



INSPIRED BY THE SONG OF SOLOMON

THE SONG

THE SONG

CREW OVERVIEW

Richard Ramsey (Writer and Director)

CAST OVERVIEW

Alan Powell (Jed King)
Ali Faulkner (Rose Jordan King)
Caitlin Nicol-Thomas (Shelby Bale)
Danny Vinson (Shep Jordan)
Aaron Benward (David King)
Kenda Benward (Bethany King)
Jude Ramsey (Ray King)
Gary Jenkins (Stan)

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USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Intended for use after viewing the film, this study guide provides catalysts for biblically based discussion of various themes found in *The Remaining*. The guide features three themes from the movie and is structured in such a way that groups can choose to discuss the entire guide at once or can focus on one or two themes at a time.



FILM OVERVIEW/NOTE TO GROUP

Inspired by the life and writings of Solomon, *The Song* is a music-driven faith drama that follows the romantic and turbulent love story of Jed King (played by Alan Powell) and Rose Jordan (Ali Faulkner). Jed, a struggling musician living in the shadow of his father's legacy, meets Rose, gets married and writes "The Song," which skyrockets him to stardom. As the demands of fame increase, Jed's marriage and faith begin to crumble, and his attraction to free-spirited, seductive Shelby Bale (Caitlin Nicol-Thomas) draws him into a world of destruction. Soon, a near-fatal overdose forces Jed to re-evaluate his life, but is it too late to find healing and forgiveness? Filled with themes of love, meaning and temptation, *The Song* is an honest, gritty portrayal of marriage.

The film opens with a flashback to 1981. David King (Aaron Benward) has it all: wife, children, fame and fortune. When a flirtation with his backup singer, Bethany (Kenda Benward), leads to devastating consequences, David crashes into the harsh reality of the Teacher's words in Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Everything is meaningless" (NIV). Yet,

David finds mercy and redemption. He marries Bethany and has a son, Jed. Though rough around the edges – and with a bit more emphasis on "tough" than "love" – David parents Jed as best he can, teaching his son about construction and music. When David passes away, Jed sets his sights on building a music career.

In 2005, Jed's career is fading fast. He's playing a gig at a Louisville bar when his manager, Stan (Gary Jenkins), drops him from the label. Stan's parting gift is a lead for a gig at a vineyard's harvest festival in nearby Sharon. At the festival, Jed meets the owner's daughter, Rose, a soft-spoken, faithful, fiercely loyal young woman whose biblical approach to dating invites ridicule from her former suitor. Jed defends her honor in an extemporaneous song and wins the favor of the festival crowd, too. At the end of the night, Jed asks Rose to name her favorite Beatles song. She replies with "Turn! Turn! Turn!" (which is actually a Byrds song). Intrigued by sweet Rose, Jed asks her intimidating father, Shep (Danny Vinson), for permission to date his daughter.

THEME ONE: LOVE

Guiding Scripture: 1 John 4:19 (NIV): We love because he first loved us.

Set against a narrative backdrop of verses from Song of Songs, Jed and Rose's courtship blossoms. One evening, Rose prompts Jed to ask God for anything, so he asks for wisdom. He then tells Rose that he wants to build her the chapel she's always wanted. Construction begins, but the two are married before the chapel is completed. On their honeymoon, Jed writes a song – "The Song" – as inspired by his love for Rose and as though the words and lyrics are given to him by God Himself. "The Song," with a repeating chorus that emphasizes the healing power of love, propels Jed to full-blown stardom. Five years later, Jed's life eerily resembles that of his late father: wife, child (Ray, played by Jude Ramsey), fame and fortune.

And then temptation walks through the door in the form of Shelby Bale, Jed's talented and vivacious new opening act. At first, Jed resists her charms, staying faithful to Rose and asking – almost begging – his wife to join him on tour. Rose, worried about her father's health and her son's exposure to the chaos of a tour, declines. The stress of tour life begins to take its toll on Jed and Rose's marriage and intimacy. His life with Rose grows increasingly fragmented, frustrated and dull while time spent with Shelby sparks his artistry and entices him to live in the moment without regret or guilt. During the London leg of the European tour, Jed commits adultery, and his actions coincide with the night Rose frantically needs him most: her father has passed away.

