BIBLE STUDY

ONWARD (2020)

Influencing The Lives Of Others

Facilitator Note: *We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.*

PRESS START

PIXAR has taken us to places large and small, prehistoric and post-apocalyptic, underwater and down the street. That said, Onward takes us to a fantasy setting unique to PIXAR, and honestly, it feels unique to most things fantasy...period.

> **ASK: Did the setting resonate with you as a viewer? What PIXAR movie(s) is/are your favorite(s), and what is it that resonates so strongly with you?**

EQUIP

In the film, we follow Ian & Barley Lightfoot as they endeavor to resurrect their father through a magic spell they only partially completed. This left them with a father who is only a set of legs to accompany them. While Ian never met his father, Barley grew up with early memories of him. Part of the film's emotional journey is centered on Ian realizing that while he never met his father, Barley was incredibly important to Ian's development. Barley may have been a big brother, but he became a father-figure of sorts for Ian in the absence of their father.

The story at the core of Onward feels incredibly personal, and it felt informed by many painful life experiences amongst the filmmakers. While thankfully not all children lose a parent while growing up, the film's message of how much we are formed and informed by the people in our lives beyond our mother and father is definitely relatable to everyone. Relationships that could be the example for us today are found throughout the Bible, but we will be looking at Paul & Timothy in this study. We only see one mention of Timothy's father in **Acts 16:1** (stating he was a Greek, but nothing else). It's been the assumption of many Biblical scholars that Timothy's father was likely a non-believer, but of course, we know Paul to be a Christian and a powerful influence for Timothy's spiritual development.

> **Acts 16:1-5 (NKJV)** *"Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily."*

LEVEL UP

Not to minimize Timothy's father, but when it comes to matters of Christian faith, history shows Paul greatly influenced the younger believer, Timothy, almost as if he was his father. In the case of Timothy, the two names are closely tied in discussion of the Bible. Even though Timothy was a young man, Paul imparted to him what he needed to know, equipping him to not only be confident in his own faith but to embolden growing bodies of believers in their faith, as well.

Some criticize why Paul would have had Timothy be circumcised, especially after he delivered word from the Apostles in **Acts 15:1-7** that declared circumcision to be unnecessary for believers. However, having experienced the debates firsthand and knowing how hard-nosed many were on the issue of circumcision, Paul had Timothy go through with it because doing so would have kept him from being looked down upon and rejected by those who took issue.

> **1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (NKJV)** *"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."*

We know from this passage this is a lesson likely hard-learned. Paul is gifting his experience to Timothy like a father would (or should). We do not have to be related to another person by blood to have a deeply rooted and enriching relationship with them. The mentor relationship of Paul and Timothy not only changed their lives, but has also changed the lives of countless others by their example. We should be intentionally seeking out how to help and enrich others through our example, as well.

MOD

Sometimes, like Ian, we have people missing in our lives. **If you could do a part(s) of your life over again with someone who is now gone, what would you do?** Also, like Ian's relationship with Barley, maybe someone in your life stepped up to fill in the gaps left behind by the loss of another loved one. **Did you have someone step in and help lead you growing up? What things did they do with you that made the most impact on you?**

Regardless of age, Christians can be an influence for Christ for others, leading them to Jesus through word and action. **Are there people in your life that immediately come to mind that could be influenced by you to come to know Christ? Is there anything you could be doing differently to help them build a closer relationship with Jesus?**

PRAY

Do you have people in your life who were/are important in shaping who you are today? On the flip side, are there people you feel you are an influence for? Are there people you could be an influence for? In any of these cases, let's join in prayer, thanking God that He gives us the opportunity to grow and help others grow through healthy relationships with one another.

THE NEXT LEVEL

> **Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV)** *"As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."*

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