



DISCUSSION GUIDE

IT'S ONLY A SIN IF YOU GET CAUGHT

BELIEVE ME



A photograph of three men sitting at a table in a dimly lit room. They are all wearing blue t-shirts. The man on the left is looking towards the right, the man in the middle is looking slightly forward, and the man on the right is seen from the back. In the background, other people are seated at tables, and a woman is visible on the left. The overall atmosphere is that of a formal or semi-formal gathering.

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Written by Henry Proegler
Created, Edited, and Designed by Riot Studios

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WHY WE MADE *BELIEVE ME*

A Letter from the Producers of the Film

Thanks for having a look at the *Believe Me* Discussion Guide. For those of you unfamiliar with our previous films, *One Nation Under God* and *Beware of Christians*, you should know that first and foremost, we love Jesus. In our pursuit of coming to know Him we've asked a lot of questions that you'll learn about in this movie.

Our primary goal in making movies is to pose compelling questions. The beauty of storytelling is diminished if the film dictates the audience's response, and we want to point, not push, people down the road toward discovery.

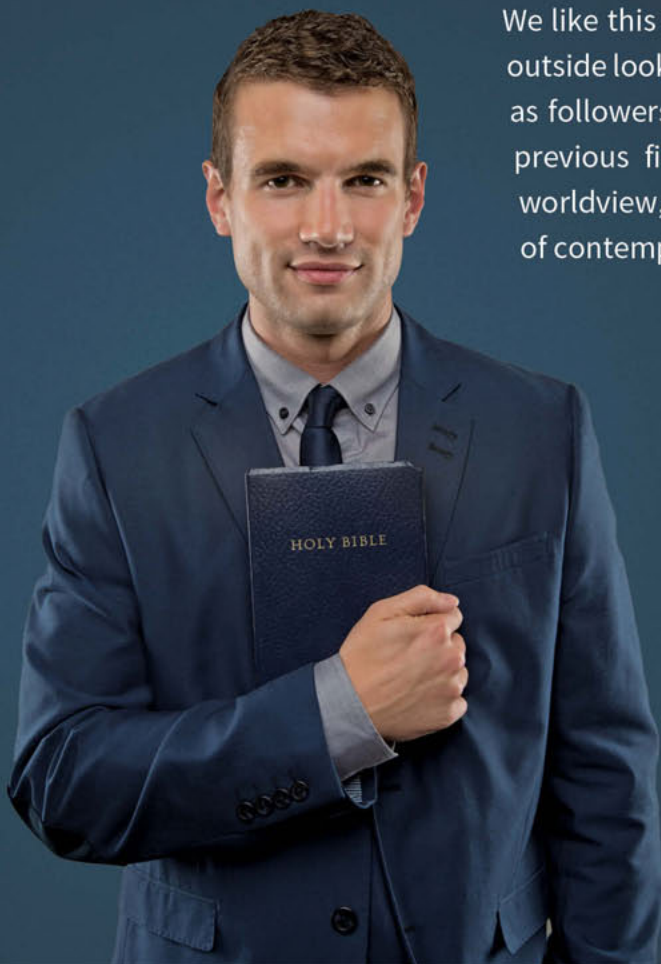
In *Believe Me*, we ask a lot of questions about spirituality, but through characters who are not religious. We tell the story of four college roommates who stumble upon Christian culture and spend the rest of the movie trying to figure out how they can fit in to and take advantage of this foreign world.

We like this set-up because our characters are on the outside looking in at Christian culture in ways that we, as followers of Jesus, never realistically could in our previous films. Coming from outside our personal worldview, they interact with and ask fresh questions of contemporary American Christianity.

We're proud of this film. We're excited to hold up the mirror, not point the finger, at our religious culture in hopes of making you laugh a lot and think about how Christians are perceived by others.

Thanks for watching,

Riot Studios



USING THIS GUIDE

Facilitating Discussions Based on the Movie

THE PURPOSE

We've put together this discussion guide to help you frame thoughtful discussions around some of the scenes we find most poignant and compelling for the church. We hope you enjoy the movie and that this guide is helpful for your group's pursuit of Christ.