After Shep's funeral, Jed returns to tour life with abandon. His only moral check is that he is incapable of playing Rose's song; his first attempt to do so brings on a panic attack. Jed nurtures his addictions and infidelity, growing ever more distant from Rose. One night, the behind-the-scenes chaos makes its way onstage, and Shelby is kicked off the tour. Desperate to be back with Jed, Shelby shows up at the vineyard and reveals all of Jed's secrets to pregnant Rose, who kicks both of them out, but not before a grossly heated argument in which Jed smashes the windows of the unfinished chapel and spurns Rose. Jed stays with Shelby, numbing his pain with drugs until he overdoses and dreams of his father: David tells his son, "It's not me you're running from."

Jed survives the overdose. At his bedside, Rose lovingly, but firmly, tells Jed goodbye. To get straight with God and his relationships, he checks himself into a healing center. It isn't long before Stan calls on him with an opportunity for "redemption," and Jed reluctantly agrees even though the concert falls on the same night as the vineyard's harvest festival. At the concert, Jed realizes that what he was searching for – what he thought he needed or wanted – was with him all along: he is loved by God and by Rose; what more could he ever need? He quits on the spot. Rushing to the festival, he arrives in time to sing "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and beg Rose to forgive him. She agrees to try. Jed finally finishes the chapel, and finds new purpose: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV).

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Proverbs 17:17 (NIV): A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.
- Ecclesiastes 9:9 (NLT): Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil.
- Song of Songs 2:2 (NIV): Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women.
- Song of Songs 4:7 (NLT): You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way.
- Luke 6:37 (NLT): "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven."
- John 3:16 (NIV): For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- Romans 12:9 (NLT): Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (NLT): Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.
- 1 Corinthians 16:14 (NIV): Do everything in love.
- Galatians 5:13 (NIV): You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.
- Ephesians 4:32 (NIV): Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.



- James 1:5 (NLT): If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.
- 1 Peter 4:8 (NIV): Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.
- 1 John 4:7 (NLT): Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.
- 1 John 4:19 (NIV): We love because he first loved us.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Harvest Festival (00:09:05–00:13:04, Chapter 2)
- Love and “The Song” (00:22:04–00:30:02, Chapter 5)
- Home Life/The Vineyard (00:47:56–00:54:12, Chapter 10)
- Recovery (01:29:55–01:33:01, Chapter 19)
- Redemption (01:43:55–01:51:08, Chapter 21)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you begin this theme discussion, look at the Guiding Scripture for this section: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19 NIV). God is love. Without Him, love has no foundation, meaning or purpose. Take a moment to consider and/or discuss the following questions: How would you define love? Have you experienced the love of God? If yes, what happened and how did it impact you? How has knowing God brought significance to your life and relationships?

At its heart, *The Song* is a love story. The film follows the journey of Jed and Rose’s relationship, from the first innocently awkward meeting to the excitement and passion of newlywed bliss to the realities of everyday married life to the despair of infidelity to the beauty of forgiveness and reconciliation. Their story demonstrates the many facets of love, and mirrors the many emotions and experiences that we encounter as God’s perfect love pursues us.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Harvest Festival (00:09:05–00:13:04, Chapter 2)*

Love and “The Song” (00:22:04–00:30:02, Chapter 5)

*Feel free to pause after the first scene to answer the discussion questions for that segment.

- What do we learn about Jed and Rose in the first scene (Harvest Festival)? How does this scene foreshadow some of the joys and difficulties they will face in their relationship?
- Based on this scene and what you can recall from the rest of the movie, how does faith play a role in Jed and Rose’s relationship as well as in their individual lives?
- How does the second scene (Love and “The Song”) show the importance of having a partner who believes in you, in your abilities and in your God-given talents?
- What happens – there are several possible answers – after Jed asks God for wisdom? Why is it important to ask God for wisdom (read James 1:5; see Scriptures Referenced)?
- One lyric in “The Song” says, “There’s a plan for us, a hand divine.” What does this verse (and the rest of the song) suggest about God’s part in Jed and Rose’s marriage?

Read Song of Songs 2:2 and 4:7, and John 3:16 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do the verses from Song of Songs suggest about love and marriage? In addition to physical attributes (e.g., beauty), what qualities are important in a marital relationship?
- What does John 3:16 tell us about love? What do you think of the very definition of love – that Jesus would willingly lay down His life to redeem each and every one of us?





