

Intimacy in Friendship

MOVIE:

Renaissance Man



Lesson Objective:

God made us as creatures needing and desiring intimacy. But intimacy in our human friendships is designed for a select few who prove worthy of private secrets, deepest longings, sincere beliefs, and the closest relationship.

Intro to the Movie:

A down-on-his-luck businessman, Bill Rago, desperately takes the only job offered – being a teacher in the U.S. Army. His mission is simple: keep a ragtag bunch of underachieving misfits from flunking out of basic training! And that’s pretty much the recipe for disaster in the classroom; a guy who’s never taught and a group that’s never thought!

Lacking any sort of understanding or even interest in the Army, Bill begins to regret taking the job and treats the classroom as unimportant and the remedial soldiers as completely unworthy of his time and effort. Everything is going pretty badly for everyone concerned until, out of desperation, Bill gives the assignment to write a paper on “Why I joined the Army.”

The papers that the Double D’s come into the classroom and read the following day transform Bill’s thinking and is the beginning point for the relationship Bill begins to develop with each of them. This was the glimpse into their lives as real people, not just uniforms, and Bill gets sucked in.

Over the course of the next few months, this group of misfits becomes very strongly connected and Bill begins to develop a level of intimacy about their lives that gets him involved in some messy predicaments. Deep friendships develop over the shared experiences and shared personal secrets.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as disrespect, stereotyping, personal stories breaking down barriers, shared secrets developing more intimacy, what committed friendships look like.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. Bill is an outsider to the military community, so how what would you do to show him the ropes?
3. Which of the personal stories most grips your emotions and why?
4. What secrets lead to Bill's more adventurous actions? How much do you share about the private areas of your life?
5. Consider these statements and discuss what you think about the personal application for you:
 - Depending on an unreliable person in a crisis is like trying to chew with a loose tooth or walk with a crippled foot. (Proverbs 25:19)
 - If you and your neighbor have a difference of opinion, settle it between yourselves and do not reveal any secrets. ¹⁰Otherwise everyone will learn that you can't keep a secret, and you will never live down the shame. (Proverbs 25:9)

Group Input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *God made us as creatures needing and desiring intimacy. But intimacy in our human friendships is designed for a select few who prove worthy of private secrets, deepest longings, sincere beliefs, and the closest relationship.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "Being made in God's image (Imago Dei)." It means several things, but specifically it means being made for communal relationships – or intimate friendship – like the friendship Jesus shared with his disciples. God has given us the fellowship of trusted friends to share the deepest, most intimate part of ourselves with. We truly were made for this. It's God's original design and he's sticking to it. Look at how the creation story puts it:

(from Genesis 1:26-28) ²⁶Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." ²⁷So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, ²⁸blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.

OK, so if we're mad for intimate relationships, shouldn't we be intimate with everybody? Nope! First of all, it's not possible, but secondly, our deepest treasure of who we are should only be shared with the *closest* of *trusted* friends (ouch, check out your Facebook pages later).

If you've been to a wedding, you have most likely heard the quote of deeply intimate friendship from Scripture. The quote is often used as a commitment between a husband and wife because it captures such deep levels of intimacy between two people.

But unlike our current culture where, when you use the word intimacy, most people think of 'sex,' the culture of that day long ago allowed for this kind of intimacy between a woman named Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. It is a scene where Ruth and Naomi are about to part ways because of deaths of husbands and no longer having a connection to the land. They have lived together for some years, and, not wanting to break their intimate bonds of friendship, Ruth blurts out to Naomi these words,

(from Ruth 1:16-17) "Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the LORD's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death separate me from you!"

Take a tip from Ruth and Naomi. God made us as creatures needing and desiring intimacy. But intimacy in our human friendships is designed for a select few who prove worthy of private secrets, deepest longings, sincere beliefs, and the closest trust in our relationship.

Challenge:

1. Sit down with a friend and go through each other's Facebook pages. Really look and see what personal, even intimate, information is on there. Discuss whether this is wise and talk about the difference between our culture's view and God's view of truly intimate friendships.
2. This week read more about Ruth and Naomi's intimate friendship and how they came to mean so much to each other in the book of Ruth. It didn't happen overnight!

*Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives.
Remind them of the online personal journey for further involvement with this topic of Intimacy in Friendship.*