

2012

Discussion Guide: Courageous



Name:

Movie Dates:

May 25, 2012 (Friday) &
June 2, 2012 (Saturday)

Time: 8.00 p.m.

Venue: FGA Sanctuary

Contribution of **Family Life Counseling Working Team**

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Compiled by Yeo Pei Li

Source:

Adapted from Study by Russ Breimeier, *Christianity Today* film critic
and editor of *NoisyWhisper.com*.



Reflection

Do you believe things are getting better or worse in the world today? Why?

INTRODUCTION

Leading our families at home in a God-honoring way takes courage. *Courageous Project* includes a 4-session discussion to help strengthen families, especially fathers.

Goal of *Courageous Project*

Parents, especially fathers, to be courageous in leading their families at home in a God-honoring way.

Focus of *Courageous Project*

The *Courageous* discussion focus on the following areas:

1. Demonstrating Priorities
 - Focusing on eternal things rather than what is temporary
2. Demonstrating Responsibility:
 - Serving, protecting, and casting a vision for the family
3. Demonstrating Legacy:
 - Recognizing a father's potential impact as a godly role model
4. Demonstrating Faith
 - Increasing in wisdom and strengthening a father's identity in Christ

Suggested Discussion schedule

Discussion Before the Movie (Optional)

- Show the promotional video
You may download from:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY1oQMY9nv0>
 - http://dl.dropbox.com/u/44717838/Courageous_Promo_FL-HF.wmv
- Discuss about the top 10 facts about fathering

Discussion After the Movie (HF Level)

- Week 1 (June 1): Demonstrating Priorities
- Week 2 (June 8): Demonstrating Responsibilities
- Week 3 (June 15): Demonstrating Legacy
- Week 4 (June 22): Demonstrating Faith

Corporate Commitment After the Movie

- Week 5 (July 1): Making the 'I Will!' Resolution (Church level)

Note: Please note that the dates are subject to change.

FACILITATING vs TEACHING

What is the difference between facilitating and teaching?

WHAT IS FACILITATION?

What is NOT facilitation?

- Being the expert
- Providing answers
- Dominating discussion
- Making judgment
- Getting bogged down
- Losing control
- Getting sidetracked

Facilitation

- Is the process of enabling groups to work cooperatively and effectively.
- Gives opportunities for members to share, listen, make decisions, and to take responsibility.
- Is to bring out and focus on the wisdom of the group, often as the group creates something new or solves a problem (Hogan, 2002).

Roles of Facilitator

- Setting the scene
- Defining boundaries
- Establishing common purpose
- Clarifying objectives
- Moving group through conflict
- Remaining impartial

The facilitator's PRIMARY role is to **manage the process** of a group and **NOT to add content**.

Qualities of a Good Facilitator

- Trust in others and their capacities
- Good listening skills
- Respect the opinion of others (not imposing ideas)
- Create a safe atmosphere for sharing
- Able to sense the group's mood at any given time and be flexible to adjust the program accordingly.
- Ability to balance between being directive and non-directive, and to know when each stance is needed at different points during the discussion.

Six points to remember when facilitating

1. Help members see the bigger picture or vision.
2. Resist temptation to teach.
3. Resist temptation to answer all the questions.
4. Resist temptation to convince. Use questions to get them thinking.
5. Find your own words and examples
6. Make the discussion flow.

Final word

As a facilitator, your only objective is to **have a discussion**. You are not trying to preach *Courageous*, but to have members reflect about the issues and discover their own “AHA!” moment.

Summary

Teacher	Facilitator
Content expert; Presents information	Guides process
Provides the right answer	Provides the right question

Summary of the Courageous Movie component

"*Courageous*" is an independent Christian drama film produced by Sherwood Pictures and was released to theaters on September 30, 2011. It is the fourth film by Sherwood Pictures, the creators of *Flywheel*, *Facing the Giants*, and *Fireproof*. Filming in Albany, Georgia concluded in June 2010. The film was marketed by Provident Films, which also marketed their previous films.

