\_Story\_r9 · 23 slides · 90 minutes · Bring: your §1.1 draft, your Life Map, and your Harvest Charter

### THIS MORNING'S QUESTION

*When I read my life back, do I tell it as a story of what I have lost — or what has been redeemed?*

## What This Morning Is About

Last session ended with a claim: you are not a man who has a story — you are the story you tell. If that is true, then the way you read your life back is not commentary on it. It is who you are becoming. This morning we find out which story you have been telling.

You have written it. You mapped your chapters, wrote three sittings in private, and drafted §1.1 — two paragraphs and one sentence. The facts are settled. This morning is about the other half of a story: the meaning you have given the facts since.

A life can be told two ways. As contamination — where good things sour and the wound gets the last word. Or as redemption — where hardship turns, in time, into growth, depth, or unexpected gift. Most of us have been telling one of these stories for decades without naming it. This morning you name it, read it aloud to two men who listen, and ask whether it can be read another way.

And one more question runs underneath: the thread. What has been true of you in every chapter — the part that carried through the job changes and the losses and is still here? That thread is your continuity, and it runs straight into the next season.

### Three things come on paper this morning

Everything else stays on your device. This morning is a two-surface job — reading one page while marking another — and that is easier on paper.

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Your Life Map</b>           | From Session 5. Already on paper.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Charter §1.1, printed</b>   | Step One (the Three Markers) and your Steps 2–4 draft — two or three sheets. If you cannot print, send your draft two days ahead and it will be waiting at your seat.                                         |
| <b>The Read My Story sheet</b> | Provided. It is on your seat with a pen — one column for contamination, one for redemption, a band across the bottom for the thread. It goes home with you; it is the outline if you choose to touch up §1.1. |

### This morning's arc

| MIN         | MOVEMENT                                                                                                       |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>0:00</b> | Check-in at tables — how are you arriving, and one thing the three sittings of writing showed you.             |
| <b>0:08</b> | The question, the claim read back, and the two ways a story can bend — about fifteen minutes of frame.         |
| <b>0:22</b> | Mark your story — eighteen minutes, silent, on the sheet: a contamination turn, a redemption turn, the thread. |
| <b>0:40</b> | How to listen, then Read My Story in threes — each man reads his §1.1 draft aloud; two witnesses answer.       |
| <b>1:01</b> | What Surfaced — whole room, one thing each. Then Genesis 50:20 and Joseph, and two minutes of silence.         |
| <b>1:18</b> | Three weeks' work — the Compass essays and your values — the claim read back, and a benediction.               |

### MOVEMENT 1 • RE-ENTRY

## Check-In • 7 minutes

At your tables. One sentence each on the first question; then one more sentence on the second. Then one moment with last week's practice, and a quick check-off: three sittings done or not yet, §1.1 open, one sentence from Why We Write Our Story, VIA top 5 (bring it to Session 7),

and the question you carried. Nobody reads a draft yet — that comes later, to two men, not a table.

**How are you arriving this morning?**

*One sentence.*

---

**What did the three sittings of writing show you that you did not expect?**

*What you changed between the raw pages and the draft says as much as the draft.*

---

**Practice of the Week — one moment with “Ask for a story.”**

*Tell us one moment from your week. One moment, no commentary.*

---

**Why We Write Our Story — one sentence that helped you write.**

*Two or three men, one sentence each. Then hands: three sittings done or not yet? VIA top 5 — bring it to Session 7.*

---

## Fleeing or seeking — the question you carried from Session 5.

*What has your story been fleeing — and what has it been seeking? A word is enough; it feeds your Compass essays.*

---

### MOVEMENT 2 • THE FRAME

## Two Ways a Story Can Bend

The same life can be told either way. This is not about the events — the events are fixed. It is about the direction the story takes at its turns.

### THE STORY THAT BINDS

#### Contamination

*Good sours into grievance. The wound gets the last word. The good years are remembered as the years before it went wrong.*

### THE STORY THAT FREES

#### Redemption

*Hardship turns into growth. The wound becomes wisdom. The hard chapter is remembered as the one that made the later chapters possible.*

### Which way has your story been bending?

Adults who tell their lives as redemption sequences — suffering that turns toward growth, insight, or deeper connection — report more purpose and more generativity in later life than those whose stories run as contamination. That is not a reason to fake it. It is a reason to look honestly at which way you have been reading, and to notice that the reading is still yours to make.