Over the course of five years, “The Song” propels Jed to stardom, making him a full-time touring musician with legions of fans and followers. While the fame and fortune are exciting, and while Rose wants to support Jed as he realizes a lifelong dream, the fact remains that Jed spends his time in two very different worlds. On tour, he is in the center of an artistic world without boundary; at home, he’s a husband and a father, and people depend on him to fulfill those roles.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Home Life/The Vineyard (00:47:56–00:54:12, Chapter 10)

- Even though Jed and Rose are in a fairly unique situation (his fame), how do their struggles reflect difficulties that are common to many marriages and relationships?
- In what ways is the love between Jed and Rose being tested and stretched? Have you experienced a similar season of testing? What do you do when love is frustrating?
- When Ray is watering the grapes, what does Rose tell him? How does her explanation impact Jed as well? What does her metaphor suggest about love?
- How does this scene highlight the importance of humility, compassion and patience in love and marriage? What qualities do you think are important to a successful marriage?

Read Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; and 1 John 4:7 (see Scriptures Referenced)

- Take some time to think about all of the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Is there a particular trait that stands out to you? How might you begin to practice that trait?

- Romans 12:9 and 1 John 4:7 call for us to love without limits. Do these verses change the way you view love? Why or why not? What does it mean to “hold tight to what is good”?

Jed’s lifestyle choices lead to a near-fatal overdose. When he wakes, Rose is at his side, but only to say goodbye. Rose loves her husband deeply, but she cannot continue with a man who consistently chooses destruction and chaos over submission to God. Jed checks himself into a healing center and begins a soul-searching process that eventually leads him back to love.

SCENES TO REVIEW

*Recovery (01:29:55–01:33:01, Chapter 19)**

Redemption (01:43:55–01:51:08, Chapter 21)

*Feel free to pause after the first scene to answer the discussion questions for that segment.

- In the first scene (Recovery), Rose reminds Jed that they had nothing when they were first married, yet they had everything. Explain what she means.
- Rose admits she made mistakes and would change them if she could. After all the hurt that Jed has caused Rose, how does her confession demonstrate great humility?
- At the harvest festival in the second scene (Redemption), Rose nearly refuses to take Jed back. What does Jed say and do to prove his love for her? Why are his efforts effective?
- During the film, Jed builds Rose a chapel. How is the chapel a fitting metaphor for Jed and Rose’s love and marriage? What storms does the chapel weather? What joys?

Read Ecclesiastes 9:9, Luke 6:37 and Galatians 5:13 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do you think of Ecclesiastes 9:9? What does Solomon mean by “meaningless days” and how does this verse esteem marriage by calling a wife a “reward” for “earthly toil”?
- What do Luke 6:37 and Galatians 5:13 say about the intricacies of love, the power of love to damage and the power of love to heal?
- The chorus of “The Song” states, “Love is the power that heals.” How does this message relate to the verses mentioned here (Ecclesiastes 9:9, Luke 6:37 and Galatians 5:13)?

As you conclude this theme discussion, read Proverbs 17:17; 1 Corinthians 16:14; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 4:8; and revisit the Guiding Scripture for this theme: 1 John 4:19 (see Scriptures Referenced). What do these verses tell us about love? About the gospel? Why do several verses that discuss love also discuss forgiving sinful behavior? The world is imperfect; humans are imperfect; our relationships are imperfect. But, we can go directly to the source of love Himself, asking Him to renew our hearts and minds with a loving attitude for others.

THEME TWO: MEANING

Guiding Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NIV): Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 90:12 (NLT): Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.
- Psalm 138:8 (NLT): The LORD will work out his plans for my life – for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever. Don’t abandon me, for you made me.



- Proverbs 16:9 (NIV): In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.
- Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NLT): History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new.
- Ecclesiastes 2:11 (NIV): Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.
- Ecclesiastes 2:23 (NIV): All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.
- Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NIV): Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.
- Jeremiah 1:5 (NLT): “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”
- Micah 6:8 (NIV): He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
- Matthew 6:33 (NIV): “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
- Romans 12:2 (NLT): Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.
- Ephesians 5:15–17 (NIV): Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the LORD’s will is.
- Colossians 3:15 (NIV): Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.
- Colossians 3:23–24 (NLT): Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the LORD rather than for people. Remember that the LORD will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV): Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Flashback (00:00:00–00:05:31, Chapter 1)
- Refusing No Pleasure (01:10:14–01:12:29, Chapter 15)
- Overdose (01:27:06–01:29:50, Chapter 18)
- Final Performance (01:39:03–01:43:54, Chapter 20)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

We tend to spin our wheels in the lifelong pursuit of meaning and purpose, but the Bible is quite clear on the subject: “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 NIV). Yet, even with such obvious instruction, the battle against the flesh is real, and our sinful nature often succeeds in convincing us to seek meaning outside of God and His will.