The film was directed by Alex Kendrick, who co-wrote its screenplay with his brother Stephen Kendrick. Kendrick also stars in the film, along with Ken Bevel, Kevin Downes, and former running-back Tony Stallings. About half of the cast and crew were volunteers from Sherwood Baptist Church, while the remainders were brought on through invitation-only auditions.

Synopsis

Honor Begins at Home

Four men, one calling: To serve and protect. As law enforcement officers, Adam Mitchell, Nathan Hayes, David Thomson, and Shane Fuller are confident and focused. Yet at the end of the day, they face a challenge that none of them are truly prepared to tackle: fatherhood.

While they consistently give their best on the job, good enough seems to be all they can muster as dads. But they're quickly discovering that their standard is missing the mark. When tragedy hits home, these men are left wrestling with their hopes, their fears, their faith, and their fathering. Can a newfound urgency help these dads draw closer to God ... and to their children?

Plot

As the police force of Albany, Georgia, attempts to stop drug smuggling in the city, the sheriff urges his deputies to spend time with their families based on statistics that fatherless children are several times more likely than those with fathers to turn to lives of crime. Among his deputies are Adam Mitchell (Alex Kendrick), Nathan Hayes (Ken Bevel), Shane Fuller (Kevin Downes), and rookie David Thomson (Ben Davies). Mitchell adores his young daughter, but is distanced from his teenage son. Hayes never knew his biological father but would risk his life to save his children; however, his teenage daughter Jade (Taylor Hutcherson), resents him because of the strict rules that he has set for her dating life. Fuller is divorced, as were his parents before him, and must share joint custody of his son. The group also befriends Javier Martinez (Robert Amaya), an immigrant struggling to provide for his family, and Mitchell arranges a job for him.

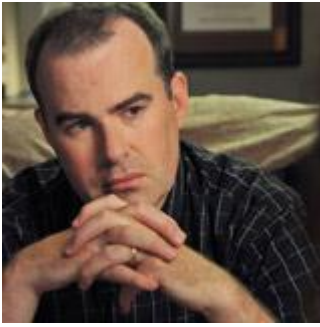
One day, Mitchell's daughter is killed by a drunk driver, devastating Mitchell and his family. After extensive research into the Bible over the next six weeks, Mitchell creates an elaborate "Resolution" to honor God in every aspect of his family; Mitchell, Hayes, Fuller, Thomson, and Martinez take the vow in a formal ceremony by Hayes's adoptive father. Mitchell rebuilds a relationship with his son and attains catharsis by slowly dancing at a site where he had previously refused to dance with his daughter. Hayes mends his relationship with his daughter and presents her with a purity ring that she is to wear until marriage; he also visits the grave of his biological father. Fuller improves his relationship with his son. Thomson, who is revealed to have fathered a child in college and deserted the child after the mother's refusal to have an abortion, contacts the mother at her trailer home and asks to have a relationship with his daughter. Meanwhile, Martinez's factory employer offers him a promotion on the condition that he report a false inventory count of incoming crates. After Martinez refuses to be dishonest, his boss reveals that the request was a test of Martinez's integrity. Martinez is promoted and his financial problems are resolved.

Mitchell and Hayes discover that Fuller has been stealing drugs from the evidence room at the police station to sell on the street. Mitchell is forced to report the corruption, leading to Fuller's arrest and separating Fuller from his son. Mitchell later visits Fuller in jail, where Fuller takes responsibility for his actions and begs Mitchell to act as a father figure to his son.

Hayes and Thomson, on a minor traffic stop, unknowingly confront the leader of the drug ring they have been eradicating, resulting in a roadside gun battle. As the gang attempts to take a young girl hostage, Mitchell and other officers arrive as additional support. As the girl's father rescues her, Mitchell, Hayes, and Thomson subdue the gang members. One of the gang members is Derrick Freeman (David Howze), a teenager who Hayes had earlier prohibited from dating his daughter; Derrick attributes his decisions to his lack of a family.

