

FROM THE AUTHOR OF "FAITH LIKE POTATOES"



ANGUS BUCHAN'S ORDINARY PEOPLE

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS

DISCUSSION
GUIDE



ONE LIFE'S JOURNEY CAN CHANGE THOUSANDS

ANGUS BUCHAN'S ORDINARY PEOPLE

2012

CREW OVERVIEW

F.C. Hamman (Director; Writer: screenplay)

Piet Smit (Writer: screenplay)

CAST OVERVIEW

Angus Buchan (himself)

Lucky Koza (Lucky Nzimande)

Anton Dekker (John Peters)

Jaco Muller (Andre Cloete)

Robin Smith (Herman)

Hannes Muller (Ben)

Michelle Douglas (Marlene)

David James (Danny Boy)

Jacques Bessenger (Gavin)

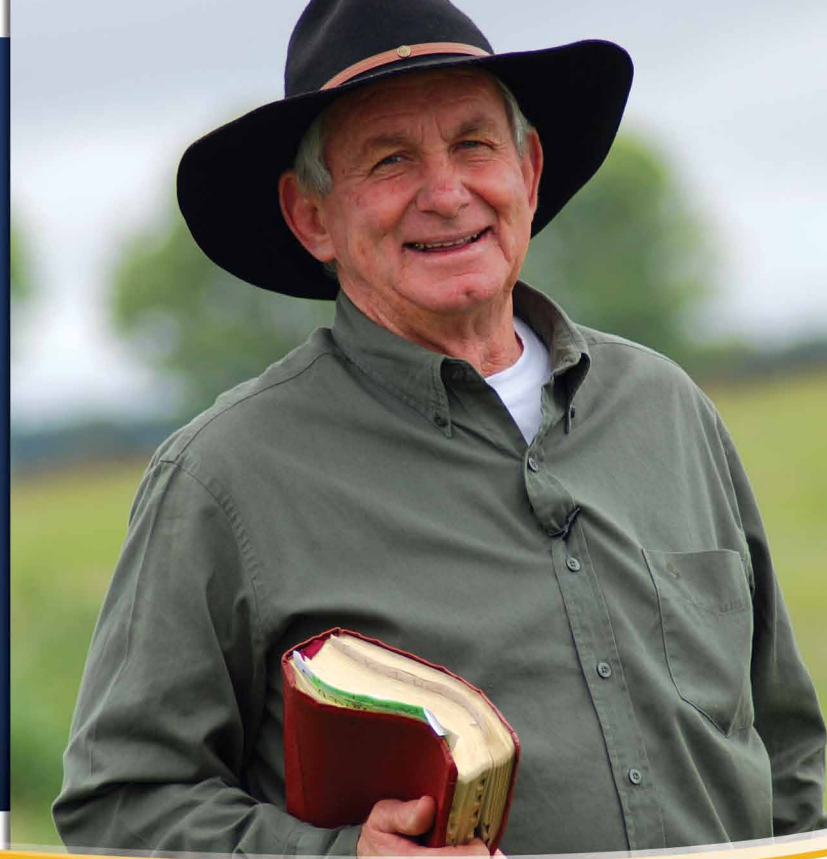
Benito van Leeuwen (Melvin)

Norman Anstey (James Cloete)

Kate Normington (Ellen Cloete)

Charles Bouguenon (Xavier)

Nomhle Nkonyeni (Maria)



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 *Angus Buchan's Ordinary People*. 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.

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FILM OVERVIEW/NOTE TO GROUP

Based on actual events, *Angus Buchan's Ordinary People* tells the stories of three men whose life circumstances lead each to the 2010 Mighty Men Conference at Shalom Farm in Greytown, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The conference, organized and hosted by Angus Buchan (played by himself, and whose inspiring faith journey was depicted in the 2006 biopic *Faith Like Potatoes*), encourages men to seek God wholeheartedly, and the three main characters begin to do just that – by receiving His mercy, accepting His refuge and understanding His love.

The film begins with an overview of Angus' early life – from outcast schoolboy to soul-searching globetrotter – and segues to his calling as a preaching farmer. Over the course of 30 years, Angus' audience grows from a few stalks of maize to tens of thousands of men, and he narrates, "This is the story of how God can change people's lives just because an ordinary guy like me decided to listen to what God's call was on my life." Angus then

briefly introduces three men, and the film flashes back to the start of each man's journey toward the 2010 conference.

