

# CLIVE THE ZOMBIE'S MOVIE STUDY GUIDE



A resource for youth pastors and other weirdos who think a zombie puppet is a really, really cool ministry tool.

By John Coper

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# Georgia on My Mind

## **Introduction**

Georgia On My Mind was a rush project that went from script to screen in less than two weeks, thanks to the assistance of two Northern Kentucky University students. Ryan Hall and Carey Parsons shot everything involving Georgia while I shot Clive in the Righteous Insanity basement lair.

What began as a parody of Twilight (filmed right around the time New Moon was released) evolved into an illustration about finding and choosing the right kind of boy (or girl) to date. Many commentators have criticized the Twilight series for Bella's reckless choices - choosing to be with a monster (Edward or Jacob) rather than waiting for the right kind of guy. Dating the bad boy/girl is a dangerous trend that has led good kids astray and left a sad legacy of broken hearts behind. Georgia On My Mind is an opportunity to examine those choices and their potential consequences with students, leading them to make better choices by developing better criteria for making choices.

## **Why do good girls like bad boys?**

The bad boy and the girl from the wrong side of the tracks have been around as long as humans have told stories. It's a romantic notion that appeals to something deep within us, and with good reason. The bad boy redeemed by the good girl is a reflection of the story of God and man. Mankind did everything to deserve Hell, but God chose to die for us and redeem us. Good for mankind, but bad for the lovelorn individual who thinks they can turn that loser into husband/wife material.

Twilight is merely the latest incarnation of this poor decision making. For whatever reason, Bella is entranced by Edward - a vampire - and later Jacob - a werewolf. Tradition tells us both a dangerous creatures, and the idea of a human falling in love with a vampire is unthinkable. (It's also been done before, and better; see Buffy the Vampire Slayer.) Bella willingly puts herself in jeopardy in her pursuit of love, making foolish choices with her heart while refusing to stop and think for a moment how foolish she might be.

Inspired by Bella and Edward, Georgia (the title character of our little film) decides that she, too, wants an undead boyfriend. True, she looks past the outward appearances and turns her eyes to the heart, but in doing so, she misses a key piece of information: she's involved with a zombie!!

As Georgia goes deeper into the relationship, she rationalizes her feelings for him. She surrenders her heart, and in the end, she literally gives her brains to Clive as a gift. Don't miss the symbolism here, because I wanted that to be very obvious: when you surrender your mind in a relationship, you surrender your whole self.

## **"You don't understand..."**

The hardest thing for those outside bad relationships to understand is why people in the relationship don't see it for what it is. My friends could tell when I was dating the wrong girl. When I started to pull away from things I love, get rid of things that mattered to me, and give up activities that I enjoyed, they knew I was being untrue to myself.

I never saw it that way. I was compromising. I was sacrificing. It was an act of love. I was so blinded by emotion, I didn't stop to notice I was the only one compromising and sacrificing.

No one wants to admit they're wrong under normal circumstances, but when the heart's tied into the matter, that resistance is even stronger. When someone tells you that you're dating the wrong kind of person, you don't immediately think of the things they've said and done to hurt you. You think about the things you've said, the cards and poems you've written, the gifts you've given and received. You think about the photos on your Facebook page and your laptop. You think how hard it would be to erase this person from your life, and you think about how empty it will be without them.

In the end, no one but the person in the relationship can truly end it. When parents step in and force a separation, more often than not it serves to drive two people to hold on even tighter. Friends and family can talk all they want. What they need to do most is pray for the person they love to have their eyes opened AND to have the courage to do something about it.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think people find the stories of Bella and Edward (or other similar couples) to be so appealing?
2. What is dangerous about seeing this kind of relationship portrayed in movies and books?
3. Do you think these sorts of stories have an influence on the decisions people make about who they date? How does it influence them?
4. What advice would you have given Georgia about finding a guy like Edward?
5. Have you ever seen someone in a bad relationship?
6. Have you ever tried to tell someone they were in a bad relationship, or been told YOU were in one? How did you or that individual handle the news?