At a Father's Day church service, the men present the resolution and Mitchell urges the fathers in the congregation to influence their families for God. Mitchell is shown running in a 5K race with his son and Fuller's son. Hayes is shown reading the Bible with an imprisoned Derrick. Thomson is shown meeting his daughter for the first time. The film ends with a portion of Joshua 24:15: "Choose today who you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Main Casts



Alex Kendrick
(Adam Mitchell)



Renee Jewell
(Victoria Mitchell)



Rusty Martin Jr.
(Dylan Mitchell)



Ken Bevel
(Nathan Hayes)



Eleanor Brown
(Kayla Hayes)



Kevin Downes
(Shane Fuller)



Robert Amaya
(Javier Martinez)



Angelita Nelson
(Carmen Martinez)



Ben Davies
(David Thomson)

Others

- Taylor Hutcherson as Jade Hayes
- Lauren Etchells as Emily Mitchell
- David Howze as Derrick Freeman
- Tony 'T.C.' Stallings as T.J.
- Ed Litton as Pastor Rogers

Pre Session 1: Setting the Stage

(Optional for pre-movie promotion and/or discussion)

Though *Courageous* is a film that focuses on the lives of four policemen, there is a lot that will ring true to anyone who views it. Questions concerning the need for morality and ethics in our everyday lives relate to all of us, no matter what our professional or home life may look like.

1. Do you believe things are getting better or worse in the world today? Give examples for your worldview. Read Romans 8:19–21 and consider whether or not the passage supports your perspective.

2. More specifically, what do you think about parenting today? Is there a correlation between broken homes and crime?
(See Handout 1: Top Ten Facts on Fathering)

3. Do you believe there are less good fathers around today than in previous generations? Why is good parenting fundamental to our society? What does God expect of a good father (or mother)?

Handout 1: TOP TEN FACTS ON FATHERING



TOP TEN FACTS ON FATHERING

- 1. There are 67.8 million fathers in America**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 2. There are 74.7 million children under the age of 18**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 3. 62.2% of children live with their biological mother and father**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 4. 24.8 million children (33%) live apart from their biological father**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 5. 20.3 million children (27%) live in a home with no father**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 6. 2.7 million children live with their father only**
Source: United States Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.
- 7. The presence and involvement of a father is positively associated with child well-being, educational attainment, behavioral development, self-esteem and avoidance of high-risk behaviors.**
Source: Father Facts, 5th Edition, National Fatherhood Initiative, 2007.
- 8. Children growing up without a father present are more likely to suffer physical, emotional or educational neglect, engage in juvenile delinquency including violent crime, abuse drugs and alcohol, be a teenage mom and live in poverty.**
Source: Father Facts, 5th Edition, National Fatherhood Initiative, 2007.
- 9. Fathers are the primary determinant on a child's ongoing faith practice.**
Source: *Fathers: Key to their Children's Faith*, S. Michael Craven, June 13, 2006, www.battlefortruth.org/ArticlesDetail.asp?id=174
- 10. 70% of Americans agree that the physical absence of fathers from the home is the most significant family or social problem facing America.**
Source: National Center for Fathering, National Fathering Survey, 2009.

For more information, visit www.fathers.com

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Week 1: Demonstrating Priorities
(Matthew 18:3; Colossians 3:13; Proverbs 3:11-12)

Opening Discussion

Which movie character did you most identify with? Why?

Discussion (Optional)

A father is unwilling to run with his son and dance with his daughter. A young man is unwilling to support his girlfriend and their daughter. Another man decides to finally put his abusive past behind him by forgiving his father for past sins. It's often been said that the first step on the road to recovery is admitting you have a problem. For many of us, including Adam, David, and Nathan in *Courageous*, that problem is buried beneath our pride—our reluctance to admit that we're wrong. One of the key traits of being a good father demonstrated in the film is a willingness to humble ourselves and reset our priorities to come alongside our children in their times of need.

1. Why do you believe Adam was unwilling to get out of the car and dance with his daughter out in the open? What about his unwillingness to run with his son?