This is a struggle to which Jed King can certainly relate. He spends most of the film seeking meaning in the temporary trappings and fleeting pleasures of the world. Jed’s father, David, chose a similar path of self-fulfillment and met with great sorrow and destruction. Even though David eventually found redemption and mercy – a wonderful thing, to be sure – his legacy demonstrates the power, positive and/or negative, that one generation holds over another.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Flashback (00:00:00–00:05:31, Chapter 1)

- Based on this scene and some limited information throughout the rest of the film, how would you describe David King? What are the different aspects of his legacy?
- Name all the things – good or bad – in which David seeks meaning. How do his choices impact his life and the lives of those around him?

Jed narrates Ecclesiastes 1:9: “History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new” (NIV).

- Why is this verse particularly relevant to David and Jed? How does the verse speak to the power of generational sin? How does it encourage us to find our meaning in God alone?
- Can you relate to David King? Have you experienced the

pain of worldly meaning and fulfillment? Have you also experienced the beauty of God’s mercy and plan for your life?

Read Psalm 90:12, Proverbs 16:9 and Ecclesiastes 2:11 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do you think of the messages found in Psalm 90:12 and Ecclesiastes 2:11? How do these verses convey the importance of finding meaning in God?
- Ecclesiastes 2:11 mentions the phrase, “a chasing after the wind,” when referring to toil and achievement. What does this phrase mean?
- Do you know the truth of Proverbs 16:9? Can you point to an example in which your plans were transformed by God’s plans? How does this verse relate to David King?

At the beginning of the film, Jed is unsure of his future as a musician, but he seems certain of his purpose: to make music that draws people to God. As his fame increases, the world calls to Jed, promising to fulfill every urge and need. The temptation grows too strong, and Jed turns to sex (in this case, adultery), drugs, alcohol, music ... whatever will provide temporary pleasure and numb the pain of being separated from true meaning and fulfillment – relationship with God.

SCENES TO REVIEW

*Refusing No Pleasure (01:10:14–01:12:29, Chapter 15)**

Overdose (01:27:06–01:29:50, Chapter 18)

- * Feel free to pause after the first scene to answer the discussion questions for that segment.
- What are your thoughts on the first scene (Refusing No Pleasure)? Is Jed finding fulfillment and meaning? Why or why not? Point to specific examples if possible.
- What do you think of the way the narration from Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs aligns with Jed’s story? In what ways does Jed’s life parallel Solomon’s life?



- In the second scene (Overdose), Jed's narration includes Ecclesiastes 2:23 (see Scriptures Referenced). Why is his mind unable to rest even at night? Why is he burdened?
- At the end of the second scene, David tells his son, "Stop running ... It's not me you're running from." What does he mean? Who is Jed avoiding and why?

Read Psalm 138:8, Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 5:15–17 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Psalm 138:8 contains amazing promises. What are the promises, and how does this verse demonstrate that the Creator has meaning and purpose for the created?
- Why does Romans 12:2 caution us against the "customs of this world"? According to this verse, what happens when we let God transform the way we think?
- Ephesians 5:15–17 distinguishes between the unwise (foolish) and wise (those with understanding). What are the differences between the two?

After checking into rehab, Jed's long, weary road of searching for self-fulfillment comes to an end. He is presented with an opportunity for a second chance (Stan calls it redemption; Jed calls it exploitation) at the American Roots Music Awards. During the awards show, Jed performs a song about the meaninglessness of it all, and he is suddenly struck by the beauty of real meaning.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Final Performance (01:39:03–01:43:54, Chapter 20)

- What is the relationship between second chances (redemption) and meaning? In Jed's case, why is redemption nearly crucial to his understanding of meaning?
- How does this performance compare and contrast to Jed's performances throughout the film? What do you notice about his appearance, demeanor and countenance?