## **Bible Study**

Read Proverbs 31:10-31

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13

1. Based on these two passages, what traits does the Bible say are ideal in a husband and a wife?
2. Since dating is, ultimately, about finding a mate, how important should identifying and seeking these qualities be in dating?
3. Is it okay to just date for fun, and not bear these qualities in mind? Why or why not?
4. What can we do to help us look for these qualities in the people we date?
5. How can we cultivate these qualities within ourselves so that we will be the ideal husband or wife one day?

Read Proverbs 13:13

6. Do you think that parents and friends can see things in us that we don't? What are some examples?
7. How important is the advice of parents and friends when you are dating?
8. How much should we rely on others when making decisions about our hearts?

Read Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4

9. Why do you think Solomon repeated this passage three times in his epic poem about love?
10. One of the hardest things to overcome in making wise decisions about love is the loneliness of being single. What can we do as individuals, and as friends, to help ourselves through those times and resist the urge to arouse or awaken love that isn't meant to be?

# Zombies R Friends

## **Introduction**

A few years ago, a woman jogging in a park in Boulder, Colorado was attacked and mangled by a mountain lion. While she was in the hospital recovering, a demonstration was held in Boulder with hundreds of people demanding rights for... the mountain lion.

While I understand the need to preserve wild spaces and the wild animals that live within them, this was just another example of a world gone mad. When God began to disappear from the center of people's lives and moral compasses, so did all sane reason and logic. That's why the life of a wild animal is more important than the life of a human. That's why a lot of behaviors once considered taboo are now part of the norm - despite the evidence that they destroy lives.

Zombies R Friends is not intended to be a political statement, nor is it intended to be a comment on any one particular sin. It's certainly not a condemnation of any certain type of individual. (And if I hear anyone out there saying "The zombie of the film represents THESE people, so help me I will sick Clive on you.") Zombies R Friends is a comment on mankind's total, unchecked acceptance of sin - and the serious consequences that await anyone who buys in to this worldly ideal.

## **Everything is permissible...**

The golden rule is broken. The age old edict to "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," is a dangerous statement. These days, there are people who would gladly do unspeakable things to you without batting an eye. And if you dare to try to tell them they're wrong, they'll curse you and tell you to keep your religion to yourself.

The moral standard that was held as absolute, unchangeable, has all but vanished. What's right for you is no longer necessarily what's right for me. There's nothing new about Relativism, the belief that there are no absolutes, but we've now gone a step farther. Everything is permissible EXCEPT telling someone that something is not permissible.

The Apostle Paul wrote that while everything is permissible, not everything is beneficial. This goes double for sin, which never comes without consequences. People have blinded themselves to the heartache and grief that their actions have caused because they simply don't want to deal with it. They want to do what they want, whenever they feel like it, and don't you dare make them feel bad about it.

## **"Zombies are NOT dangerous..."**

The blind refusal to believe that an evil is an evil is at the heart of *Zombies R Friends*. After a young woman and her boyfriend are attacked by a zombie, the town quickly turns from concern for her to concern for the maligned "resurrected American" who only wanted to eat. Only the sheriff is stubborn in his refusal to accept the idea that zombies aren't dangerous, and he's quickly over-powered by the people, thanks in part to his own grandma!

With hundreds watching in TV - including Sylvia, the girl who was attacked - the pro-zombie alliance moves in to welcome the zombie into their community. The celebration is short-lived, however, as the zombie turns on them and slaughters every last one of them.

### **Not so obvious**

If the dangers and consequences of sin were as obvious as a zombie eating someone's brains out, no doubt there would be fewer people dabbling with the sins that have become so prevalent in society. But sin isn't always obvious in its effects, which can take years to manifest themselves. The problems fester beneath the surface and lead those who have been victims to perpetuate the cycle of sin themselves. In the end, many are left broken, wondering how they ever got to the place they did.

