

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday September 1, 2019. "At the Movies: Stand by Me"

I. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

Sunday was our fifth, and final in our **"At the Movies"** series and a deep dive into the inner workings of relationships. Over the past weeks we've looked at; why relationships are important, how to look past the exterior of people and find the inner worth, fighting the tendency of being overly self-reliant and dealing with conflict. Those messages, and a devotional guide, are available on our website or through our app. There is practical wisdom, and scriptures, that can help in all of your relationships.

III Sunday.

We finished up our series Sunday with the classic movie **"Stand by Me"**, which is a remake of a Stephen King short story called, **"The Body"**. Kristen was open about the nature of this movie, and know we're not endorsing it, but it's a great example of relationships and the importance of vulnerability, opening up our 'real' selves in establishing and growing authentic relationships that mean something. So, we'll start with some opening questions.

How do you define vulnerability? What does it mean to you?

In how you understand vulnerability, why would this be important in a relationship?

What are some things that make being vulnerable difficult in a relationship?

Kristen used several quotes from a famous author and speaker about the topic of vulnerability, Brene Brown. This is how Brene describes and talks about what being vulnerable means.

She defines vulnerability as: **"Uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure." "Able to be wounded."**

Then Brene goes onto say: **"Vulnerability is the "birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity."**

"Vulnerability is based on mutuality and requires boundaries and trust."

It is "about sharing our feelings and our experiences with people who have earned the right to hear them."

As you can see from these quotes, being vulnerable in relationships can be scary, and it involves risk. Being open, real, and transparent, is taking the chance that the other person may not respond in a way that validates or respects your sharing. Now there is oversharing, which happens on social

media all the time, but this is simply the opening of one's self up, whether it works or not, to invest in a relationship with another person.

And without taking the chance of genuine, authentic vulnerability, there can be no genuine connection nor deep joy that can come from true relationships.

Just engage these quotes and wrestle a bit with what they mean to you.

What do they say to you about the necessity of vulnerability for meaningful relationships?

Where do you or could you have a little bit more difficulty in being vulnerable?

Kristen referred to several passages in which Paul, in his letters to a church, shared some personal struggles he was experiencing showing his vulnerability in how he related to the people of that church. Read two of these passages, and then consider how they deal with the importance of vulnerability in relationships.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10. 2 Corinthians 13:3-4.

What jumped out to you about these passages?

How did you see vulnerability addressed in them?

Kristen went on to say that vulnerability is important because.

1. Non-vulnerable versions of ourselves are only projections of a person but not really us. If you're fronting, (yes we used that word), then that person isn't in a relationship with the real you.
2. Trust has to be built one marble at a time. How can a person trust you if you aren't willing to be vulnerable with them?
3. We need people we can be our true selves with if we want to grow, and if we want the real connection we're wired up to need.

Each of these truths talks about the dangers, and loss of significance within the relationship if we don't reveal our real selves within our relationships. Again, these are based on the type and nature of those relationships. But even the most casual of our relationships still will be richer and more meaningful if we can practice true openness, vulnerability within those relationships.

III Challenge.

Let me close with the same blessing Kristen shared at the conclusion of her message.

"May we have friends like the ones we did when we were 12, when it was easier to be vulnerable".

Don't let your bad experiences with others, being burned, betrayed, or hurt allow you to shut yourself off from others in your life. You may mute the pain you've experienced from past damaging relationships, but you will also mute the joy that can only come from truly opening ourselves up, being vulnerable, and experiencing each other as God intended us to.

Go be, and share, your realness!