Jed says, "When you're always under bright lights, you can't see the stars. You forget things. You forget that somebody put the stars there ... that they love you enough to die for you. And it's that kind of love that makes songs worth singing and life worth living. I had that love. I threw it away. Because I am a fool."

- How does Jed's speech signify the intense change that he has undergone through the course of the film? Is there a specific part of his speech that stands out to you? Why?
- How do Jed's words remind us that God is essential? What happens when we seek personal glory and reject God's place at the center of our lives?
- Why is it tempting – and sometimes easy – to forget that "somebody put the stars there"? What is it about our nature and this world that has the potential to cloud our thoughts?

Read Jeremiah 1:5, Micah 6:8 and Matthew 6:33 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What does Jeremiah 1:5 tell us about God's meaning and purpose for our lives? Even though we might forget Him, how does this verse reassure us that He does not forget us?
- According to Micah 6:8 and Matthew 6:33, what does the LORD require of us? What should we do in any situation? How do these verses inspire finding meaning in God?

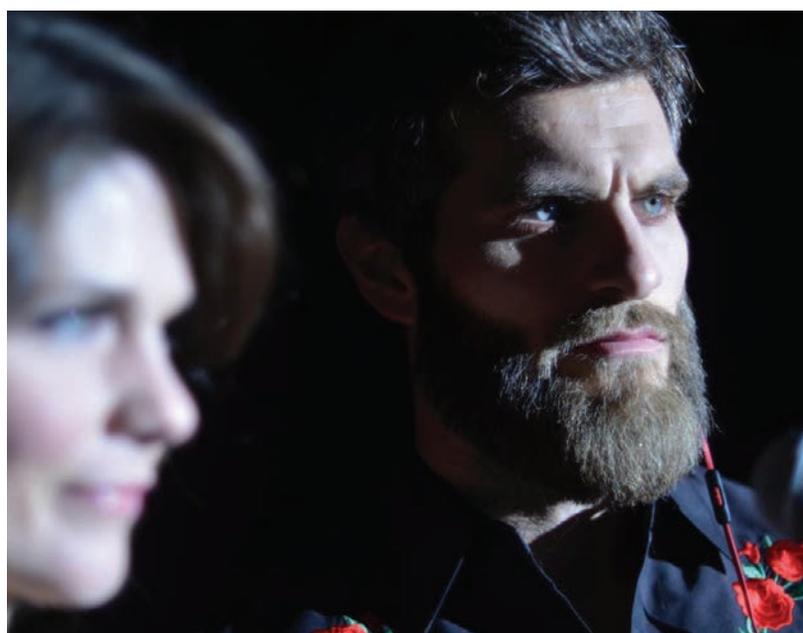
Before you conclude this theme discussion, take time to read some Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:13–14; Colossians 3:15, 23–24; and 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (see Scriptures Referenced). How do these verses inspire your faith and your search for significance and meaning? The Bible is a love letter to us from God. His word is filled with all kinds of encouragement. He desires that we seek Him for meaning, fulfillment and purpose. He longs to be our Father and steadfast companion on this journey. Whenever you doubt life's ultimate meaning, turn to the One who loves you unconditionally and longs to lavish you with incomparable love.

THEME THREE: TEMPTATION

Guiding Scripture: Matthew 26:41 (NIV): "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Genesis 4:7 (NIV): "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."
- Proverbs 6:32 (NIV): But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself.
- Proverbs 12:15 (NIV): The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.



- Matthew 5:28 (NIV): “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
- Matthew 26:41 (NIV): “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
- Galatians 6:7–8 (NIV): Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.
- Ephesians 6:11 (NIV): Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.
- Hebrews 2:18 (NIV): Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
- James 1:12–16 (NLT): God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters.
- James 4:7 (NLT): So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV): Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- 1 John 2:16–17 (NLT): And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.
- 1 John 4:4 (NIV): You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Tattoos (00:58:39–01:06:39, Chapter 12)
- Panic Attack (01:06:39–01:10:13, Chapter 14)
- Two Worlds Collide (01:12:35–01:16:03, Chapter 15)
- Meltdown (01:16:04–01:18:45, Chapter 16)
- An Uninvited Guest (01:18:47–01:27:05, Chapter 16)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Guiding Scripture for this theme on temptation is Matthew 26:41: “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (NIV). Jesus’ words to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane serve as a caution for all believers. Temptation surrounds us, preying on our desires and perceived needs. However, if we walk with the LORD, we can rely on His strength to overcome temptation and find freedom from the bondage that easily ensnares.

