

## *Group Discussion:*

# The Cutting Room Floor

The editor cut the film before he watched the film because he didn't trust that the plot was good, or the intention of the protagonist was good.

Your life is like a film.

1. Can you think of ways in which you've edited the film because you didn't trust that the plot is good? (Are there certain memories that you won't revisit, certain people that you won't forgive, or certain fears that you won't face?)
2. How would your life change if you believed that the plot was good, and that, in every situation, you were being pursued by the lover of your soul?

The Bible is like a film... or perhaps, the screenplay to the film that is your life.

3. Is there anything you'd like to edit out of that screenplay? Why?

Imagine an enemy that hated the plot to your film.

4. Suppose you had an enemy that wanted to keep you from trusting the author of your story, loving your neighbor as yourself and living the life that the author created for you. How would the enemy lie about the plot and the intention of the protagonist in your film? What would the enemy try to edit from your film... or from the Bible?
5. What would he tell you about pain and suffering . . . or something like the cross?

At the end of the short film, "Relentless," the young woman says, "I just need some time," and her husband says, "I know."

6. What's the purpose of time? What's the purpose of our time?
7. Read Hosea 2:14-16, 19-20 and John 12: 30-33 (also, Isaiah 54:5-8; Revelation 21:9-10). What does that tell you about the purpose of time?

Your neighbor's life is like a film.

8. Have you, or your intentions, ever been edited out of your neighbor's film? What did that look like? What did that feel like? (Maybe they stopped listening. Maybe they misinterpreted all of your actions.)
9. Do you suppose that God ever feels the way you feel when you are edited out of someone else's film?

## The Plot Summary – BVBBBBBs

## [Handout: The Plot Summary]

Genesis 1:26, 31-2:1; Isaiah 25:6-8; Isaiah 45:22-23; Isaiah 66:23-24; Ezekiel 16:53-55; Zephaniah 3:8-10; John 12:30-32; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 4:22b-24; Romans 5:18-19; Romans 11:32, 36; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 53-56; Ephesians 1:7-10; Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 5:13; Revelation 21:5-6a; Revelation 22:13 to point out a few...

10. Does it surprise you that some of these verses are in the Bible? Do any of these verses make you uncomfortable?
11. Have others expressed discomfort or caution in regard to these verses?
12. Why might some folks consider these verses dangerous, explain them away, or effectively ban them?

Peter conjectured as to four reasons:

- ✓ We're afraid not to be afraid.
- ✓ We're seduced by the institutions of this world and so run on fear.
- ✓ We lack faith in "God is Salvation" and trust "Me is Salvation."
- ✓ We don't want to forgive like Jesus forgave. We don't like the Plot.

13. Those are all bad reasons to question Scripture, but can you think of some good reasons?

## Reconciling Scripture with Scripture [Handout: Three Kinds of Texts]

There are three classic ways of summing up the plot of Scripture and reconciling scripture with scripture. Which view best summarizes the Plot and reconciles all texts?

- ✓ **Eternal Torment** (By that they mean torment without end). It is the idea that some people will be tormented endlessly (either actively by God or passively through endless subjection to the will of the Devil). This has been the predominant view among Western Christians for the last 1500 years.
- ✓ **Annihilationism** (Sometimes called **Conditionalism**). This has always been a minority view. It is the idea that some will simply be annihilated, perhaps after a time of torment.
- ✓ **Universalism** (By this we mean **Christian Universalism**). It's the belief that God will reconcile all people and creation to himself making peace by the blood of Christ's cross. It appears to have been the predominant view of the early church up through the fifth century.

## How could we best share the Good News?

14. How do you respond to an argument over a doctrinal position?
15. How do you respond to Hope?

1 Peter 3:13-16 *Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...*

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