*Zombies R Friends* is a wake up call. It's a call to the faithful to stand strong and not let the world redefine what sin is. It's a call to resist temptation in our own lives, and to help others see the potential consequences of their own actions.

### **Questions**

1. When you think about the movie as a parable, what comes to mind? What do you think the zombie represents?
2. Is there a direct connection between sin and the zombie in the film? (The couples who are attacked are both in the act of adultery when the zombie shows up.)
3. Why do you think Janet and the other characters refuse to believe the zombies are evil? What motive do they have in proving Sylvia is wrong?
4. Why do you think so many people are willing to follow Vesta while no one was willing to stand with the sheriff?
5. Have you ever been in Sylvia's position, where it seems like the whole world is against you? What were the circumstances?
6. Sylvia begins to question what she believes near the end. Have you ever felt pressured to question your long-held beliefs?

7. Have you seen the consequences of someone choosing to ignore sin? What happened as a result?

### **Bible Study**

Read Jeremiah 2.

1. In what ways are the pro-zombie characters in the film like the children of Israel?
2. In what ways does this scripture reflect our own culture?
3. What sins do you see treated as "no big deal" in your school or work?
4. How do people react when someone tells them they are wrong?
5. Do you think most Christians today do more to lead people to Christ or push them away? Explain.

Ephesians 4:14-16

6. How do we go from being "infants" in Christ to people who can boldly stand up for him?
7. Do you think most Christians today do a good job of speaking the truth in love? Think about Christian talk radio, especially. How do you think people perceive Christians?
8. Many people today are turned off by Christians because we're just as angry and hateful as the pro-zombie characters in the movie. How can we change people's perceptions of Christ and open them up to hearing the truth?
9. How can we help one another to stand firm, apart from the world, while extending a hand in love to the world around us?

# The House on Zombie Hill

## **Introduction**

As the world became aware of the books and movies of the *Twilight* saga, a serious and heated debate arose among *Twilight* fans and true fans of horror, vampires, and werewolves. Passions rose high on all sides as people who truly believed they were right and the other side was horribly wrong tried to sway their equally passionate foes.

The question being debated: is Edward Cullen truly a vampire?

Cullen fans cited his immortality, his super strength, and his taste for (animal) blood as reasons to say yes. Lever-headed, intelligent, educated horror fans like myself were quick to counter with Edward's immunity to the sun, his sad sack emo looks, and the fact that he "sparkles" as reasons to say, "He may be some sort of monster, but no way he's a vampire."

It's fun to debate pop culture and literature in this sort of context. Every time someone makes a film adaptation of a comic book, true fans of said comic often take issue with the liberties film makers take with their beloved costumes. But when people get into needless arguments over important things, it's not so funny.

We no longer live in a world where people can argue and remain civil. People have forgotten how to agree to disagree. Today people not only disagree, they choose to hate the people who disagree with them.

## **Divided on Doctrine**

Shortly after Christ ascended into Heaven and mankind was charged with carrying the gospel to the world, the devil unleashed the tactic of division and argument as a way to weaken the church of Christ. Often times divisions and breaks have benefited the church as a whole, such as the Protestant reformation. But how many divisions have happened out of genuine divine revelation?

A few years ago, the Righteous Insanity drama team attended a youth conference put on by a certain denomination that will remain nameless. We learned that there were actually three different branches of this denomination, each with their own take (liberal, conservative, and somewhere in between) on interpreting the Bible. We also learned that they not only disagreed with each other, they pretty much hated the other two and considered them heretics.

Many times when a church grows or changes in an extreme manner, splinters will break off from the church. These churches usually have good intentions – wanting to "get back to the Bible" and "set things right." But underneath

these good intentions lie hard feelings and rebellion. Thus the new church develops with a chip on its shoulder. It not only wants to do things right, it wants to prove the other wrong.

