

“Captain Phillips” starring Tom Hanks, Barkhad Abdi, Barkhad Abdirahman, 2013, PG-13, 134 minutes

Major themes:

- Piracy
- Kidnapping
- Poverty
- Heroism
- Psychology
- Justice
- Teamwork
- Risk
- Authority

Major characters:

- Captain Richard Phillips
- Andrea Phillips
- Shane Murphy
- Mike Perry
- Muse
- Bilal
- Najee
- Elmi

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- This film is based on the true story of Captain Richard Phillips and the 2009 hijacking by Somali pirates of the US-flagged MV Maersk Alabama, the first American cargo ship to be hijacked in two hundred years, as recorded in the book, "*A Captain's Duty: Somali Pirates, Navy SEALs, and Dangerous Days at Sea*" by Captain Richard Phillips.
- Tom Hanks reported that all the interior lifeboat scenes were filmed inside a scale model that was actually on water at all times, resulting in him being vomited on by crew members in the cramped space.
- None of the Somali actors in the film had ever acted before. An open casting call was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota which has the largest population of Somalis in the US. Seven hundred people auditioned for the four main Somali roles.
- The negotiator, when asked what his name is, says he is "*Nemo*," which in Latin, means "*no one*" or "*nobody*."

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Scriptures:

Proverbs 29:7 (NLT) – *“The godly care about the rights of the poor; the wicked don’t care at all.”*

Psalms 10:17 – 18 (ESV) – *“O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.”*

Proverbs 11:15 (ESV) – *“When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.”*

Isaiah 1:16b – 17 (ESV) – *“cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.”*

Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 10 (The Message) – *“It’s better to have a partner than go it alone. Share the work, share the wealth. And if one falls down, the other helps, But if there’s no one to help, tough!”*

Luke 19:26 (The Message) – *“Risk your life and get more than you ever dreamed of. Play it safe and end up holding the bag.”*

1 Timothy 2:1 – 4 (NLT) – *“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.”*

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Discussion points:

1. Sometimes people are in such dire circumstances that they make tragic choices out of sheer desperation. Captain Phillips asks Muse, *"Surely there's something other than fishing and kidnapping people you could do?"* to which Muse replies, *"In America, maybe."* How can we live out Micah 6:8 (ESV) – *"do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God"* among people who are facing dire circumstances such as poverty?
2. Heroism can be defined as a service performed to others in need or to defend a moral cause, done voluntarily (not required by a higher authority), in recognition of possible risks and costs to health or reputation, and with no anticipation or expectation of external gain or reward. What decisions can we make today that will help us to act with heroism when our circumstances require it?
3. Captain Phillips remarks to one of his Somali captors, *"We all got bosses."* According to 1 Timothy 2:1 – 4, "good" bosses will enable us to *"live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity."* Under what circumstances (if any) is it okay to disobey authority?
4. What most helped Captain Phillips in this crisis?
5. What psychological battles / mind games did you notice in this film?
6. Which character do you most relate to, and why?