APPROACH

This movie poses challenging questions without forcing rigid answers. We recommend a similar approach when discussing the film. Use the questions in this book, as well as your own, to challenge your students and peers.

Reference the humor in the film to establish a comfortable environment before jumping in to deeper, probing questions that challenge the group's beliefs. Each section provides a "take away" message based on the questions and scripture provided, but encourage and allow the group to challenge these ideas as well.

Every person is unique and will take different ideas away from the scenes at different times. Be patient as the story serves as a mirror that challenges people in more ways than one.

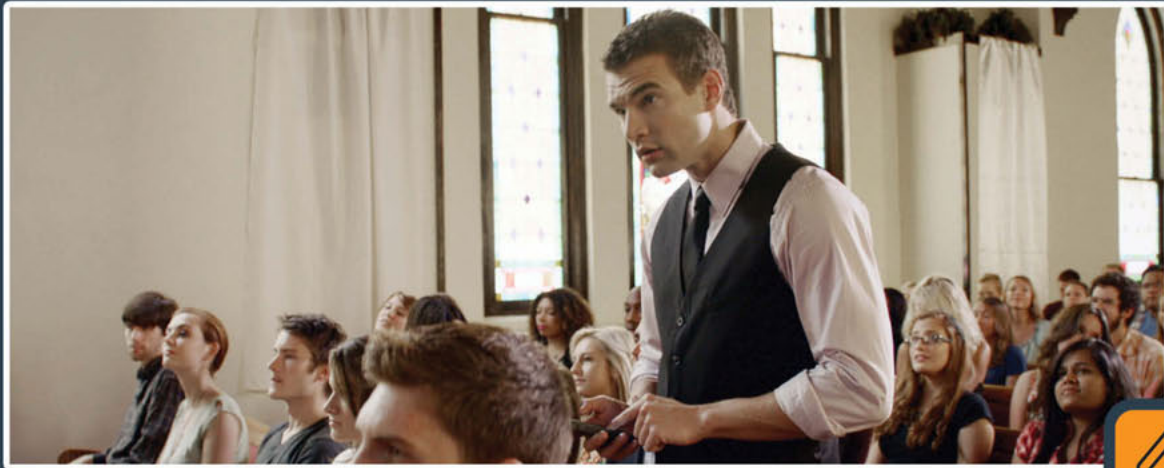
ORGANIZATION

The seven chapters in this book all follow the same format, beginning with a summary of a scene from the movie, followed by an introduction to a topic and pertinent scripture references. The second page of the chapter includes a list of discussion questions and a "take away" message to consider. Finally, the suggested scripture verses are provided on the last page of the chapter.



DISCUSSION 1:

Mission Trips: Is God Calling Me to Hawaii?



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 8: INT. CHURCH: DAY

After hearing about the Church's mission trip to Hawaii, Sam approaches Macy to learn more about how the fundraising is going. In their conversation, Sam learns that Christianity can be profitable and get's the idea to start project Get Wells Soon.

DISCUSSION THEME

MISSIONS

We're called to "go and make disciples of all nations," (Matt. 28:18) but what does that look like in the 21st century? Does it matter where we go, whether it's Hawaii, Africa, or our own neighborhood? Why or why not?

READ

Joshua 1:9, Colossians 3:23-24,
Matthew 28: 18-20, Matthew 25: 34-40





QUESTIONS

- ① Do you think this scene depicts reality? Why or why not?
- ② Do you think there is anything wrong with taking a mission trip to Hawaii?
- ③ Have you gone on a mission trip? If yes, what did you learn in the process?
- ④ When and where are we called to be missionaries?

TAKE AWAY

There's no right or wrong place to be on a mission for Christ. As followers of Jesus, we're called to serve Him in everything we do. When it comes to mission trips, we need to be thoughtful about where we go and how we spend our God-given resources. People in all parts of the world need Jesus, not just those in poverty.

It's also important not to miss out on what God has right in front of us. There are needs all around - in our neighborhoods, schools, and homes. Let's not forget that God has placed us where we are for a reason. Don't wait for a mission trip to serve others. Think about the people that God has placed around you, and start making an impact.



