

“Unbroken” starring Jack O’Connell, Miyavi, Domhnall Gleeson, 2014, PG-13, 137 minutes

Major themes:

- War
- Olympic Games
- Survival
- Prisoners
- Suffering
- Heroism
- Courage
- Determination
- Resilience
- Forgiveness

Major characters:

- Louis “Louie” Zamperini
- Pete Zamperini
- Russell “Phil” Phillips
- Francis “Mac” McNamara
- Mutsuhiro “The Bird” Watanabe

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- Both the title of the film and its tagline "*Survival. Resilience. Redemption.*" are inspired by the book "*Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*" by Laura Hillenbrand.
- Louie Zamperini watched a rough cut of this film on director Angelina Jolie's laptop while in hospital before he passed away on July 2nd, 2014, aged 97.
- The American Film Institute chose this film as one of the Top 10 Films of the Year in 2014.
- This film contains a cameo by Clay Zamperini (grandson of Louis Zamperini), who plays an Olympic Torch bearer.
- While Louie and Phil are together at sea, the picture of a woman that Phil looks at is a photo of his actual sweetheart who would later become his wife.
- It was widely thought that Louie Zamperini would be the first man to break the barrier for running the mile in under 4 minutes. As we now know, that did not happen until 1954 when Roger Bannister made that achievement.
- In his hometown of Torrance, California, the airport Zamperini Field is named after Louis Zamperini.

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Scriptures:

Ephesians 4:1 – 3 (NIV) – *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*

1 Peter 3:14 – 17 (NLT) – *“But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats. Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!”*

Zephaniah 3:17 (GWT) – *“The LORD your God is with you. He is a hero who saves you. He happily rejoices over you, renews you with his love, and celebrates over you with shouts of joy.”*

Proverbs 16:32 (GWT) – *“Better to get angry slowly than to be a hero. Better to be even-tempered than to capture a city.”*

Deuteronomy 31:6 (The Message) – *“Be strong. Take courage. Don’t be intimidated. Don’t give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He’s right there with you. He won’t let you down; he won’t leave you.”*

Matthew 6:14 – 15 (NIV) – *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

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Discussion points:

1. Before going off to war, Louie's brother, Pete tells him, "*A moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory.*" How have you seen that truth operate in someone's life?
2. In what ways is teamwork essential to Louie, Phil, and Mac's survival? How did facing death change them?
3. What do you think Louie had that the Japanese feared?
4. Louie chose to forgive instead of taking revenge. Why is revenge never a good choice?
5. How do you define a hero? What characteristics of heroism do you see in Louie?
6. When faced with a horrendous, life-threatening situation, what do think would help you most to be unbreakable?
7. What does the relationship between Louie and "The Bird" teach us about the personal nature of war?