### **Common Ground? What's that?**

It is rare you see people on opposite ends of the spectrum in any arena come together. It usually takes a natural disaster or a national emergency to bring everyone together. That typically lasts a few days to a few weeks before they begin fighting and blaming one another for the catastrophe.

Everyone has an agenda. Everyone believes in doing the right thing, but not at the expense of their agenda.

But here's the question for Christians: whose agenda should we make our agenda?

### **Christ's Agenda**

Jesus came to Earth with one agenda: to deliver mankind from sin. When he left, he left us with one agenda: to share that salvation with the world.

That's it.

Pretty simple and straight forward: Go and tell. So why do we spend all our time debating how to baptize, how to take communion, whether to call it communion or the last supper, Creation vs. Evolution, and whether Jesus was a liberal or conservative?

We could wait to sort out these differences out before we turn our attention to the Lord's agenda, but history tells us that's not likely to happen ever. How pleased will the Lord be when we go to see him and he asks about all the opportunities we missed – individually and collectively – because we were too busy trying to win the argument?

### **Questions**

1. How do the two monster "experts" reflect the arguments of Christians from different churches?
2. Given the end of the story, would the men have been better off setting their differences aside in order to save lives?
3. Why do you think the two men chose to argue about the monster rather than team up and save the others?

4. Have you ever had a Christian from another church or denomination criticize your own church/denomination? What did they say about your beliefs?
5. Have you ever criticized a fellow Christian for having beliefs different than your own? What was it about their faith that made you speak up? Why?

### **Bible Study**

Read Matthew 28:16-20

1. Does Jesus say anything about certain people going? Does he give any qualifications for going and telling?
2. Why do you think doctrine is so important that it causes disagreements among believers?
3. What other concerns or issues divide Christians and keep them from serving with one another?
4. If a friend of yours were to get saved, would you think less of them for joining a church that wasn't the same as yours? Are there certain churches you would be okay with? Are there certain churches you would not want them to join?
5. Do you think people have legitimate reason for their arguments, or do some use their differences as an excuse to stay on the sidelines?

Matthew 12:25

6. What impression do we make on unbelievers when they see Christians fighting against Christians?
7. What are the consequences, in and out of the church, when Christians argue and split from other Christians?
8. Are there good reasons for having different denominations?
9. Have you ever served or worshipped in a true non-denominational environment? What was it like worshipping or serving with people who have fundamental differences in their faith?
10. What can you do to be a bridge builder with people from other denominations?

# How to Catch a Zombie

## **Introduction**

There's a frightening tale tucked into the middle of Acts 19 (verses 13-18) about seven men who went around casting out demons in the name of Christ. Why these men were engaged in such activity isn't made very clear, although it is implied they were doing it through somewhat selfish motives. Their career as demon hunters came to an abrupt end when a demon called them out, stating that he knew Christ and Paul, whose name they invoked, but he had no idea who they were. The demon-possessed man beat the seven brothers and sent them fleeing for their lives.

Acts says that many who heard the story of these men gained a new fear and respect for the name of Christ and that many people came into a real relationship with the Lord. It's a lesson Luke felt important enough to include in his chronicle of the early church. But to look around at the church in the 21st century, you would think no one had ever read the story of the seven sons of Sceva. The name of Jesus is used to win votes, grow businesses, curry favor with the powerful, and sell everything from books to fitness videos. The Christian faith is on the out with society in general, but the name of Christ is as profitable as ever to those who wish to gain from it, from the smiling pastor on the hard cover book to the real estate agent who wears his name tag to worship.

Christ wants to be a part of our lives and our identities, but we have turned his plan for our lives around. Instead of allowing us to remake us in his image, we have bent and changed him to suit our own personal desires. But in all fairness, it's not entirely the fault of the masses that this has happened. If we're going to assign blame, we can start right at the top.

