

Christmas at the Movies

It's a Wonderful Life

Christians live not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). Like Paul quoting the storytellers of his day (Acts 17:28) to share the gospel of Jesus and His kingdom, movies and television today often echo elements of *the story*. It is these elements that stir God-given desires within us, like the desire for love and acceptance, the desire to see good triumph over evil, and the desire for adventure. In particular, the Christmas movie *It's a Wonderful Life* points to the truth that Jesus came not to be served but to serve, to give His life as a ransom for many. And even though Jesus alone is the ransom for sin, we as His followers should emulate Him and seek to give our lives for others. We are God's workmanship, created and designed to do good works – things that matter and have an eternal impact (Ephesians 2:10).

GET THINGS STARTED

What is your favorite Christmas movie, and why? What is your least favorite Christmas movie (that you end up watching almost every year because of your family or kids), and why?

GO DEEPER

1. In Acts 17:28, Paul quotes two different non-Christian storytellers of his day as he speaks about Jesus on Mars Hill in the city of Athens. Why do you think Paul did this? What does it possibly show us in how we as followers of Jesus should engage our modern stories and/or methods of storytelling?
2. How does the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* echo the truth of Scripture? What does Mark 10:45 reveal about Jesus that is seen and felt in a basic way in this movie?
3. From Ephesians 2:10, we are created to do good works, to serve, just as Jesus did. What does it look like to practically serve others or to do good things that have a lasting, eternal impact? Why does just going to church, or just being a nice person, fall short of what it truly means to follow and emulate Jesus? What other choices or actions demonstrate that we are His followers?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What things are you regularly doing that have eternal significance? What trivial or ultimately meaningless things do you tend to give too much time or attention to?
2. What is a small step you can take to move towards or further into serving others like Jesus? What are some possible areas that God has been showing you (and stirring in you) to engage and serve within?

PRACTICE IT NOW

As a group, take time to pray together, asking God to give you a heart to serve rather than be served. Ask Him to help you be like Him and to emulate His heart, motives, perspective, desires, and actions. Ask Him for fuller revelation into what it means to be His follower. And pray that He would show you where to actively serve in a way that has significance and eternal impact.