Jed King starts well. Even as his fame increases, he longs to be a dedicated husband and father. But, as the strain of tour life interferes with his marriage and intimacy needs, he begins to surrender to the temptation that accompanies his lifestyle. He makes the decision to cross from temptation to adultery when he allows Shelby Bale entrance to a place reserved for his bride.

SCENES TO REVIEW

*Tattoos (00:58:39–01:06:39, Chapter 12)**

Panic Attack (01:06:39–01:10:13, Chapter 14)

*Feel free to pause after the first scene to answer the discussion questions for that segment

In the first scene (Tattoos), Shelby says, “Feeling regret and guilt is like punching yourself in the face. Sure, it hurts, but it’s self-inflicted, so don’t do it.” She also adds, “Do what you want and don’t feel guilty about it.”

- Based on her comments, what is Shelby’s attitude toward temptation? Is she fully to blame for Jed’s decision to pursue her, or does he share the blame? Why or why not?
 - In your opinion, at what point does Jed embrace temptation and commit sin? What could he have done to stifle or dissuade Shelby’s seductive advances?
 - Ultimately, Jed is responsible for his behavior. But, is it possible that temptation would have been lessened if Jed and Rose’s marital intimacy were healthier? Why or why not?
 - How does the news of Rose’s father’s death highlight the seriousness and inappropriateness of Jed’s decision to give way to temptation and to pursue Shelby?
 - How have Jed’s actions produced a fracture in his relationship with Rose? How have his actions created a longing (and further temptation) for Shelby?
 - In the second scene (Panic Attack), what happens as a consequence of Jed’s behavior? Why does he feel unable to play Rose’s song? What has changed?
 - How does Shelby further entice Jed? What new temptations does she offer when she tells him that she can help him let go of all the rules and live life to its fullest?
- Read Genesis 4:7, Proverbs 6:32 and Matthew 5:28 (see Scriptures Referenced).
- In Genesis 4:7, God tells Cain that sin is crouching at his door and that he must “rule over it.” How can we rule over sin? Can we conquer it in our own strength? Why or why not?
 - What does Proverbs 6:32 say about adultery? According to Jesus in Matthew 5:28, when is adultery actually committed? Why is adultery a matter of the heart?

Once we succumb to initial temptation, it becomes increasingly difficult to withstand further temptation. Soon, our sinful nature craves more of what we experienced. Larger amounts. Bigger experiences. Consumption. Indulgence. For Jed, temptation devolves into addiction and addiction devolves into vice. By the time he next sees Rose at a concert in Cincinnati, he has become a different person – a person

so completely sold out to his sin that he can't even stand his wife's touch without taking painkillers to squelch the guilt that threatens to overtake him.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Two Worlds Collide (01:12:35–01:16:03, Chapter 15)

Meltdown (01:16:04–01:18:45, Chapter 16)

- In the first scene (Two Worlds Collide), put yourself in Rose's place. How would you feel if your husband acted the way Jed does? What thoughts would cross your mind?
- How does the news – and visual confirmation – of Rose's pregnancy affect Jed and Shelby?
- How has Jed's inability to resist temptation caused destruction in his life? How has his struggle with sin impacted the lives of those around him?
- What do these scenes demonstrate about temptation's power to blur the lines of what is right and what is wrong? How does temptation create and promote entitlement in people?

Read Proverbs 12:15, Galatians 6:7–8 and Hebrews 2:18 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How do Proverbs 12:15 and Galatians 6:7–8 relate to the theme discussion of temptation and the danger of crossing from temptation to sin?
- Why is it important to our faith that Jesus Himself experienced suffering and temptation (Hebrews 2:18)? How does His example help fortify our reliance upon Him?

The consequences of Jed's sinful behavior and destructive choices push his marriage to its breaking point. During dinner one evening, Shelby shows up at Jed and Rose's house, and divulges – or perhaps confirms – Rose's suspicions about Jed's infidelity. In the extremely heated argument that follows, Jed crushes Rose willingly and completely, showing the cruel reality of a man who has flirted with temptation and entered into a life of unchecked sin.