## **A Mile Wide, An Inch Deep**

If the church in the 21st century has let believers down in one area, it's in what comes after the baptism. The emphasis on reaching out to non-believers has grown the membership rolls of many churches across the nation, but in too many cases churches are leaving their new people in the baptismal without any clue as to where to go from there. It's a vision that some have described as being "a mile wide and an inch deep."

Baptism was never meant to be an end. Baptism marked the beginning of Christ's ministry on Earth. It symbolizes the death of the old self and the re-

birth of the new. Any new birth leads to new life, and just as a newborn infant needs care and guidance to grow and mature, new believers need the same care and guidance to get them on the right track.

Seeker friendly churches are good at drawing people into the waters of baptism and moving them to a regular seat in the pews. But not all of them have done as good a job of guiding those people to opportunities to go deeper in their faith. They've enabled new believers who use the name of Christ for their own gain because they themselves have modeled such behavior by watering down the gospel for numerical (and let's be honest, monetary) gain.

What's worse, churches that fail to give their new believers a chance to deepen their faith are setting them up for failure when their new-found faith is tested. With no root to their faith, these believers are easily ripped up and cast aside. They vanish from the pews and are soon replaced with new faces, brought in by the seeker-friendly model that has grown the church so quickly.

Thankfully, many churches have recognized the danger in not leading their members to deeper growth. Church leaders in these congregations have taken great strides to turn the tide and lead their people into small group programs and other opportunities that will nurture and grow their faith. But many times these efforts fall short, not for lack of effort on the leader's part, but because of the long time members who have grown a little too fond of their soft, cushy pew seats.

### **Living in the Bubble**

Time was when the churches of this country had open doors and windows. They were engaged with the communities and cultures around them, actively serving and participating in the world at large.

Times have changed, and so have churches. As the world has grown more corrupt and sinful, churches have withdrawn into themselves. The more the world goes "bad," the more the church withdraws, and the more the church withdraws, the worse the world around us gets. Interesting how that works out, isn't it?

Christians have no need to leave their churches any more, and many of them never do. They have their own gyms and recreation facilities, their own restaurants, their own bookstores, their own music, their own business directories, their TV and movies, their own culture and art. Everything they

once enjoyed with the world at large they have in their own sub-culture, their own little bubble of a world.

Sadly, the result of this isolation isn't a stronger family of believers, but a weaker one. Surrounded by Christian things becomes a substitute for immersion in God's word. Christians know the words of their favorite Christian singers and book writers better than the gospel. They have no concept of what life is like outside the church, and they have no way to relate to the people in the world around them. They are utterly incapable of connecting with someone where they are and leading them to Christ.

### **True Believers**

So what does the Lord want from the people of the church? Paul put it best in Philippians 2:5-8 when he pointed to the example of Christ. Jesus came not to seek his own advantage, but ours. He made himself nothing, the humblest of the humble, and went to his death on the cross that we, his children, might have a new life with him.

When you consider he died to give us a chance to know him and spend eternity in his glory, it seems pretty selfish and cheap that we prefer to hide from the world in our bubble, doesn't it?

God needs true believers who seek to know him through Bible study, worship, and prayer. Not only that, he needs servant-hearted believers willing to go out and meet this dark world on its terms, sharing the light of the gospel and opening the eyes of the lost.

If we choose to stay in our cushy pews, secure that our name's on the church roster, can we really call ourselves believers?

### **Questions**

1. How do you think the world perceives Christians in general?
2. In contrast with the last question, how do you think the world believes that Christians should behave?
3. When someone professes to be a Christian and fails to live up to the standard they expect?
4. Is it fair for the world to have such a high standard for Christians? Why or why not?

5. If someone asked you to state what makes you a Christian, what would you tell them?
6. What would you say are the distinguishing characteristics of a true believer?
7. What actions or efforts do you make on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis to cultivate your relationship with God?
8. What opportunities are available to you to further grow your relationship to God? What's keeping you from taking advantage of them, if anything?
9. How hard is it for you to connect with someone who has no knowledge of church, God, or the Bible?
10. What steps can you take to become a person who is better able to connect to others?