Has there been a time when you were similarly unwilling to do a seemingly simple act for a loved one? What stopped you?

2. Do you think Adam had a different relationship with his daughter than with his son? How do we treat our sons and daughters differently?
3. Considering what happened to his daughter, what does this story element have to say about using the time we've been given by God?

4. Read **Matthew 18:3**. What does Jesus mean by this? What is he saying to us about our pride and the need to love others?

5. How does Adam ultimately humble himself and bring closure to his regret? How does that humility spill into other areas of his life for the better?

6. Now consider David's situation as a deadbeat husband and father. What's holding him back from doing the right thing? How does accepting Christ affect his attitude and outlook?

7. Why does Nathan visit his father's grave? Read **Colossians 3:13**.

Why is it important for Nathan to forgive his father at this point, especially since his father has long since passed away? How does forgiving his father not only bring closure to his life but also affect his morals and enable him to model Christ-like behavior to his family?

Deepening Discussion

8. Priorities shape our family dynamics and our relationship with God. How did changing priorities impact families in the movie?

9. What are your top 5 priorities as a family? Do you think all the member of the family agrees with it?

10. What areas need to shift for your family to honor God more?

Week 2: Demonstrating Responsibilities

(1 Timothy 5:8; James 1:27; 1 Corinthians 13:11; 1 John 1:8–9)

Opening Discussion

What is courage? (See 2 Tim 1: 7-8)

What are you currently being asked to do that requires courage (for you)?

Discussion (Optional)

Once fathers are humble enough to take on their role and reprioritize their time, it is important to follow through by taking responsibility. In the film, Javier is willing to do whatever it takes to make ends meet for his family (though not at the cost of his integrity). After accepting Christ, David reaches out to his estranged girlfriend and daughter to be more active in their lives. Even Shane must accept responsibility for his actions, serving time in prison and explaining to his family that he was wrong. If we're to be called fathers (parents), we need to accept the responsibility that comes with the part.

1. What do you believe it means to accept responsibility as a parent and spouse? What are some of the actions that come with that?
2. Describe Javier's relationship with his wife and kids. Has he taken responsibility for them despite his unemployment?
3. How does this contrast with David's relationship with his "wife" and child?
4. Read **1 Timothy 5:8** and **James 1:27**. Why does Paul say that not providing for family is the same as denying the faith?

How do these verses explain David's letter to his girlfriend and daughter?

How do they also explain why he first needed to accept Christ into his life?

5. Recall the scene where the men ask each other when they first considered themselves "a man." Then read **1 Corinthians 13:11**. What does this passage say about embracing the responsibility of becoming a man, husband, and father?

6. What about Shane? Does he initially show responsibility as a father by his actions at work? Why not?

Read **1 John 1:8–9**. How does Shane eventually accept responsibility as a spouse and parent?

Deepening Discussion

7. What about your own life? Have you taken full responsibility for the roles in which God has placed you? Why or why not?

8. How could taking responsibilities and acting with courage help any of your relationships?

9. How could being responsible and courageous help you fulfill your church callings better?

10. How do we help each other be courageous?

Week 3: Demonstrating Legacy

(Ephesians 6:4; 1 Chronicles 29:17; Joshua 24:15)

Opening Discussion

Adversity can pull a family apart or bring them together. Discuss an example of this in the movie.

Discussion (Optional)

Much of the last hour of *Courageous* shows the men responding to trials and temptations in their lives. Javier is asked to turn a blind eye at work in return for a promotion. Adam must consider reporting a friend's indiscretions at work. Nathan risks upsetting his daughter by forbidding her to date a local teen involved with gangs. No one said integrity would be easy!

1. Ignoring how Javier's situation was resolved, what would you have done in his shoes? Would you have agreed to alter the inventory? Or would you have said *no* based on principle?
2. What about Adam's dilemma in reporting Shane to his superiors? Would you risk a friendship to do what's right? Why not deal with the situation privately, between you and the friend doing wrong? Why was Adam's handling of the matter the right way?
3. Was Nathan within his rights as a father to determine who his daughter should date? Or should she "decide for herself" as suggested by the boy in question?