### A NOTE ON THE REDEMPTIVE READ

You do not have to manufacture redemption. Some chapters are still only loss, and naming that honestly is itself faithful work. A redemptive read is not pretending the wound never happened, and it is not rushing to a silver lining. It is the quiet trust that the Author is not finished. If a chapter resists redemption, write it true and leave it open. God is not done.

## Mark Your Story • 18 minutes, silent

Your §1.1 draft and Life Map in front of you; the sheet at your seat. Three prompts, about five minutes each. No sharing yet. The page after this one mirrors the sheet, for anyone working on a device this morning or catching up at home.

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Prompt<br/>1</b> | <b>Find a contamination turn.</b><br>Where did something good sour into grievance or regret? Left column.                                                                   |
| <b>Prompt<br/>2</b> | <b>Find a redemption turn.</b><br>Where did something hard become growth, depth, or an unexpected gift? Right column. You may read this one to your witnesses — you choose. |
| <b>Prompt<br/>3</b> | <b>Find the thread.</b><br>What has been true of you in every chapter — and where is God in the turns? The band across the bottom. “Nowhere yet” is an honest answer.       |

*A check you can make with your Charter open: did the arc you wrote in §1.1 actually account for your valley moments — or did it route around them?*

## Mark the Turns — and the Thread Beneath Them

### CONTAMINATION

*Good sours into grievance. The wound gets the last word.*

*Where did something good sour into grievance or regret?*

### REDEMPTION

*Hardship turns into growth. The wound becomes wisdom.*

*Where did something hard become growth, depth, or an unexpected gift?*

### THE THREAD

*What has been true of you in every chapter — and where is God in the turns?*

*Genesis 50:20 • the worst chapter • read backward • redeemed • Keep this sheet — it is the outline for an optional §1.1 touch-up.*

## How to Listen

Before anyone reads, the room learns what to listen for. These are the three marks of a story that carries a man forward — not a scorecard, a lens. Witnesses name what they heard; nobody grades.

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Coherence</b>  | Does it hang together — or is it a list of jobs? A story has a through-line; a résumé has dates.                                                               |
| <b>Complexity</b> | Does it admit the hard chapters — or route around them? A story that has no valley is not yet true.                                                            |
| <b>Resolution</b> | Does it land somewhere — or leave room for God to finish it? “And I am still waiting to see what He does with it” is a resolution. A tidy bow is not required. |

## Read My Story • in threes • 18 minutes

Pre-assigned threes, all reading at once. Each man has about five minutes: he reads, two men witness, and the group rotates.

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>You read • 2 min</b>    | Your §1.1 draft — two paragraphs and the God sentence. Not the raw pages; not the sheet. If you came without a draft, read one redemption turn and your thread from the sheet. |
| <b>Witness one • 1 min</b> | “What I heard you say was ____.” One sentence. Not advice, not a “me too.”                                                                                                     |
| <b>Witness two • 1 min</b> | Name the arc: which way did it bend — contamination or redemption — and what was the thread you heard? Then rotate.                                                            |

### THE ONE RULE

You are not here to fix him. Men are trained to solve; listening-only breaks the pattern and builds the kind of trust where a man can say something true and not have it managed. If you catch yourself about to say “what you should do,” stop, and tell him what you heard instead.

**Witness in scenes, not summaries.** Tell him the one scene you heard — not a verdict like “you’re a hard worker.” Meaning lives in the particular.

**Write down what your witnesses said.** Their words feed your Compass essays now and your Life Theme at Session 7. Use their words if theirs were better than yours.

**What my first witness heard**

*“What I heard you say was...”*

---

**The arc and the thread my second witness named**

*Which way did he say it bent? What did he say has held?*

---

## **What Surfaced • 8 minutes, whole room**

Three or four men, one thing each — not the story, the thing that surfaced. Witnesses first: what did you hear in his story that he did not hear himself? Then tellers: what surprised you about being heard?

**One thing that surfaced — in his story, or in mine**

---

## Genesis 50:20

*“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”*

*Genesis 50:20 • NIV • the worst chapter • read backward • redeemed*

Joseph could not undo it. Sold by his brothers, imprisoned, forgotten — for years every chapter read like ruin. Then he read it backward, and saw God. He did not deny the harm; “you intended to harm me” is plain. He refused to let the harm have the last word. In the Hebrew, the same verb is used of the brothers and of God — one act, two authors, two meanings. That is the redemptive read in its purest form, and it is the co-author claim from last session with a face on it.

