

There's A Hole In Your Story

Conversation Starters

- What's one of your favorite stories to tell? Tell a short version of it to the group.
- Share a funny or ridiculous rumor you heard about yourself or someone you know.
- If you could know "the whole story" about a legend or secret, what would you choose? *(e.g., Area 51, Bigfoot, The Bermuda Triangle, etc.)*

Review

Ask eGroup members to share their favorite points from the sermon, what spoke to them, a phrase or moment from the sermon they related to the most, or questions they have. If members have a hard time recalling the sermon, talk through your notes and share your favorite points.

Make It Personal

- Based on Pastor Steven's message, talk about (as a group) what it means to "tell yourself a story." On a scale of 1-10, how often do you tell yourself stories? (1 is almost never, 10 is all the time)
- Read Acts 11:1-5. *(The believers were critical of what they'd HEARD Peter was doing, so Peter told them the whole story — he believed that when they heard the full truth, they would see God had led him to his actions.)* Why do we need to be careful and make sure we have the whole story about something? *(Encourage your group to give personal examples if they want.)* How careful are you about telling YOURSELF the whole story?
- For you personally, what are some of the risks of listening to your own stories? How do your stories impact you? *(How do they affect the way you see yourself, others, God, etc?)*

Pastor Steven said there are four types of stories we need to watch out for: second hand stories, self centered stories, selective stories, and short stories.

- **Second Hand Stories** create preconceived notions. What's a second hand story you've believed about yourself or a situation you're in? *(What stories are you holding onto that are old? Who told you that? What has it created in your attitude and mindsets? How has it set you and others back?)*
- **Self Centered Stories** have ourselves at the center. *(What are you making about you?)* How does putting ourselves at the center of a story affect our emotions and perspective? *(What are some ways we can learn to recognize when we're putting ourselves at the center?)* What would a shift toward gratitude do to your self centered story?
- **Selective Stories** focus on the situation instead of the story. We get to choose the story we tell. Where in your life are you letting the situation be the focus of the story? How are you filling in the gaps of what's going to happen next? *(What story do you need to choose instead?)*
- **Short Stories** are when we let something cut us off or we believe "that's all there is." Read Acts 10:39-40. Verse 39 ends with the comma, but verse 40 reveals that there's more to the story of verse 39. What comma have you been tempted to stop at? How can recognizing that comma as a "short story" change your perspective on it?
- Read Genesis 45:4-8. Joseph had been sold into slavery by his brothers, but he eventually became the second-most powerful man in Egypt. Talk about how he could have told himself the four types of stories above. How does his response to his brothers challenge or encourage you?
- Which type of story do you need to stop listening to the most? With the group, identify some practical steps you can take to help with that. *(There's a hole in your story — Jesus. How does knowing there's a hole in your story change the way you see what you've been believing?)*

Act On It

Give your group paper and a pen, and have them write down a "story" they've been listening to. What type of story is it? This week, encourage them to write down two or three changes they need to make to that story and keep them where they can see and reflect on them. *(They could challenge a belief they got from a second hand story, take themselves out of the*

spotlight in a self centered story, change the focus of a selective story, write what they're believing for after the comma of their short story, etc.)

Prayer Requests and Prayer

Ask eGroup members to share any prayer requests they have. Record any notes or prayer requests to pray for members during the week.

Father, thank You for the story You're writing about our lives. Your story is so much greater than the stories we've been telling ourselves. Please put Your wisdom in us so that the stories we tell reflect who You are and who we are in Christ. In Jesus' name, amen.