# The Lonely Dead

## **About the Movie**

When I first came up with the idea for "The Lonely Dead," there was no intent to find deeper meaning or purpose. I was brainstorming for zombie story ideas, looking for an angle that had never been done before. We've seen plenty of stories about the last human(s) remaining after the apocalypse, with I Am Legend/The Last Man on Earth among the most famous and beloved of those tales. I began to wonder what would come after the aftermath, after the humans were all dead and the zombies had nothing left to eat. What would happen then? What would the last zombie on Earth be like? And if the humans came back, how would he respond?

I decided that it would be funniest if Clive's quiet post-post-apocalyptic world was invaded by a bunch of mindless jerks, the kind that talk too much on airplanes and elevators, all while saying absolutely nothing. These are not people of substance, grateful survivors of the greatest threat mankind has ever known, but vapid, self-centered, and completely annoying. These are not people you cheer for. These are the kind of people who make you cheer for the zombie.

There wasn't really a point to the story that I could see, but I was okay with that. Not every film has to have a message, right? But then, one day, sitting at my desk at work, I had one of those moment we've all had. It was a moment when the only thing I wanted in the world was for all the jerks, cry babies, and self-centered people of the world to please just go away and leave me alone. I was tired of people. I was tired of their whining and crying and complaining. I just wanted to be left alone.

And suddenly, I realized what "The Lonely Dead" was all about.

## **Created in God's Image**

Genesis says that God created man in his own image. Many people take this to mean that humans must somehow physically resemble the Living God, but there's far more to that statement than physical appearance. God gave us his unique ability to love. Like God, we are capable of loving something or someone other than ourselves. It's a gift tied closely to our free will. True love must be freely given, and without free will, we would not be able to love God or other people as He chooses to love us.

When God gave us the ability to love others, He created a need in the first man that could not be met by any other creature He had made. While Adam could love animals and birds and fish as God did, he needed someone with the same capacity for love as himself in order to be complete. Thus in Genesis God says, "It is not good for man to be alone. Let us make him a suitable helper."

Eve was not just the first bride, nor was her creation solely for the purpose of creating the institution of marriage. Eve was a companion, a friend, someone Adam could love who could love him with equal passion. Only after making Eve and creating community was God able to rest.

## **Dealing With Jerks**

Of course the peaceful, utopian community of the Garden of Eden was shattered after Adam and Eve sinned. Their selfish action not only brought sin and death into the world, but conflict and all the things that come with it. There is no one among us who gets along with everyone. We all have our hot buttons, we all have our pet peeves, and we all have those days when we just want people to leave us ALONE!

But beneath our selfish exteriors beats the heart of a people who were made to love one another. We see love expressed all the time, especially in the face of tragedy. When natural disasters strike, people of all races, colors, and creeds come together in unity to love and serve those in need. People who think they have no friends in the world suddenly find themselves surrounded by caring people when personal tragedies strike.

There are few of us who, like Clive the Zombie, are true hermits. Most of us have a circle of friends and family members whom we love and hold close. When someone in that inner circle is hurting, it's easy to show them love and care. But as Christians, God wants us to go further. In fact, Christ commanded us to go further. The Great Commission wasn't just an order to tell the gospel. It was an order to go out and love others as Christ loved us.

I was looking at the web page of a big church in my own community, and I was surprised at the make up of their church staff. They have a dozen or so people on a team dedicated to connecting new members, and another dozen or so dedicated to helping those members grow in the Lord. There was also a ministry team devoted to service outside the church. There were four people on that team.

Let me repeat that for you: Two dozen staff members dedicated to connecting and growing a couple thousand people within the church. Four people dedicated to reaching the hundreds of thousands in the city and the billions in world beyond that city.

Christ went to church every week, but when church was over, he left the building. He spent most of his time in the streets where he healed the sick, reached out to the sinners, and loved the unlovely. How can we call ourselves his followers if we refuse to do the same?