GETTING REEL *script notes*

MACY
Haha. Well, God has been so good to our mission. Actually, a lot of my friends have had success raising money for Christian mission trips. My friend Holland is building an orphanage in India this summer, and my cousin Alison's drilling wells in Ruhango for Living Water. Well, she was. I think there was a flood in Lesotho so I'm pretty sure she moved there.

SAM
(interrupting)
Uh huh, yeah. So...what sort of accountability is there?

MACY
What do you mean?

SAM
Well, I guess I'm wondering, how do these people know you and your friends aren't just running off to Vegas with their money? I mean I know that's obviously crazy.

MACY
Well, I'm bringing my camera...

VERSES

JOSHUA 1:9

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

COLOSSIANS 3:23-24

23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

MATTHEW 28:18-20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 25: 34-40

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

DISCUSSION 2:

"I'm Just an Artist": Fame and the Famous One



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 23: INT. ATLANTA STAGE – DAY

The guys meet Cross Country's worship leader, Gabriel, and quickly learn that he has a rock star's ego.

DISCUSSION THEME

FAME

Fame is something our culture loves, and it often finds its way into the church. Christian leaders can sometimes be worshipped as much as any other celebrity.

READ

Proverbs 16:18-19, Romans 12:3-8, James 3:13-18



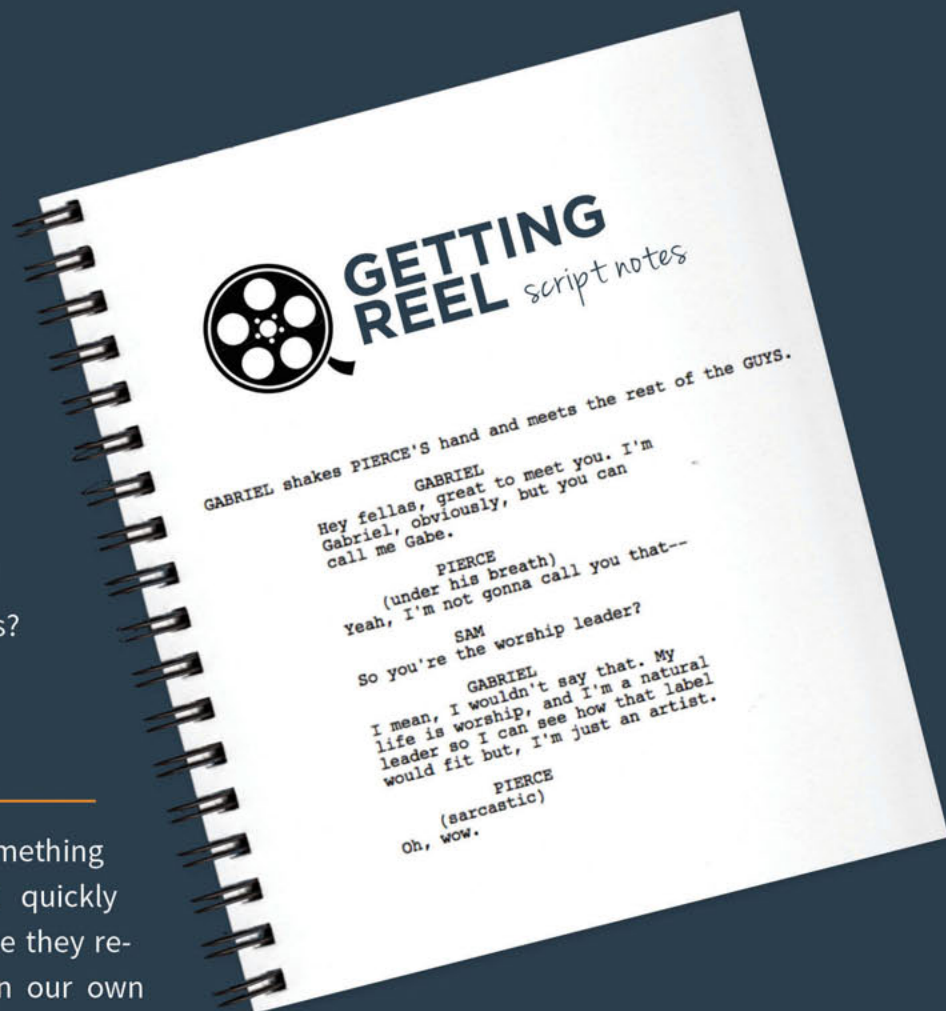
QUESTIONS

- ① Have you ever wanted to be famous? Why?
- ② Why do you think Gabriel acts the way he does?
- ③ Does fame affect the church? If so, can you give some examples?