LUCKY

As a child, Lucky Nzimande (Lucky Koza) began stealing to supplement his family's meals. Over the years, Lucky turned to full-time crime. One night, after a failed carjacking, Lucky becomes the prisoner of the vehicle's owner, Herman (Robin Smith), a former policeman en route to the Mighty Men Conference. Herman, deeply shaken that the loaded gun he leveled at Lucky miraculously misfired, gives Lucky the choice between consequence and mercy. After an escape met with frustration, a defeated Lucky accepts Herman and Ben's (Herman's friend, played by Hannes Muller) offer of help. Together, the three face Lucky's troubled past and look toward a future immersed in God's mercy and the meaning of life that satisfies "the big hunger."

JOHN

John Peters (Anton Dekker) is an alcoholic whose addiction is steadily overtaking his life. When he meets Marlene (Michelle Douglas), though, he chooses love over alcohol, and the newly blended family enjoys a time of peace and happiness. But, the joy is short-lived, as John and Marlene soon face a series of difficulties – the tragic death of John's teenage son, Melvin (Benito van Leeuwen); an unexpected financial crisis due to Marlene's brother-in-law (Danny Boy, played by David James); and an incurable lung disease from John's years of working as an auto mechanic. Burdened beyond hope, John starts drinking again, but he also reaches out to God, and his honest, heartfelt prayer is the first step for John in taking refuge in his sovereign Lord.

ANDRE

Consumed with his fast-living, hard-partying lifestyle, young adult Andre Cloete (Jaco Muller) has little regard for his concerned mother, Ellen (Kate Normington), and his religious,

emotionally distant father, James (Norman Anstey). Despite his parents' varied efforts – from awkward lectures to strained prayers to desperate warnings – Andre's behavior escalates, resulting in a car accident that leaves Andre fighting for his life in the hospital.



As James sits by his son's unconscious body, he asks for Andre's forgiveness, knowing that his harsh parenting style did little to encourage affection in their relationship. When Andre recovers, he continues in his reckless ways until God's love begins to repair the relationship between father and son.

(Warning – spoilers mentioned below.)

Having suffered a heart attack during the 2009 conference, Angus understands the importance of living each moment for God, and he delivers this message to the men at the 2010 gathering. With transformed hearts and minds, the men leave the conference to pursue God's call on their lives. Lucky finds his calling in sharing God's love with the people of Gugulethu in the Cape Flats; Andre and his father begin to restore their relationship, spending time together and demonstrating love for each other; and John's ending is bittersweet: he is killed in a motorcycle accident on his way home from the conference, but he had just given his heart and life to God. As Angus says of himself at the beginning of the film, so it is true for these men: This is the story of three ordinary men encountering an extraordinary God and listening to His call on their lives.

THEME ONE: LUCKY'S STORY: GOD IS MERCIFUL

GUIDING SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 4:16 (NLT): "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 34:18 (NIV): "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
- Psalm 86:5 (NLT): "O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help."
- Psalm 145:9 (NIV): "The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made."
- Matthew 5:7 (NIV): "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."
- Luke 6:36 (NIV): "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

- Romans 3:23–24 (NIV): "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."
- Ephesians 2:4–5 (NLT): "But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)"
- Colossians 3:13 (NLT): "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."
- Hebrews 4:16 (NLT): "So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."
- James 2:12–13 (NIV): "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment."
- 1 Peter 1:3–4 (NIV): "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade."

DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- "Today, you must choose." (00:18:54–00:22:36, Chapter 4)
- Lucky's Past (00:50:31–00:55:16, Chapter 11)
- Accepting Help (01:25:31–01:27:19, Chapter 18)
- Visiting Home (01:28:44–01:31:08, Chapter 18)
- Gugulethu (01:45:47–01:48:00, Chapter 22)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you begin this theme discussion, take some time to think about what mercy means to you. How would you define it? How



have you experienced it? Does Ephesians 2:4–5 (see Scriptures Referenced) support, inform or expand your understanding of mercy? Reflect on the ultimate act of mercy – that of God giving us (the undeserving) life through Christ's death and resurrection.

As it does in all of our lives, mercy plays an important role in Lucky's story. After the failed carjacking, Lucky finds himself at the mercy of a complete stranger – a stranger in possession of a gun, no less. Without any knowledge as to Herman's final intentions, Lucky must endure whatever his captor has planned for him, even when Herman drives to a secluded, wooded area.

SCENE TO REVIEW

“Today, you must choose.” (00:18:54–00:22:36, Chapter 4)

- What does Herman disclose about himself as he speaks to Lucky? What do you learn of his past? Why would he choose to divulge such personal information?
- How is the gospel presented? (Even though taking people captive isn’t encouraged as a witnessing strategy, how is this unique circumstance a tangible representation of mercy?)
- Herman transitions from repeating, “Just like you,” to saying, “Just like us.” What does this solidarity suggest about Herman’s own need for mercy and forgiveness?
- Throughout the film (and starting with this scene), Herman tells Lucky that he must choose. What is the choice that Lucky must make? What does it have to do with mercy?

Take a look at Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36; and Romans 3:23–24 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do Matthew 5:7 and Luke 6:36 say about God’s character and the way he values and models mercy? Why is being merciful such an esteemed attribute?
- According to Romans 3:23–24, who needs mercy and why? Have you experienced God’s mercy? If so, how did you come to an understanding of your need for mercy?

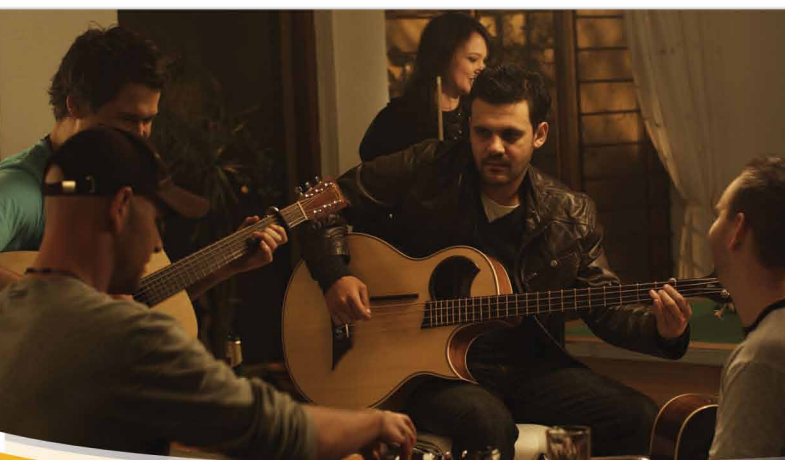
At one point during the road trip, Herman asks Lucky why he turned to crime. Despite Ben’s cynical attitude that Lucky would never offer something so personal, Lucky proceeds to share his life story – a story full of poverty, tragedy and desperation. In the presence of such raw emotion and brutal honesty, Herman and Ben are speechless, clearly affected by Lucky’s outpouring.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Lucky’s Past (00:50:31–00:55:16, Chapter 11)

- Do you think Lucky knew mercy as a child? Is it possible his experiences prevented him from understanding the concept of mercy? Why or why not?
- How did Lucky’s grandmother influence him? What was their relationship like, as best you can tell from Lucky’s flashbacks and memories?

Gogo told her grandson, “Lucky, the big hunger is the hunger for the meaning of life. If you don’t find that, you’ll stay hungry forever.”



- How do Gogo’s words demonstrate how well she knew her grandson? Has Lucky found the meaning of life? Use references from the film to support your answer either way.
- Some people will relate to Lucky’s poverty and some will never understand what it means to be materially poor. But, how are we all spiritually destitute without God?

Read Psalm 34:18 and 86:5 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How does Psalm 34:18 display God’s mercy to the “brokenhearted” and those who are “crushed in spirit”? How does this verse apply to Lucky and his painful past?
- According to Psalm 86:5, what is God ready to give if we ask for help? Does this verse relate to Herman’s repeated insistence that Lucky must choose? Why or why not?

The morning following Lucky’s escape, Herman and Ben find their new acquaintance walking along the side of the road. After convincing Lucky to rejoin them – this time in freedom and without any handcuffs – the three men make their way to Lucky’s village. Ben (who narrates this scene) is impacted by how little the people have, and vows to help at least one person: Lucky.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Accepting Help (01:25:31–01:27:19, Chapter 18)

Visiting Home (01:28:44–01:31:08, Chapter 18)

Gugulethu (01:45:47–01:48:00, Chapter 22)

- Why is Lucky disinclined to accept Herman and Ben’s offer to give him a lift to the village? What does his reluctance suggest about his relationship (or lack thereof) with mercy?
- How does the visit to Lucky’s village affect Ben? How does the experience encourage him to remember the concepts of mercy and compassion?
- At what point does Lucky begin to choose mercy? How does his decision to accept God’s mercy change his life? What does he endeavor to do for the people of Gugulethu?
- How about you? Can you relate to Lucky’s journey toward mercy? Or perhaps you relate to Herman’s or Ben’s experience along the way – where do you see yourself in this story?

Read Colossians 3:13 and Hebrews 4:16 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How does Colossians 3:13 serve as a reminder to extend mercy and forgiveness to others? What does it mean to “make allowance for each other’s faults”?
- According to Hebrews 4:16, how should we approach “the throne of our gracious God” and what will we find or receive when we do so?

As this theme discussion comes to a close, read Psalm 145:9; James 2:12–13; and 1 Peter 1:3–4 (see Scriptures Referenced). What do these verses say about mercy? How do they demonstrate God’s merciful nature? It isn’t easy to extend mercy and compassion when we’ve been wronged, but God Himself is our role model, graciously sparing us from life apart from Him should we choose to accept his help and embrace his mercy. Spend some time reflecting on the moments in your life when you’ve needed mercy, and then consider how you might be in a position to extend mercy – no matter the “amount,” so to speak – to someone in need of your compassion.

THEME TWO: JOHN’S STORY: GOD IS OUR REFUGE

GUIDING SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 41:10 (NIV): “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT): “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”
- 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV): “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”



SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 16:8 (NIV): “I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”
- Psalm 23:4 (NIV): “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”
- Psalm 46:1–3 (NIV): “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”
- Psalm 147:3 (NIV): “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”
- Proverbs 19:21 (NIV): “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”
- Isaiah 12:2 (NIV): “Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.”
- Isaiah 41:10 (NIV): “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
- Isaiah 55:9 (NIV): “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
- John 16:22 (NLT): “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”
- Romans 8:28 (NIV): “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
- Romans 8:38–39 (NLT): “And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can

DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- **Melvin’s Death** (00:46:39–00:50:27, Chapter 10)
- **Surety and Spray Painters’ Lungs** (00:59:44–01:06:18, Chapter 13)
- **Marlene’s Request** (01:21:34–01:23:06, Chapter 17)
- **John’s Legacy** (01:38:33–01:44:23, Chapter 20)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When you think of a refuge or sanctuary you value, what comes to mind? Do you have a close family member or trusted friend to whom you turn during distressing times? Perhaps you have a favorite place in which you find peace. Or perhaps your refuge is the Lord. As Psalm 46:1–3 (see Scriptures Referenced) tells us, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

For John Peters, finding refuge means indulging in a vice – drinking, to be specific. Though John can be fun-loving and outgoing, his addiction has strained many of his relationships. But, when he meets and marries Marlene, John transitions away from the bottle and toward partnership with his wife. In grieving his young son’s death, though, John returns to a familiar, impersonal refuge.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Melvin’s Death (00:46:39–00:50:27, Chapter 10)

- How would you describe John? Do his personality and mentality prevent him from acknowledging God? Especially as a source of comfort or as a refuge in difficulty?
- What is John’s reaction to Melvin’s death at the site of the accident? How does Marlene offer comfort to her devastated, grieving husband?
- In whom or what does John find refuge during and just after



this tragedy? Where does Marlene turn for comfort? How do these characters' reactions differ?

- Put yourself in John's shoes for a moment. What might you be thinking and feeling as you process Melvin's death? How do you make sense, if at all, of such a horrible event?

Read John 16:22; Romans 8:38–39; and 1 Peter 5:7 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What message is found in both John 16:22 and 1 Peter 5:7? In the passage from John, what does it mean for us that Jesus has "overcome the world"?
- How does Romans 8:38–39 convey the depth of love that God has for us? How might the knowledge of God's tremendous love encourage us during life's difficult moments?

In the midst of grieving for Melvin, John receives bad news in two forms. First, Danny Boy has defaulted on his loan, placing John in an immediate financial crisis as the remaining responsible party (surety). Second, a trip to the doctor's reveals that John has an incurable lung disease. Weary with these new and frustrating burdens, John finally asks God for help with a few things.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Surety and Spray Painters' Lungs (00:59:44–01:06:18, Chapter 13)

- How does Danny Boy's irresponsibility impact John and Marlene's relationship? What do you think of John's declaration that he never wants to see his brother-in-law again?
- How do Melvin's death and the new financial strain affect the way John interacts with and treats his remaining son, Gavin (played by Jacques Bessenger)?
- What is John's immediate reaction to the doctor's findings? Describe what he might be thinking as he sits in the exam room and contemplates the recent rash of bad news.
- What compels John to finally reach out to God in prayer? How does this scene represent a shift in John's willingness to take refuge in God rather than in alcohol?

Read Psalm 16:8 and Isaiah 12:2 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How does Psalm 16:8 pertain to the difficulties we face in life?

What are some practical ways that we can "keep [our] eyes always on the Lord"?

- What does Isaiah 12:2 say about God being our refuge? Why does the verse repeat the following phrase: "The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense"?

Marlene, sensing her husband needs relief from all of the recent suffering, asks him to consider attending the Mighty Men Conference. John agrees, and finds that Angus' message at the gathering is exactly what he needed to hear – that men need to be right with God to be right with anything else. As John leaves the conference, he also establishes a brand-new legacy of faith.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Marlene's Request (01:21:34–01:23:06, Chapter 17)

John's Legacy (01:38:33–01:44:23, Chapter 20)

As Marlene speaks with John, she mentions Psalm 147:3: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." She's seen her husband suffer tremendously since Melvin's death.

- What does Marlene want for John? What evidence in the film suggests that Marlene greatly desires for her husband to take refuge in and find peace with God?
- How does the character of Marlene highlight the importance of Christian community?
- Just prior to the fatal accident, how would you describe John's face and demeanor? What has changed in his life since he first left for the Mighty Men Conference?
- Describe what John sees as he transitions from this life to the next. How do these images and moments represent the joy of his recently transformed heart?
- Even though John's death is sudden and tragic, how does his funeral not only offer comfort to his grieving family, but also hope to those who may not know God?

Take a moment to read Psalm 23:4 and 2 Timothy 1:7 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Psalm 23:4 is often associated with funerals. In this case, how is the verse applicable to what John was thinking and

feeling as he reveled in his new relationship with God?

- Based on the freedom – the true, liberating freedom of God – that John experienced just before his death, do you believe he'd found a genuine refuge in God?
- During his sermon, Angus mentions 2 Timothy 1:7, and he challenges the men to be strong in the Lord. How does this verse apply to John's final days?

As you conclude this theme discussion, read Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 41:10; Isaiah 55:9; and Romans 8:28 (see Scriptures Referenced). Several of these verses speak to the sovereignty of God. How does trusting in God's sovereignty make it easier for us to take refuge in Him? There are devastating moments in this life that often make us question how "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (part of Romans 8:28). The good news is that we don't have to understand everything at once; God is faithful to lead His children through the journey so lovingly and carefully placed before each one. Are you struggling to trust God as your refuge? Consider taking your fears, concerns and questions before Him in prayer. He is listening.

THEME THREE: ANDRE'S STORY: GOD IS LOVING

GUIDING SCRIPTURE: 1 John 4:9–11 (NIV): "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 86:15 (NIV): "But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."
- Proverbs 23:24 (NIV): "The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him."
- Proverbs 25:28 (NLT): "A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls."
- Proverbs 27:17 (NIV): "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."
- Matthew 6:33 (NIV): "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
- Romans 13:8 (NLT): "Owe nothing to anyone – except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law."
- 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (NIV): "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."
- Galatians 5:13 (NLT): "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."

- Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT): "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"
- Ephesians 6:4 (NIV): "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."
- Colossians 3:21 (NIV): "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."
- 1 Peter 4:8 (NLT): "Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins."
- 1 John 4:9–11 (NIV): "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."



DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- Caught (00:16:01–00:18:53, Chapter 4)
- The Lecture (00:22:37–00:26:26, Chapter 5)
- Searching (00:55:17–00:59:43, Chapter 12)
- The Accident (01:06:19–01:12:43, Chapter 14)
- Reconciliation (01:44:24–01:45:46, Chapter 22)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Who are the people in your life that most point you to Jesus Christ? What are some common characteristics among the people you just thought of or mentioned? Do they model the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23; see Scriptures Referenced)? Notice that the first fruit listed is love. Without Spirit-filled love and affection – and willingness to show them – a Christian's walk can seem harsh or legalistic, even if that person has the best intentions when trying to relate to others.

One of the glaring omissions in Andre's life is affection – the tangible, overt kind that makes a child feel secure and accepted. Certainly, Andre's parents love him, but their time is consumed with failed expectations, behavioral issues and frantic concern, and the stress of the situation has pushed affection to the background, where it occasionally resurfaces with a mixed message.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Caught (00:16:01–00:18:53, Chapter 4)

The Lecture (00:22:37–00:26:26, Chapter 5)

- In the first scene, Andre's father catches him smoking. What does the parents' subsequent conversation reveal about their relationship with Andre and with each other?
- Andre is usually unconcerned about his parents' reactions, but he seems unnerved that his "conservative" father caught him smoking. What motivates or prompts Andre's fear?
- During the second scene, what are your thoughts as you watch James deliver a harsh lecture and then pair it with an awkward prayer? What is Andre's response?
- How might James have handled the situation differently? It's obvious that he cares deeply for Andre's well-being, but what prevents him from showing that affection?

Read Proverbs 23:24; Ephesians 6:4; and Colossians 3:21 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Compare and contrast the message in Proverbs 23:24 with James and Andre's relationship. How does a father raise a "righteous child" and "wise son"?
- What do Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21 say about parenting? Notice that these verses specifically address fathers; why might that be?

At a friend's house one night, Xavier (played by Charles Bouguenon) teases Andre about the number of car accidents he's had recently. While everyone laughs, Andre leaves the party, frustrated at his friends, his family and himself. What follows is a series of soul-searching scenes that indicate a growing displeasure with his lifestyle, even though he isn't willing to surrender it.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Searching (00:55:17–00:59:43, Chapter 12)

- Maria (Nomhle Nkonyeni) shares Matthew 6:33 (see Scriptures Referenced) with Andre. What does Jesus say in this passage and how does it apply to Andre's situation?
- In what way does Maria show genuine affection for Andre? How does Andre's interaction with Maria differ from his interactions with his parents?
- Even though Andre is rebelling, in part, against his father's continual preaching, at what point is Andre responsible for his own behavior and decisions? Does this scene indicate that he might be growing aware of his culpability in his chaotic and frustrating home life?
- What does this montage reveal about Andre's inner turmoil and struggle? What events have prompted him to start taking stock of his life, even as he continues to party?
- Why does Andre push himself physically (e.g., running, weight-lifting, etc.)? What is he looking for as he practically throws his body toward exhaustion?

Read Proverbs 25:28 and Galatians 5:13 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- In your own words, elaborate on the meaning of Proverbs 25:28.
- How is Galatians 5:13 a good reminder to be cautious in how we exercise our Christian liberties and freedom? How are we commanded to use our freedom (as described at the end of the verse)?

As sometimes happens with unchecked and extreme behavior, an accident brings everything to a standstill and infuses those affected with new perspective. For Andre, a night of partying leads to a nearly fatal car crash and sends him to the hospital with life-threatening wounds. James, showing a father's vulnerability for the first time in the film, prays over his son's body, asking forgiveness for not showing Andre love. Fortunately, the two have a chance for reconciliation.





SCENES TO REVIEW

The Accident (01:06:19–01:12:43, Chapter 14)
Reconciliation (01:44:24–01:45:46, Chapter 22)

- What do you think of the way the beginning of the scene cuts between Andre racing dangerously in his car and James praying earnestly for his son?
- At the hospital, James asks his son, “Forgive me for not showing you the love that I should have.” When do you think James realized that he wasn’t showing Andre love?

As the two fly a remote-controlled airplane, James narrates, “What this boy needed was my acceptance, not expectations. Acceptance ... from me, his father.”

- What does James mean by this? How might James’ new approach to fathering (a loving, accepting one) encourage Andre to develop in his relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Conversely, how did his previous approach (a harsher, judgmental one) stifle his son’s interest in knowing God? How does our understanding of an earthly father – in any capacity, whether absent, present or other – influence and shape our posture toward God?

Take some time to look at Proverbs 27:17 and 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- How is Proverbs 27:17 especially applicable to Andre’s story? How is it applicable to father and son relationships in general?
- 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 is a well-known passage about the characteristics of love. What can you learn from this passage and begin to apply to your own life?

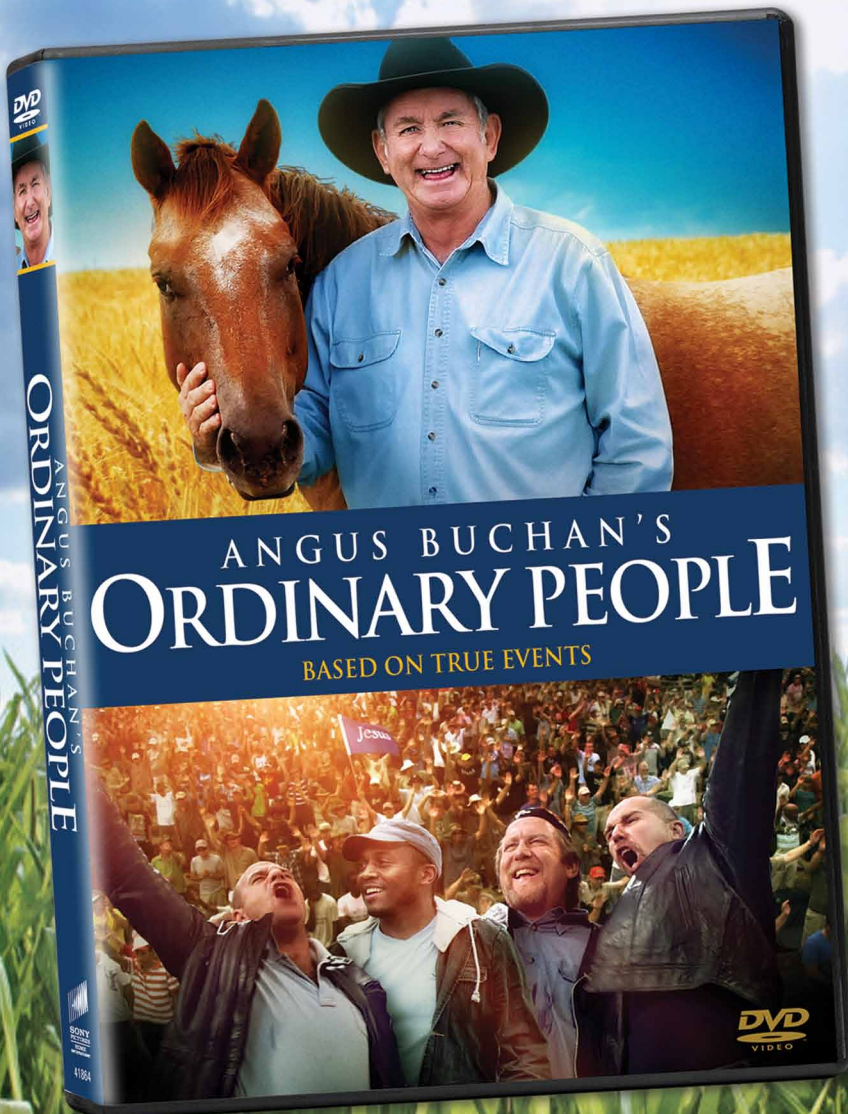
In closing this theme discussion, read Psalm 86:15; Romans 13:8; 1 Peter 4:8; and 1 John 4:9–11 (see Scriptures Referenced). At the beginning of this theme, you were asked to think of

people who point you to Christ and what kind of characteristics those people embody. After examining Andre’s story, let’s take that question in a different direction: Can you think of anyone with whom your relationship would be improved if you determined to cover that person with love? One of the closing passages is 1 John 4:9–11, which tells us that God showed love by sending Jesus Christ and finishes with, “since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Angus Buchan doesn’t appear in the film often, but he plays an important role in setting the story and introducing the three main characters. From the brief overview of his life and the section concerning his medical emergency, what do you learn about Angus?
- Which character in the film do you most identify with? Why?
- Music plays an important role in the film, whether it’s a medium for the characters (Andre’s friends) or a soundtrack for a specific scene. What do you think of the music?
- What additional themes do you see in the film? Can you refer to scenes or specific lines of dialogue to support your answer(s)?
- At the end of the movie, Lucky says that God saw a great king in a shepherd boy and a mighty man for Christ in a potato farmer. Then he asks, “What does He see in you?”

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