## **About those Church People**

While we're on the subject of Christians, let's talk about one more group of people: the people who are fed up with their fellow believers.

It seems to be a growing trend, doesn't it? Christians become disenchanted with the hypocrisy they see in church. They see a man singing hymns in the front row who lies and swears at work and will do anything to get ahead. They see a girl in the youth group whose chastity ring is a joke in school. They don't like the way a certain pastor feels about a certain issue, and they think the church is headed in the wrong direction. And they just can't believe how anyone can be so naive as to take the Creation story as anything but a metaphor.

So they decide they're better off without church. They decide to pursue God on their own. They are the Lone Rangers of the church family.

I certainly understand the feelings that these people feel. When I see preachers who are little more than stand up comics telling clean jokes, when I see realtors wearing their name tags to worship, I get disgusted too. But here's the cold, hard truth:

If your standard for church is a place where everyone is perfect, no one is a hypocrite, and everyone thinks the way you do, you're demanding a standard in other people that you yourself can never live up to!

There is no perfect church. There are no perfect Christians. So stop trying to find a perfect place. Like it or not, one day we will all be united as one before the throne. No denominations, no divisions, no Lone Rangers. You might as well learn to love, forgive, and get along with your brothers and sisters here on Earth because you're going to be spending a very long time with them in Heaven.

Clive the Zombie was sent to Hell, where he was condemned to spend eternity with the people he hated most. How ironic that there are actually Christians who would consider an eternity with certain fellow believers to be a living Hell.

This is not who we were meant to be. Christ called us to be his family – and not the kind that argues at reunions, but a real family.

## **Questions**

1. Have you ever felt like Clive, where you just wanted to be left alone?
2. What kinds of people or places or situations make you long for solitude?
3. Do you think a little solitude is always bad? Why is it bad to isolate

yourself all the time?

4. The Internet has created an entirely new way to do community. We can now have more "friends" than ever, and through email and instant messages and texts, we can get to know people without ever meeting them face to face. Is this enough, or do people need to have face to face interaction?

5. Not only do we have friend communities online, there are now virtual churches offering virtual worship services. Do you think this is a good idea? What do you think the early church founders would think about such a thing?

### **Bible Study**

Read Genesis 2:18-23

1. Why do you think God said that it was not good for man to be alone?
2. What needs did God fulfill by creating a second person in Eve?

Read Acts 2:42-47

3. What needs were the early church members able to fulfill in one another by coming together?

Read Acts 6:1-7

4. How did the church come together to meet the needs of their community?
5. On a scale of 1 to ten, how well does our church/ group meet the needs of its members?
6. What can we do to improve on that?
7. On a scale of 1 to ten, how well does our church/ group meet the needs of our community?
8. What can we do to improve on that?
9. Thinking back to the people who drive you crazy, the ones you wish would leave or leave you alone. Knowing that you can do nothing to change them, is there something you can change in yourself that will not only allow you to tolerate, but love them?
10. What can you do to open your heart to others whom God has placed in your life, even the "annoying" ones?
11. Do you know of someone who has left the church because they can't stand to be around Christians? What would you say to them to convince

them to come back?

12. How can we become a church that doesn't drive away believers and non-believers, without compromising on what we believe?

# Zombies R Forever

## **Introduction**

True or false: if a person is a great actor or singer or athlete, then any opinions they express on politics, science, religion, or world events should be not only accepted but agreed upon by all.

Put it in black and white like that, it sounds pretty ludicrous, doesn't it? But it happens all the time. If you're a celebrity, you have a platform, and many celebrities choose to use those platforms for good. Some use them to advocate world peace or helping the poor or any number of good causes. Some celebrities use it for things that are immoral, indecent, evil, or just plain bizarre.

