

“The Identical” starring Blake Rayne, Ray Liotta, Ashley Judd, 2014, PG, 107 minutes

Major themes:

- Identity
- God’s call
- Father-son relationship
- Music
- Authenticity
- Crisis of faith
- Imitation
- Adoption
- Family

Major characters:

- Reece & Louise Wade
- Ryan Wade
- William & Helen Hemsley
- Drexel Hemsley
- Dino
- Avi Hirschberg
- Jenny O’Brien

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- On January 8, 1935, a woman gave birth to twin boys in a two-room house built by her husband in Tupelo, Mississippi. One was stillborn; 35 minutes later Elvis Presley was born. The concept for this film is a “what if?” story loosely based on the life of Elvis Presley.
- The “Encyclopedia of Alabama” says that in the years after the Civil War, Alabamians, like many southerners, lived on the edge of poverty. Conditions grew even worse during the Great Depression in the 1930s.
- A “honky tonk” was a rough establishment in the Deep South or Southwestern U.S. that played country music and served alcoholic beverages to a working class clientele.
- Blake Rayne is a famous Elvis impersonator. He was cast after one of his performances as Elvis garnered the casting director's attention.
- The 20 original songs in this film were co-written by Jerry Marcellino (writer and producer for Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Bobby Darin, Jackson 5) and Yochanan Marcellino, grandfather and father (respectively) of director, Dustin Marcellino.
- Ray Liotta stated that he took the role in this film because he was adopted.

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Scriptures:

Acts 20:35 (GWT) – *“We should remember the words that the Lord Jesus said, ‘Giving gifts is more satisfying than receiving them.’”*

Jeremiah 29:11 (The Message) – *“I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.”*

Romans 12:5b – 6a (The Message) – *“. . . since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t.”*

John 8:31 – 32 (The Message) – *“Then Jesus turned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. ‘If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure. Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you.’”*

Exodus 20:12 (NLT) – *“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”*

Proverbs 15:22 (The Message) – *“Refuse good advice and watch your plans fail; take good counsel and watch them succeed.”*

Colossians 3:23 – 24 (The Message) – *“Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you’ll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you’re serving is Christ.”*

1 Timothy 6:6 (NLT) – *“. . . true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth.”*

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) – *“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Discussion points:

1. Have you ever been tempted to copy someone else's life? What would help you to move closer to your true identity, the person God created you to be, in order to do what He planned for you to do? What could hinder you or make you feel pressured to be someone you are not?
2. What do you think it means when Ryan's mother says, *"If He (Jesus) is in your dreams, nothing can stand against them?"*
3. How do we tell which life dreams to pursue? What role does the Bible and counsel from parents (and others) play in discerning what to do? Are certain jobs more spiritual or meaningful than others?
4. What factors influence the point at which children can transition from complete dependence on their parents to making more interdependent or independent decisions?
5. What would your life look like if you were to use all of your God-given gifts and talents to bring honor and glory to Him? What obstacles are keeping you from living like this?
6. Both William & Helen Helmsley and Reece & Louise Wade faced ethical dilemmas. What were the pros and cons of their choices? What would you have done?