TAKE AWAY

Sometimes, people start something with pure motives, but then quickly become distracted by the praise they receive from others. Focusing on our own glory is pretty counter-productive if we're supposed to be glorifying God in all we do.

It's important to surround ourselves with others who will keep us humble and focused on the ultimate purpose in what we're doing.



VERSES

PROVERBS 16:18-19

18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.
19 Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

ROMANS 12: 3-8

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

JAMES 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

DISCUSSION 3:

Playing Sunday School: Religious Culture



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 34: INT. ATLANTA HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

After almost being caught on the first night of the tour, the guys realize that they should learn how to play “Christian” to blend in to the Cross Country culture. They go through a series of lessons on religion, learning how to talk, dress, act, and think.

DISCUSSION THEME

CHRISTIAN CULTURE

When you follow Jesus, your life should look different. However, it’s sometimes easier to look the part than actually play it.

READ

Matthew 6:1, John 13: 35, Luke 18: 9 -14,
James 2:14-17



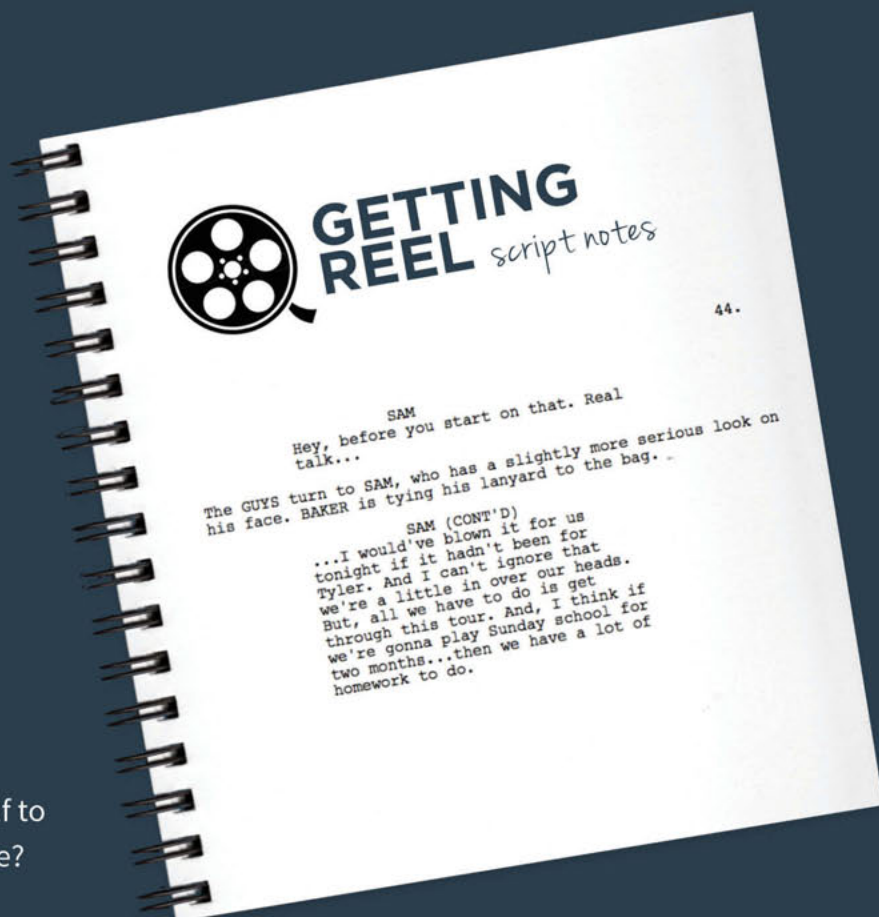


QUESTIONS

- ① Did this part of the movie make you feel uncomfortable? Why or why not?
- ② Have you ever changed yourself to fit into a group, idea, or lifestyle?
- ③ Why do you think we do that in the church? Why are these stereotypes so easy to point out?
- ④ Does Jesus care about how we talk, what we wear, etc.?