Read **Ephesians 6:4**. How was Nathan wise to offer his daughter an alternative rather than to simply put his foot down and say "no"?

4. Read **1 Chronicles 29:17**. Why does God allow dilemmas such as those described above to enter our lives?

5. Read **Joshua 24:15**. What does it mean to serve the Lord? Why is this verse such a perfect choice for the men's resolutions?

6. Why is integrity important to our role as spouse and parent? How does courage work with integrity? How does taking responsibility reflect integrity?

Deepening Discussion

7. How has adversity affected your family?

8. What are 2 things you can do now to position your family to support and encourage each other through adversity?

As you are supporting others, who do you go to for support?

What kind of support would you like to get from this group/person?

9. The characters in the movie demonstrated a spectrum of values. [i.e. integrity, dishonesty, greed, selflessness, etc.] Some were good. Some were harmful. Talk about some specific examples from the movie.

10. What values currently define your family? (Optional: See Handout 2 - Short list of 50 values)

How do they align with God's values articulated in the Bible?

HANDOUT 2: **SHORTLIST OF 50 VALUES**

Put a tick on the values that resonate within you.

- Accountability** – mutually accountable to a consciously chose set of values.
- Achievement/Success** – recognition from other for what you have done.
- Actualization/Success** – realizing one’s full potential, an emotionally and physically integrated.
- Administration/Management** – exercising executive functions in an institution
- Art/Beauty** – as enjoyed for its own sake
- Autonomy** – to be independent and personally in control of one’s life
- Belonging (Liked)** – to be regarded with favor by a group of significant others
- Care/Nurture** – to care and nurture others as they grow and to expect the same
- Community/Simplicity** – enriching and empowering relationships that exist within a group who are intensely committed to one another
- Community/Support**– seeking to have the whole greater than the sum parts
- Contemplation** – mediative reflection that leads to intimacy and harmony
- Control/Duty** - exercise of strong morale restraint to fulfill obligations
- Convivial technology** – technology that improves society and that is technologically sound.
- Corporate mission** – designing of organizations that enrich persons within them and that are beneficial to society
- Detachment** – detachment from worldly issues to enrich the quality of one’s life
- Dignity/justice** – commitment to providing every person with honor, respect and worth
- Education** – formal study / training to gain a recognized qualification
- Empathy/Generosity** – reflecting on another’s feelings, thoughts and attitudes with positive regard and acceptance.
- Equality** – liberated for action through seeing oneself as having the same worth as others
- Expressiveness/Freedom** – able to express oneself fully and freely
- Family/Belonging** – physical and emotional connectedness with parents and children or their substitutes
- Health, well-being** – health of mind and body that flows from meeting one’s physical and emotional needs
- Insight** – intuitive understanding of an underlying truth about the nature of one’s internal and external realities
- Institution** – concern for and devotion to a particular institution which is committed to the provision of a particular product or service
- Intimacy** – deep mutual sharing with another on a regular basis