SCENE TO REVIEW

An Uninvited Guest (01:18:47–01:27:05, Chapter 16)

- At the beginning of the scene, Rose can sense that something is wrong. Why doesn't Jed confess to his behavior? What prevents him from fully checking out of his home life?
- How is Shelby's sudden appearance at the house a perfect example of the way that unconfessed sin has the potential to rear its head when we least expect it?
- What is your reaction to Jed and Rose's argument? Do you feel compassion for Rose, for Jed or for both? Are you frustrated with either or both of them? If so, why?
- Think back through the film and the scope of the story to see how temptation created a disastrous mess. How does the film serve as a caution to resist temptation at all costs?

Read Ephesians 6:11; James 4:7; and 1 John 2:16–17 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How do Ephesians 6:11 and James 4:7 equip and encourage us to take a stand against evil and to resist the devil? What does the armor of God help us to do?
- What does 1 John 2:16–17 say about the temporary pleasures of this world ("everything that people crave")? Why is it important to keep an eternal perspective when tempted?

Take some time to look at James 1:12–16; 1 Peter 5:8; and 1 John 4:4 (see Scriptures Referenced). Think about these verses in light of the theme of temptation – pay close attention to the bountiful wisdom found in James 1:12–16 regarding this topic. What temptation have you wrestled with lately? Have you been able to resist, or have you indulged? Consider spending some time in prayer, asking the LORD to be your strength and your guide as you encounter temptations that seem to know where you are most vulnerable. Be encouraged. God is good.

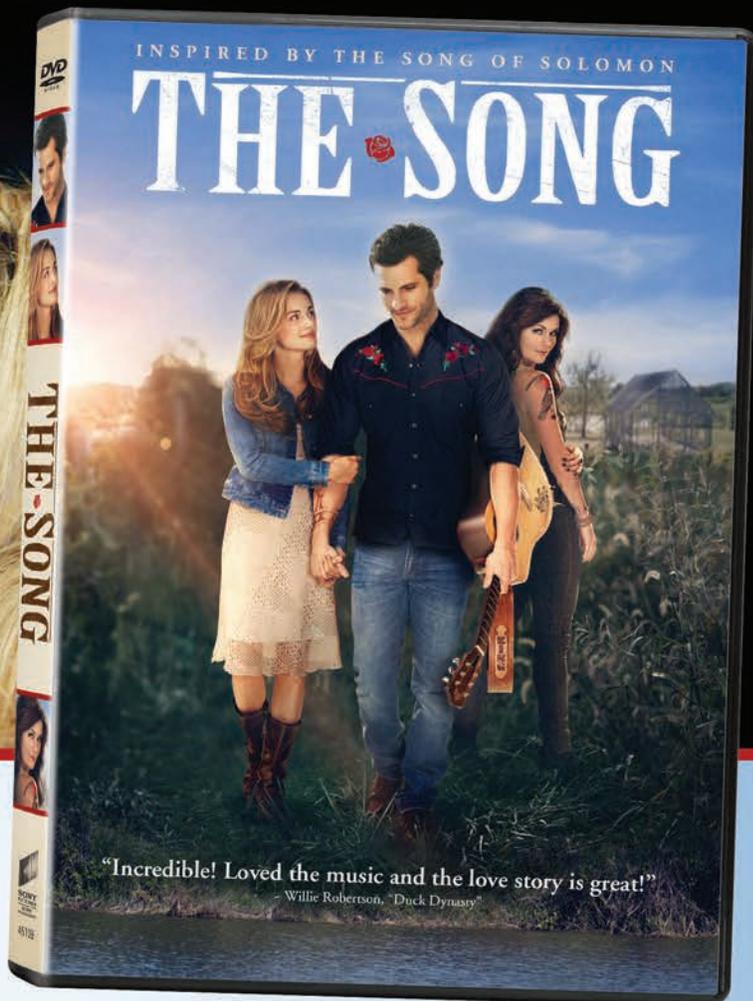
FINAL THOUGHTS

- How do the film's soundtrack and score play a role in the story? Do you recall a specific song or lyric that caught your ear? How do the lyrics help to tell the overall story?
- What do you think of Rose's commitment to her father and her desire to make family a priority? How does Jed's career complicate the family structure and stability?
- Discuss the significance of the vineyard as the film's setting.
- What are your thoughts on the way the film handles the topic of marriage and the various difficulties that many married couples face?
- What other themes do you see in the film? Which scenes or lines of dialogue support and point to these additional themes?



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