TAKE AWAY

More than anything, God cares about our heart for Him. If we live our lives to pursue him, everything else will fall in line. In the church we sometimes do things that make us look more holy. But, at the end of the day all that matters is that we are sinners, and Christ died for us. We ought to be careful that the outward expressions of our faith doesn't distract us from actual faith.



VERSES

MATTHEW 6:1

1 Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

JOHN 13:35

35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

LUKE 18:9-14

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed[a] thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

JAMES 2:14-17

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

DISCUSSION 4:

I Think God's Calling Me to...



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 62: INT. AUSTIN BACKSTAGE - DAY

Inspired by Sam's sermons, Cameron thinks God is calling him to move to Africa. Sam's response to Cameron upsets Tyler.

DISCUSSION THEME

CALLING

How do we know when we are truly called to do something? What role, if any, should others play in our discernment process?

READ

Jeremiah 17:7-9; Micah 6:8

Ephesians 1:4-5; Proverbs 16:9



QUESTIONS

- ① Have you ever felt called to do something? What did that look like?
- ② Do you think Cameron's calling is real and true? Does the motivation behind Sam's words that moved Cameron matter?
- ③ What kind of role should we play in helping discern our brothers' and sisters' callings?

TAKE AWAY

God knew what we would be called to do in his name before we even existed. Sometimes we can overthink our "calling," but God promises that if we trust in Him, he will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).

If we're regularly in prayer, scripture, and Christian community, we can trust that God is moving us in a good direction.



VERSES

JEREMIAH 17:7-9

7 “But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. 8 They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

EPHESIANS 1:4-5

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

PROVERBS 16:9

9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

MICAH 6:8

8 He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

DISCUSSION 5:

The Cover Up: Keeping Up Appearances



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 78: INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

Sam, Ken, and Gabriel discuss the repercussions of Sam's crime. Ken must decide what to do with the "GodSquad" and the money they have stolen. He chooses to cover up the crime and use the money for the preservation of Cross Country.



DISCUSSION THEME

REPUTATION

As believers, it's not uncommon for us to attend, volunteer, or work for large ministries. However, these organizations are not perfect, and sometimes protecting the reputation of the mission can get in the way of God's calling on our lives.



READ

1 Corinthians 3: 5-11, Proverbs 28: 13

QUESTIONS

- ① What do you think about Ken's decision?
- ② Regardless if you agree or disagree with what Ken did, can you understand his reasoning?
- ③ Do the "ends justify the means" when it comes to following Christ?
- ④ Is protecting the image of a church more important than doing the right thing?

TAKE AWAY

Ken's character is doing the wrong thing for the right reasons. All he wants is to spread the name of Christ, but it comes at the cost of his own righteousness.

Jesus would never allow his righteousness to come secondary to anything else, and he doesn't ask us to either. Trusting that Jesus can handle even the worst of situations is an incredibly difficult lesson to learn. All we can do is follow Him without compromising our beliefs, knowing that he is honored through our obedience.



VERSES

1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-11

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

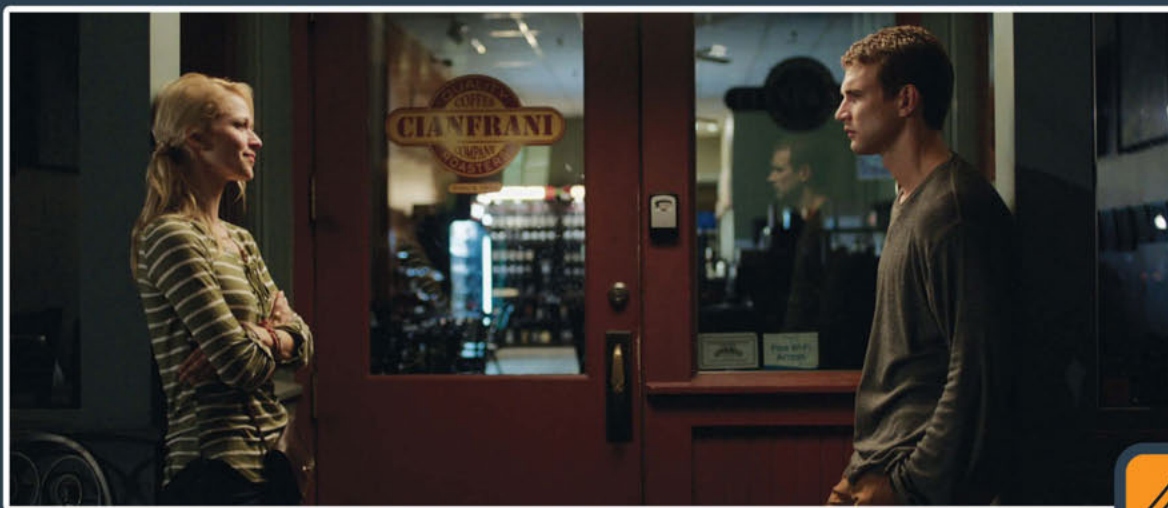
10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. 11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

PROVERBS 28:13

13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

DISCUSSION 6:

“Saving Grace” and Learning How to Forgive



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 83: EXT. DOWNTOWN AUSTIN – NIGHT

Sam sees Callie for the first time after being found out. In a heated and emotional conversation, Callie forgives Sam but he has trouble accepting it.

DISCUSSION THEME

FORGIVENESS

Sometimes, it can be extremely difficult to forgive someone. Similarly, it can feel just as difficult to accept forgiveness.