A redemptive read is not denial of the hard chapters. It is the faith that the same God who carried Joseph from the pit to the palace is at work in the turns of your story — taking what was meant for harm and weaving it toward good. The story you are living may be the one He is still redeeming.

### Sit with this • 2 minutes of silence

*The thread that has held you is still being woven. Read your story forward — where is it carrying you?*

#### Where the thread is carrying me

*A sentence or two. This is the seed of your Life Theme.*

## The Claim, Read Back

You are the story you tell. This morning two men heard which story that has been. Same life, two readings — and the reading is still yours to make. The invitation is not positive thinking. It is to read your life the way its Author reads it: Joseph’s way, backward, and redeemed. At

Session 7, after Christmas, we ask what the story has been for — and what you will not compromise to keep being it. That is where your values come from.

## Expand, Then Reduce

You have remembered your story and read it aloud. Before you apply it — to values at Session 7, to strengths after that — the program asks you to understand it. That is the whole job of the Session 6 Homework Packet, the Compass Worksheet, which comes with this guide. It is the one place in Part One where you write long before you write short — §1.2 My Compass, part 1. Three weeks, with Christmas in the middle.

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sitting 1 • 45 min</b> | <b>The Workview essay — What is work for?</b><br>About 250 words, first person, without stopping. Beyond the paycheck, and now without one.                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Sitting 2 • 45 min</b> | <b>The Lifeview essay — What is life for?</b><br>Same rules, different question. Resist the pull to write about work again.                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Sitting 3 • 20 min</b> | <b>The Compass — and 3–5 values circled</b><br>Read the two essays against each other — where they agree you have a bearing; where they collide, a value is hiding. Circle 3–5 candidate values on the Values Inventory. The Life Theme and your two core values finish §1.2 at Session 7. |

*The essays are the marble; Session 7 is the carving. A man who writes the two-sentence version without the essay behind it writes what sounds right. A man who writes the essay first writes what is true, and then notices it.*

### Your Harvest Charter this week

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>§1.1 • My Story — optional touch-up</b> | Optional, not counted. One evening, with this morning's sheet beside the draft: does the arc account for your valley moments? Is the God sentence still the one you would write? Touch it up — it is not a rewrite. Tuck the sheet into the Charter. |
| <b>§1.2 • My Compass, part 1</b>           | New over the break. The two essays — Workview and Lifeview, about 250 words each — and 3–5 candidate values circled. Session 7 adds the Life Theme and your two core values to finish §1.2.                                                          |

## What Is Due — Monday January 4

| TIER     | BEFORE SESSION 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DO       | <p><b>§1.2 My Compass, part 1 — the Workview and Lifeview essays, about 250 words each. About 90 minutes (sittings 1 and 2).</b></p> <p><b>Values Inventory — circle 3–5 candidate values where your essays collide. About 20 minutes (sitting 3).</b></p> <p><b>VIA top 5 — taken after Session 5. No new work; bring it to Session 7.</b></p>                                                                                                                                |
| READ     | <p>Genesis 50:20 — this week’s Scripture. Read it slowly, twice; bring one sentence. About 5 minutes.</p> <p>Bring to Session 7: your two essays (§1.2), the circled Inventory, your VIA top 5.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| PRACTICE | <p>Reflect it back — try it this week; tick the box on the practice page; bring one moment. From the Toolkit: 1 · Listen. About 5 minutes.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| TOTAL    | <p><b>About 120 minutes over the three weeks — about 40 a week. Optional items below are not counted.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| OPTIONAL | <p>Touch up §1.1 with this morning’s sheet — one evening, not a rewrite.</p> <p>Designing a Meaningful Second Half, a WhyzMen reading on Dave Evans’s Hidden Brain conversation (about 20 minutes). Burnett &amp; Evans, Designing Your Life, chapter 2, “Building a Compass.” Brené Brown, Dare to Lead, pp. 185–197, on living into values (borrow it from the library).</p> <p>Going Deeper, only if it calls to you; not counted — no one is behind for leaving these.</p> |

### THE ASSESSMENT — ALREADY DONE

**VIA Character Strengths — you took it after Session 5. Bring your top 5 to Session 7; it is used that morning.**

**CliftonStrengths comes later: it is assigned at the close of Session 7 and used in Session 8.**

*The compass says what matters; your strengths say what you are wired to do about it. Session 7 needs both.*

Three weeks, with Christmas in the middle. One sitting a week is enough. If busyness wins a week, come back — this is the page most worth catching up. Bring whatever you have to Session 7 on January 4. A half-finished compass still points.