If a celebrity says it's true, there's a segment of our society willing to accept their word on blind faith, no matter what that person says. L. Ron Hubbard understood this principal well. When he founded the church of Scientology, he insisted the church focus on converting movie stars. It's no accident that you see so many Scientologists in Hollywood. Hubbard knew that if movie stars were into it, their fans would follow, many of them blindly.

When we put our faith in people, we are setting ourselves up for failure. No matter how intelligent or good a man or woman we idolize may be (and it is a form of idolatry!), they are human. Humans are not only sinful, imperfect beings, they are susceptible to corruption, and nothing corrupts like fame. That's why so many celebrities come out and endorse the most radical, immoral causes they can. That's also why so many teenagers have followed their heroes to the grave by using drugs, abusing alcohol, and otherwise choosing the destructive path of their idols rather than looking to a higher standard!

## **If a famous person told you to jump off a bridge...**

Like its predecessor, "Zombies R Forever" is a portrait of a world that has rejected the truth and embraced a dangerous lie, but "Forever" takes the metaphor a step further when it comes to the cult of celebrity. So much of the pressure we get today to accept sin as a good thing comes from Hollywood and a celebrity culture that looks down on traditional values and religion. The world of show business has completely rejected the Word of God, and anyone who doesn't agree with them is, in their minds, a backward, simple-minded fool.

But just because society has changed its mind about God doesn't mean God or his word has changed. Sin is as harmful today as it has ever been. Sin has consequences, and when sin stops being taboo, those consequences spread like wildfire. The only way to curb those consequences is by adhering to the unchanging, infallible Word of God. But the moment you try and tell someone

this, you are labeled a kook and reminded to keep your religion and morality to yourself.

There is only one man in all of history who was perfect, and he left behind his word as a light for us to navigate the darkness. He alone is worthy of our praise, our adoration. He alone is the one voice we can always trust to guide our steps. When we ignore his teachings and reject the straight and narrow for the road more heavily traveled, we do so at our own peril. Just ask all the people who followed Rodney to their deaths at the hands of Clive the Zombie!

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Celebrities are great spokespeople. They are used by political parties, religious organizations, charities, and of course marketers to sell the public just about everything. Here's a short list of the kinds of things that celebrities have been known to endorse. Raise your hand if you ever bought or bought into any of the following because one of your favorite celebrities told you:

- Shoes
- Clothing (shirts, pants)
- A certain beverage
- A certain snack
- A certain restaurant
- A favorite music artist
- A favorite book
- A religious philosophy
- A political candidate

2. Why do you think so many people listen to what celebrities say about religion and politics?

3. When a celebrity endorses a product or belief, how much peer pressure is there from others to accept the celebrity's beliefs?

4. Is there anything wrong with wearing a certain shoe or shirt that a celebrity endorses? What about a favorite food? Or reading a favorite book?

5. Where do you draw the line when it comes doing everything a hero or idol says?

6. Do you think that a Christian role model is someone you can follow blindly? What pitfalls might there be even in following after a Christian role model?

7. What causes (social, political, etc) have you heard celebrities endorse that may go against what we believe as Christians?

## **Bible Study**

Read 1 Timothy 1:3-11

1. What is Timothy's command in regards to false teachers?
2. What sort of false teachings are most popular in the world today?
3. False teachers are not limited to people outside the church. What sort of false teaching have we heard from "Christian" sources in recent years?
4. What is the best way to arm ourselves against being deceived?
5. How can we keep ourselves and others from being misled by false teachers?

Read Ephesians 4:14-15

God does not want us to be like "infants," who cannot fend for ourselves and are tossed back and forth by the teachings of the world. He wants us to stand strong and speak the truth in love.

6. Are Christians today good at speaking the truth in love?
7. What do you think it means to speak the truth in love?

Read John 3:16

8. Does this verse, or any other in scriptures, leave anyone out in regards to God's love and God's offer of salvation?
9. Why is it important to not just speak the truth, but speak in love?
10. How can we learn to love those who oppose and persecute us for our faith?
11. How can we best prepare to speak the truth to others when needed?