READ

Matthew 18:21-34, Ephesians 4:31-32



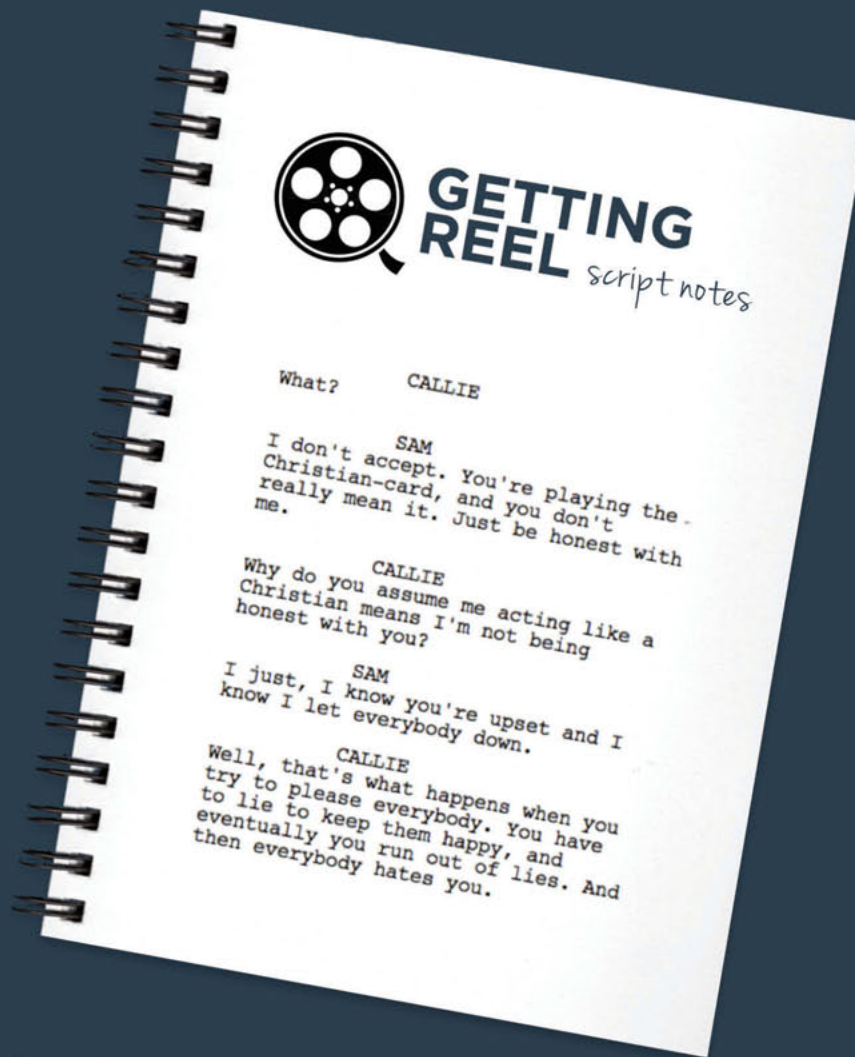
QUESTIONS

- ① Why do you think Sam is unwilling to accept Callie's forgiveness?
- ② Can you forgive someone even if you're still mad at him or her?
- ③ What does true forgiveness look like?
- ④ Who are we called to forgive?

TAKE AWAY

As believers, being forgiven is something that marks who we are. We should always be willing to show mercy and forgiveness because we know firsthand what it's like to receive it.

If you're having trouble forgiving someone, take a moment and think about how much you have been forgiven. It may help you understand the immeasurable amount of love and forgiveness Jesus is offering us.



VERSES

MATTHEW 18: 21

21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

EPHESIANS 4:31-32

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

DISCUSSION 7:

Rich, Young Rulers: Learning to Let Go



FLIP *the* SCRIPT

SCENE 98: INT. HOUSTON STAGE - NIGHT

After figuring out a way to get the money to the people that need it most, Sam takes the stage to tell the story of the rich young ruler.

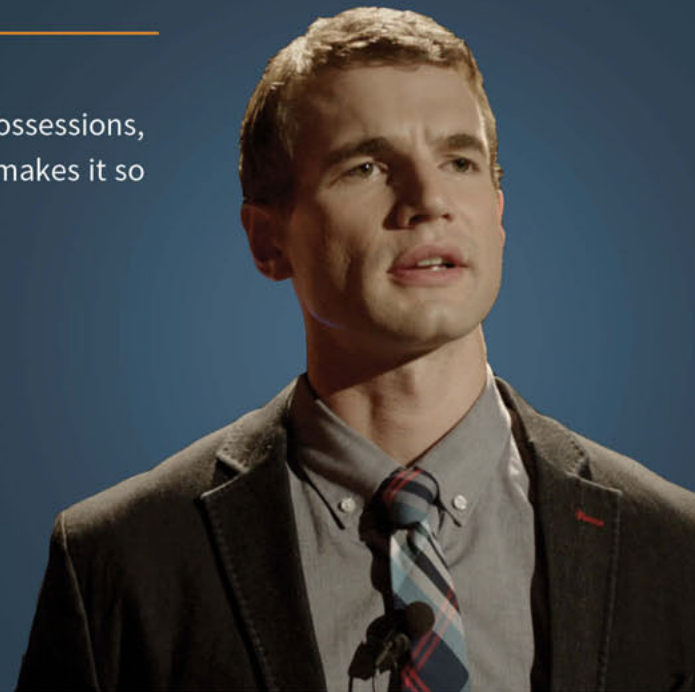
DISCUSSION THEME

SACRIFICE

It's often easier to find value in the immediate, our possessions, careers, or relationships, than in the eternal. What makes it so hard for us?

READ

Matthew 19:16-22





QUESTIONS

- ① If the movie didn't end, what do you think we'd see Sam do or say next?
- ② If you were the main character in the rich, young ruler story, what would Jesus ask you to give up?

TAKE AWAY

Sometimes it's hard to realize our need for Jesus when we don't need anything else.

It's important for us to recognize that we often look for comfort and fulfillment in material things rather than Christ. Material possessions, relationships, or talents can all be tempting sources of security. But, Jesus is the ultimate source of life, and sometimes it takes us losing the things we desire most to see that.



VERSES

MATTHEW 19:16-22

16 And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” 17 And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” 18 He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, 19 Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 20 The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” 21 Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

We hope you enjoyed your group's discussions. We love making movies like *Believe Me*, and we sincerely thank you for your support.

If you would like to know more about "Believe Me," or learn about other films from Riot Studios, connect using the information below.






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