- ❑ **Law/Duty** – legal and moral obligation to follow rules of an institution
- ❑ **Law/Guide** – laws not as absolute rule, but as a basis for rational decision making
- ❑ **New order** – the goal of creating new organizational forms that develop and dignify persons
- ❑ **Patriotism/loyalty** – faithful loyalty to an institution
- ❑ **Personal authority** – confidence in the right to have one’s thoughts, feelings, words and actions respected
- ❑ **Play** – non dutiful, undirected engagement in fantasy, pleasure and amusement
- ❑ **Property/Economics** – accumulation of material goods for security or power
- ❑ **Research/Knowledge** – gaining of knowledge for its own sake
- ❑ **Rights/World order** – commitment to improving the lot of people throughout the globe
- ❑ **Safety/Survival** – avoiding the risk of personal injury or loss of order to survive
- ❑ **Search** – personal search to find one’s place in the scheme of things
- ❑ **Security** – interest in one’s physical comfort and protection
- ❑ **Self-preservation** – protecting oneself from physical harm
- ❑ **Self-worth** – knowing that when other people know me they will think well of me
- ❑ **Sensory pleasure** – experiencing physical pleasure through senses
- ❑ **Service** – motivation to make a contribution to others through one’s unique skills and abilities
- ❑ **Social prestige** – display of hallmarks of reputation, influence, achievement, rank or success
- ❑ **Tradition** – ritualization of beliefs, legend and customs so as to preserve their meanings
- ❑ **Transcendence/Ecority** – motivation stemming from an ecological awareness, to maintain beauty and harmony in the natural order through convivial technology
- ❑ **Wisdom** – knowledge of what is true and right combined with just judgment as to appropriate action
- ❑ **Wonder/Awe** – overwhelming feelings of reverence, admiration and fear about the natural order
- ❑ **Word/Prophet** – writing or lecturing to raise the consciousness of people to the human condition
- ❑ **Word/Confidence** – self-assurance about one’s skills and abilities to perform one’s work productively
- ❑ **Workmanship/Technology** – the art or skill of producing quality work through the use of tools
- ❑ **Worship** –reverence for a belief in God that is expressed through a commitment to the doctrines and teachings of the religious belief

Week 4: Demonstrating Faith (1 Peter 4:12–14)

Opening Discussion

Read the 'I Will' Resolution (Handout 3). What is your opinion about the statements listed? Do you think it's realistic and achievable? Why?

Discussion (Optional)

As *Courageous* draws to a close, some viewers may feel compelled to stand with others in the final church scene, ready to sign a resolution of their own to become a more effective spouse and parent. You might consider drawing up an original document with your own personal promises.

1. Aside from humility, grace, and integrity, what are some of the traits of fatherhood championed in this movie?

2. Are there other traits this movie leaves out? Is there one you believe to be more important than all others?

3. Do you believe the challenges the fathers faced played out realistically? What if Javier had lost his job due to his honesty? Or what if Shane's family responded to Adam with anger and blame?

Read **1 Peter 4:12–14**. Does God promise believers an easy path in following his will?

4. How has seeing *Courageous* affected your view of parenting? Would you consider drawing up a resolution similar to the one depicted in the movie? If not, what changes would you make?

5. Consider all that the Bible has to say on fatherhood, setting priorities, accept responsibilities, and leaving a legacy. How important is good parenting to God? Are God's expectations easy? Are they doable? What can you do to be a better spouse and/or parent?

Deepening Discussion

6. What do you like about the *Courageous* discussion?
7. What are some areas of improvement for the discussion?
8. What are the two major learnings you gain from this discussion?
9. What do you like to see happen proceeding from here?
10. Read each statement from the 'I Will! Resolution again. Identify what does each statement demonstrates - *Priorities, Responsibilities, Legacy, and Faith.*

Are you ready to make a courageous commitment to demonstrate *Priorities, Responsibilities, Legacy and Faith*? If yes, what do you think are the benefits for making this commitment? If no, what are your concerns?

HANDOUT 3
'I WILL!' Resolution

I DO solemnly resolves before God to take full responsibility for myself, my wife, and my children.

I WILL love them, protect them, serve them, and teach them the Word of God as the spiritual leader of my home.

I WILL be faithful to my wife, to love and honor her, and be willing to lay down my life for her as Jesus Christ did for me.

I WILL bless my children and teach them to love God with all of their hearts, all of their minds, and all of their strength.

I WILL train them to honor authority and live responsibly.

I WILL confront evil, pursue justice, and love mercy.

I WILL pray for others and treat them with kindness, respect, and compassion.

I WILL work diligently to provide for the needs of my family.

I WILL forgive those who have wronged me and reconcile with those I have wronged.

I WILL learn from my mistakes, repent of my sins, and walk with integrity as a man answerable to God.

I WILL seek to honor God, be faithful to His church, obey His Word, and do His will.

I WILL courageously work with the strength God provides to fulfill this resolution for the rest of my life and for His glory.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

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Signed by:

Date: