



WALT DISNEY
PICTURES PRESENTS
**AMERICA'S
HEART
&
SOUL**

IN THEATRES STARTING JULY 2ND



LEADER'S GUIDE
DISCUSSION GUIDE, BIBLE STUDY, WORKSHEET

www.americasheartandsoul.com

AMERICA'S HEART & SOUL

INTRODUCTION

You won't read about them in the newspaper. They don't show up on TV. They're not famous, and they don't draw attention to themselves. But they are the heart and soul of what makes our country great.

These are the extraordinary stories of ordinary people. They are our everyday heroes.

America's Heart & Soul is a cinematic journey that discovers more than thirty real-life Americans. From the coal mines of Appalachia to the top of Mt. Everest. From the first woman to win the US Aerobatics competition to a father-son team running the Boston marathon. From a bike messenger zipping through traffic to a dance troop that performs on cliff faces, *America's Heart & Soul* is a movie that presents compelling stories of fascinating people. Their stories are full of drama, passion, emotion and conviction.

If this year has shown us one thing, we as a body of believers have discovered that a movie can be a tremendous opportunity for education, evangelism and outreach. People of faith like going to the movies! You can use this film to provide insights into Biblical truth for others and help them grow in their faith.

Three key issues around which you may want to orchestrate your lesson are:

- **Freedom** – The people in the film repeatedly refer to freedom, and our nation is proud of our many freedoms. The Scriptures talk a lot about liberty. Jesus said, *"If the Son has set you free, you'll be free indeed!"*
- **Passion** – The movie shows people who have at least one thing in common: they are pursuing their passion. They are examples of the truth that life is most fulfilling when we are doing what God has designed us to do.
- **Fame** – "Sic transit gloria mundi," or "all fame is fleeting," goes the proverb. Emily Dickinson wrote, "Fame is a fickle food upon a shifting plate." It seems that celebrity is sometimes held as the highest manifestation of our cultural values, but Jesus commands us to be careful about what we treasure.



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BEFORE THE MOVIE SHOWS

No matter what sort of "group" you have – your entire church, a youth group, a Bible study class, a collection of friends, or even just your family – you should try to create some "buzz" for attending *America's Heart & Soul*. Even in these media-rich days, it's still rare that any group attends a movie with the idea of discussing the film afterward. Be sure to remind everyone that *America's Heart & Soul* is a beautifully photographed film with an uplifting message about Americans.

- **Poster** – Go to the *America's Heart & Soul* website (www.americasheartandsoul.com) and download the movie poster. Print the poster, and put it up for one week with no fanfare. Just put it on a wall and let your group or family speculate what it's for. Then, make a "We're Going!" placard and put it on the poster. Finally, add "when and where" information.



- **Ecards** – The movie's website – www.americasheartandsoul.com – is your best friend. Not only can you send a link to the trailer via email, but you can also download gorgeous shots from the movie to send in an email to your group as an "Ecard." (Just click on "Spread the Word" and then choose "Ecards.") Use this website, and the many fine resources it provides, to your best advantage. Show the trailer to your group and encourage them to bring their friends.



- **Tickets** – Once again, the website is a great resource. You can check for your local theaters and show times and purchase tickets online. You can also buy tickets in advance by calling **1-888-DISNEY6**. These tickets will be mailed to you.

AFTER SEEING THE MOVIE

Carefully plan for the hour after the movie. People will be most willing to talk about the film just after seeing it.

GO SOMEPLACE

After attending the film, arrange a discussion in a place where there will be few distractions. A multi-purpose room at your church or even your own living room would be fine, but conversation at the quiet end of a restaurant near to the theater might also be appreciated.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Five-Minute Fan Clubs – Have every person in the group name his or her favorite person from the film. Keep track of the favorites. When everyone has had a turn, check your list of favorites, and divide the group into Five-Minute Fan Clubs to share briefly within that fan club why they chose that particular person. (If your group is small enough to allow it, each student could explain his or her choice to the entire group.) This way, each student can be involved, thinking, and talking. Have a volunteer from two or three of the largest fan clubs report their findings to the full group.



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Here's a list of the real-life "cast" of the movie:

Roudy Roudebush – Horse Wrangler	Paul Stone – Explosive Artist
Marc and Ann Savoy – Cajun Musicians	Patty Wagstaff – Aerobatic Pilot
Mosie Burks – Gospel Singer	Amelia Rudolph – Bandaloop Cliff Dancers
Minnie Yancy – Rug Weaver	Dan Klennart – Junk Artist
George Woodard – Dairy Farmer	Charles Jimmie, Sr. – Tlingit Indian Elder
Ben Cohen – Founder, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream	David Krakauer – Klezmer Clarinetist
Ed Holt – Wine Grower	The Vasquez Family – Salsa Dancers
Ace Barnes and James Tuppin – Oil Well Firefighters	Michael Bennet – Olympic Boxer
Weirton Steelworkers – Employee-Owners	Erik Weihenmayer – Blind Mountain Climber
Frank and Dave Pino – Rock Musicians	Reverend Cecil Williams – Pastor
John "Yac" Yacobellis – Bike Messenger	Rick and Dick Hoyt – Boston Marathon Runners
James and Troy Andrews – Jazz Musicians	

1. FREEDOM

In many ways, this film is about freedom. From the quotations separating sections of the film to the words of many of those interviewed, the notion of liberty appears again and again.

FREEDOM: the condition of being free;
the power to act or speak or think
without externally imposed restraints.

REVIEW MOVIE CHARACTERS

Ask your students to help you remember the various quotes about freedom from the movie, and generate a discussion around the characters and quotes. Here is a partial listing:

- **Roudy Roudebush**, Horse Wrangler and a recovered alcoholic: "Sobriety is interesting work. I quit the alcohol and got more freedom. Cherish your freedom."
- **Donald Sweetland**, Art Car Designer: "How many people experience pure freedom? People enjoy what I do. What could be more satisfying?"
- **Patty Wagstaff**, Aerobatic Pilot: "I always felt like I was a leaf floating in the wind, even though it's the most freedom you can ever have, it's also the most structured. Because in aerobatic flying, one mistake could be your last."
- **Amelia Rudolph**, Bandaloop Cliff Dancer: "Once I'm anchored in and understand the system, I'm free."
- **Charles Jimmie, Sr.**, Tlingit Elder: "Seeing an injured eagle flying free again is like watching a great spirit of freedom taking flight."
- **Dick Hoyt**, Marathon Runner: "The special bond developed between Rick and I when he was first born and we started doing everything together. Rick is the athlete and I'm just out there loaning him my arms and my legs so that he can compete like everybody else. I am the body, Rick is the heart. Mobility is freedom."



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- **Movie "Section" Quotes:**

- » "The future belongs to those who are free to believe in their dreams."
- » "We are a free people: free to succeed, or to fail."
- » "Freedom lives in the soul, and keeps passion alive."

Hand out the worksheet and have someone read **James 1:23-25**:

If you hear the message and don't obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. But you must never stop looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don't just hear and forget.

- **Freedom has structure.** James says that the perfect law gives freedom. Laws provide for us a structure within which we can act without harming the rest of the community and allows us to act in ways that benefit those around us. Unstructured freedom, on the other hand, can easily become chaos. Structured freedom adds richness and variety to our community, and helps us as individuals to achieve our potential.

- **Freedom is internal.** Which restraints hold us back more – the external restraints put upon us, or the internal restraints we put upon ourselves? Many people interviewed for this film exercise a great inner freedom, indulging their passions, whether it be creating art, playing music, or running a marathon. They are adding to the lives of those around them.

- **Freedom requires attention.** Notice that James tells us to "never stop looking" at what sets us free: God's perfect law. If our attention is diverted, we could lose our freedom. "We are a free people: free to succeed, or to fail" is one of the "section quotes" from the film. Freedom means that our futures are not predestined; we have the real possibility of failure, but also the genuine potential to succeed. **John 8:36** says, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." We must not forget what we have seen when we look into the perfect Law of Christ. If we keep this in mind, we will be blessed, and bless others.

Have the participants take a moment to write out three ways they might creatively express freedom this week.



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2. PASSION

Some of the people in this film do some odd things, but doing makes them feel very fulfilled because they are pursuing their *passion*, not their happiness. When we chase happiness, we never catch it. But a pursuit of a passion is a lifelong endeavor that brings joy.

PASSION: a keen interest in a particular subject or activity.

REVIEW THE MOVIE CHARACTERS

Ask your group to help you remember the various quotes about "passion" from the movie, and generate discussion around the characters and quotes. Here is a partial listing:

- **Minnie Yancey**, Rug Weaver: "When most people pray, they're talking to God. When I'm praying, I'm separating the wheat from the chaff in my thoughts."
- **James Andrews**, Jazz Musician: "Trombone Shorty is my little brother and I help him be responsible for himself through music. The most important thing in my life is passing music on to the children, that's how I overcome adversity."
- **Mark Savoy**, Cajun Musician, who compares the unique people in America to a great Cajun gumbo: "It's not just one kind of food or one kind of music or one kind of landscape. It's the wonderful diversity of this country that makes this place so great."
- **Ed Holt**, Wine Grower: "I love growing grapes. You can't learn how to grow grapes in 25 or 30 years. It takes a lifetime. I hope to die out here working on the vineyard. That's my retirement plan."
- **Dan Klennert**, Junk Artist: "I found love and self respect and everything else in art. It saved me!"

Eric Weihenmayer, Blind mountain climber: "For me, all of the great things that have ever come to me have come through reaching out. I think life is just sort of an ongoing process of reaching out into the darkness when you don't really know what you're going to find".

Have someone read **Luke 10:27**:

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.

Let someone else look up and read **Colossians 3:22-24**:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.



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- **Our first passion is God.** Note the four ways we are to love God: heart, soul, strength, and mind. The “heart” is the seat of our emotions. Our “soul” is our spiritual and creative core. We love God with our mind when we discipline our thoughts, information, and imagination. And when we roll up our sleeves to do our best effort, we love God with our strength. This one verse pretty much summarizes “passion” – and the Bible clearly states that our overriding passion must be for God.
- **We should give maximum effort.** Most of the activities in our daily lives are mundane instead of passionate. Washing the dishes and making our bed aren’t the most exciting activities in the world. However, the way we do commonplace tasks says a lot about the state of our heart. In the film the hat maker, chair maker, junk artist, and others take such pride in what they do that the results show in the quality of their work. If we do things with dreary, halfhearted effort, we gain nothing – but when we work with enthusiasm and maximum effort, the Bible says we achieve a spiritual “inheritance” as a reward!



Have the group take a moment to name some possible “passions” that they can pursue, and how those things can serve Jesus.

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3. FAME

When we think about the number of people it takes to keep a star looking “starlike” — manager, publicist, personal assistant, personal trainer, body guard, make-up, hair, and wardrobe stylist — it becomes clear that a celebrity sets an impossibly high standard for us in our daily lives. In addition, it’s easy to become disillusioned when those we have put on a pedestal reveal their failures and foibles. This film shows an in-depth look at people who embody cultural values like independence, pride in their work, dedication, discipline and creativity.

Taking a good look at them can remind us that to treasure fashion and wealth

can lead us away from more valuable but less obvious character qualities.

CELEBRITY: a person held up for public recognition and praise.

REVIEW THE MOVIE CHARACTERS:

- **Mosie Burks**, Gospel Singer who clearly enjoys singing for Jesus, which puts her in the spotlight: “My mother was a good mother. I was a good mother. I *am* a good mother.”
- **George Woodard**, Dairy Farmer: “There’s nothing more important than watching your children grow up. Learn new things every day.”

- **Larry Fuente**, Art Car Designer: “If I had a dime for every time I saw people smile, I’d be wealthy.”

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- **Michael Bennett**, Olympic Boxer: "A host of other men that I met along my path took time out to invest in me. And at the same time, I am trying to give back."
- **Frank Pino**, Rock Musician: "Our dream is to be successful enough to where we can bring a gold or platinum record home and give it to our mom and dad and say, 'We did it, and all this time didn't go to waste. Just pretend we were in music college for ten years.'"
- **Charles Jimmie, Sr.**, Tlingit Indian Elder: "My father is an eagle. My mother is a raven. My father is respected very, very much in the clan. That is why an eagle is so dear to me."

Have someone read **Matthew 6:19-21**:

Don't store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

- **Fame can be misleading.** We celebrate the people and things that we value. If we value image over substance and fame over heroism, or if we treasure those things that can be stolen or destroyed, our treasures cannot last. If we are living vicariously through celebrities, holding them up for public praise and emulation, when they fall from their pedestals we can be devastated.
- **Fame deserves insight.** We risk giving our hearts to something unworthy. We should celebrate something deeper, something more lasting because it is rooted in character.
- **Celebrate and treasure that which is worthy.** Jesus said that the one who wishes to become great should become a servant. There aren't any celebrities in this film, living primarily in the flash of the camera, but there are real heroes in this film, living in the trajectory of the vineyard. Some of them have some warts, but they give you their truth, even when it doesn't flatter them. They treasure the truth, cherish freedom and give their hearts to the things that last, to the things that are really important.

Provide a few moments for your group to identify and write down a quiet hero in their life, and a person who's a celebrity *and also* a hero.

CONCLUSION

Conclude with, "The kind of people who are the heart and soul of America may be quiet heroes, but they give us an idea of the liberty and insight we need." Ask if anyone would



like to share any prayer requests they might have as they begin to integrate these ideas into their daily lives. Be sure to close in prayer.

Study by **Allen Corben**

Guide created in conjunction with:

- **Reel Spirituality**
at Fuller Theological Seminary
www.reelspirituality.com
- **Movie Mission**
www.movieimission.com

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WORKSHEET

My favorite person in the film was _____

FREEDOM JAMES 1:23-25

Freedom comes with _____

Freedom is _____

Freedom requires _____

Write out three ways that you can express freedom in your life this week:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PASSION LUKE 10:27; COLOSSIANS 3:22-24

Our first passion is _____

We should give _____

Name some possible "passions" that you can pursue, and how those things can serve Jesus:

PASSION

SERVE JESUS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FAME MATTHEW 6:19-21

Do not store up _____

Instead, store up _____

Your _____ will always be where your _____ is.

Celebrity can be _____

Celebrity deserves _____

Celebrate and treasure _____

Someone who's a quiet hero in my life: _____

Someone who's a celebrity *and also* a hero: _____