## Plan for the three weeks

Three weeks and Christmas. A gentle suggestion:

|                      |                                                                                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Day 1 • today</b> | Reread your sheet and your witnesses' words before bed. Notice what surfaces.              |
| <b>Week 1</b>        | Read Genesis 50:20 slowly, twice. Sitting 1 — the Workview essay.                          |
| <b>Week 2</b>        | Sitting 2 — the Lifeview essay. Christmas week: one sitting is plenty.                     |
| <b>Week 3</b>        | Sitting 3 — read the essays against each other; circle 3–5 values on the Values Inventory. |
| <b>Jan 3</b>         | Put your essays, the Inventory and your VIA top 5 with your Charter for Monday.            |
| <b>Optional</b>      | Touch up §1.1 with the sheet beside it — only if it calls to you.                          |
| <b>Sundays</b>       | Sabbath. No Charter work. Rest.                                                            |

### CARRY THESE — DON'T WRITE THEM

*Reading my story back, which way does it bend? • Where did I once see only loss that I now read as redemption? • What thread has held through every chapter of my life?*

Over coffee, on a walk, in the shower. They compost into the Life Theme you write at Session 7 — the sentence your witnesses heard this morning before you did.

### IF YOU GET STUCK

Some men write easily; others freeze. Both are normal. If you freeze on the essays, answer the next prompt on the worksheet and keep going. If you freeze on the story, write one sentence instead of a paragraph:

*“The hardest chapter of my story was \_\_\_\_, and what grew from it was \_\_\_\_.”*

*And if nothing has grown from it yet, that is honest too: “The hardest chapter was \_\_\_\_, and I am still waiting to see what God will do with it.”*

That one sentence is enough for this week. Or call one of your witnesses, or email the facilitator. You are not meant to do this alone.

### READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

**Required** Genesis 50:20 — this week’s Scripture · “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good”

**Going Deeper · optional** Designing a Meaningful Second Half — WhyzMen reading (Dave Evans) · Designing Your Life, ch. 2, “Building a Compass” — Bill Burnett & Dave Evans · Dare to Lead, pp. 185–197 — Brené Brown (library)

### PRACTICE OF THE WEEK · REFLECT IT BACK

**How:** “What I heard you say is...” in their words, before your own.

**From the Toolkit:** 1 · Listen

**Rooted in:** The Session 6 witness

Tried it this week ☐ · Bring one moment to the room.

## Beyond This Week · optional

You do not need any of these to do your Charter work well. If something this morning stirred you and you want to go further:

### Online — WhyzMen Reader’s Companion

- “Redemption & Contamination — How We Tell the Stories of Our Lives.”
- “The Thread — Continuity and Calling.”

- “Poimea — God’s Poem Still Being Written” — the co-author theology behind this morning’s claim.
- Book summaries: Dan Allender, *To Be Told* — reading your own story; Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward* — the deeper story of the second half.

### **Full books to consider**

- Dan Allender — *To Be Told*
- Frederick Buechner — *Telling Secrets*
- Richard Rohr — *Falling Upward*
- David Brooks — *The Second Mountain*

## **Coming at Session 7 • Values**

Monday January 4. Bring your Charter with §1.2 part 1 (the two essays), the circled Values Inventory, your VIA top 5, and one moment with “Reflect it back.” Session 7 runs the values work in the room — starting from what you wrote in §1.2, not from a blank list — and asks the Source Question: whose values are these, Christ’s, your family’s, or your industry’s? Your values are your theme made operational: the theme is what you have been; the values are what you will not compromise to keep being it.

Recommended: text your two witnesses one sentence this week — how you walked out of this morning. Brotherhood is built between sessions, not during them.

## Use This Space During the Session

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

What you read this morning was not a transcript. It was a reading. Joseph stood before the brothers who had sold him and read the whole brutal chapter in one sentence: you meant harm, God meant good. He did not deny what happened. He refused to let it have the last word. Read your story the same way — honest about the harm, open to the redemption, attentive to the thread that has carried you this far. It will carry you still.

## Wise Men Still Seek • Knowing Their Why's

*Read My Story · Redemption & Continuity*