



GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL. 2 (2017) | IMPERFECT UPBRINGINGS | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

PRESS START

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 (2017) has finally arrived in theaters after much anticipation, and, true to tradition, it brings a slew of “new” songs along with it. Music is an extremely important part of storytelling in film. While you may not remember the titles of the songs, **share with the group your favorite musical moments from *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2***. Similarly to how the music accentuates everything happening on-screen, **are there any favorite songs of yours that make ordinary moments in life extraordinary?**

EQUIP

The original film, ***Guardians of the Galaxy (2014)***, is widely regarded as one of the strongest entries in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It took a ragtag group of space-travelling misfits and made them a family. However, this first film could only briefly explore the character’s pasts in its two-hour runtime. ***Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2***, then, examines the team’s *status quo* as damaged individuals shaped by their past experiences. Nebula and Gamora share a complicated and competitive upbringing as sisters raised by Thanos, Drax still grieves over losses in his life, Rocket and Yondu have been greatly hurt by others over the years, and Peter Quill (Star Lord) feels aimless after never having met his biological father... until he does. Peter’s biological father plans to use him, just as he has used countless others before for a disastrous end. To say that Peter is disappointed in meeting Ego is a vast understatement. We all come from a variety of places and experiences, and those formative experiences in our past shape who we are today. **If you are comfortable doing so, please share some good and bad experiences that clearly affected you and shaped who you are today.**

LEVEL UP

For many, the past and those in the past hold far too much sway over the present and future. While we all have things behind us we aren't proud of, the Bible shows us we are more than just our pasts.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* ² *"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:* ³ *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."* ⁴ *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

We may have done our best to obey and honor our parents as children, but due to a number of factors (emotional distance, lack of any relationship, or abuse), we may not have been given much from our parent(s) worth honoring. On the flipside, our parents may have done just as they should, teaching and leading us, but due to rebelliousness in our own hearts we actively railed against their instructions in our youth. We shouldn't be consumed with regrets, regardless, but if we were given the chance, I'm sure many of us would try to change something in our pasts. Oftentimes, the way we were parented instinctively resurfaces when raising our own children. There's no denying that the past plays a part in our present, but there is no reason we should feel bound to repeat our mistakes and bad circumstances without any hope of change.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.*

Whether we were saved as a child or an adult, the fact remains that Christ has called us to change. We undeniably bring problems from our pasts along with us, whether we caused them or were the victims of them, unless we put them to rest. Christ calls us to move beyond our pasts and walk in a newness of life. We may not have had the best parents or the ideal upbringing, but God shows us the model of love, care, and compassion that every father should show. God becomes the perfect role model for us all, no matter where we come from.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ¹⁵ *from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,* ¹⁶ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,* ¹⁷ *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,* ¹⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints may be filled with all the fullness of God.* ²⁰ *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,* ²¹ *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.*

When we belong to Christ, we have a good Father in God and a new family amongst His people.

MOD

Ask: Superhero movies often revolve around teams, but *Guardians of the Galaxy* goes beyond that and shows the team to be family. Do you consider your fellow Christians your “family”? What factors might need to change within you or within others that will help you see them as your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Church attendance seems to dwindle more and more over time, and even where there are mass numbers of people attending, personal connection and community is often lacking. The early church shown in **Acts** was built on investment between various unique individuals. As the church grew worldwide, people, many of whom surely had terrible pasts, found wonderful eternal futures alongside others believers. If you aren't already, endeavor to invest in other believers by spending time and conversation with them. Connection between believers is so vital in Christ's church.

Ask: Sometimes, there are other “imperfect” people in our lives who we may not realize can be a great support and encouragement for us in our Christian walk. How often do you devote time to connecting and conversing with others (parents, peers, mentors) to help you develop spiritually?

Life is busy, as we all know. It takes a disciplined focus to make time dedicated to connecting with others, especially if we don't live in the same place as them. Quill realized that Yondu, for all of his faults and grizzled exterior, loved him just like his own son. Family is more than just blood-relation, as shown in ***Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2***, and as such, we can build deep, meaningful connections with others without being related to them. In fact, church family should prove this. If you don't have what you would call a “church family,” you should make the effort to connect with a local congregation a priority.

PRAY

Before we close, are there any needs the group can pray for in the coming days? Do you know anyone who desperately needs a family of believers to belong to? Let's pray for them together.

THE NEXT LEVEL

Ephesians 1:3-6 (NKJV) ³ *Blessed be the god and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,* ⁴ *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,* ⁵ *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,* ⁶ *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

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