

“Still Walking” starring Hiroshi Abe, Yui Natsukawa, You (Yukiko Ehara), 2008, NR, 115 minutes

Major themes:

- Family
- Loss
- Reunions
- Memories
- Rituals
- Expectations
- Regret
- Life

Major characters:

- Ryota Yokoyama
- Yukari Yokoyama (wife)
- Atsushi Yokoyama (stepson)
- Dr. Kyohei Yokoyama (father)
- Toshiko Yokoyama (mother)
- Junpei (older brother)
- Chinami (sister)
- Nobuo Kataoka (Chinami’s husband)
- Satsuki Kataoka (Chinami & Nobuo’s daughter)
- Mutsu Kataoka (Chinami & Nobuo’s son)
- Yoshio

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- Director Kore-eda Hirokazu made this film based on a novel about his own family that he wrote following the death of his mother.
- This film won the Golden Astor for Best Film at the 2008 Mar del Plata International Film Festival which has been held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, annually since 1954.
- The original Japanese title, "Aruitemo aruitemo," means "No matter how much I walk" and is a lyric from the 1968 song "Blue Light Yokohama" (which we hear in the film).
- The family drama we see in this film unfolds over a single summer day.
- Filming took place in Yokosuka, a city in coastal prefecture, Kanagawa, just south of Tokyo, Japan.

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Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 2:5a,6-8 (NRSV) – *“But if anyone has caused grief . . . This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person; so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by even worse grief. So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.”*

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT) – *“The kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.”*

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NRSV) – *“The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”*

Proverbs 22:3 (GNT) – *“Sensible people will see trouble coming and avoid it, but an unthinking person will walk right into it and regret it later.”*

Proverbs 27:12 (NLT) – *“A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.”*

Proverbs 24:26 (NRSV) – *“One who gives an honest answer gives a kiss on the lips.”*

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Discussion points:

1. Much of the film shows us ordinary activities that occur within this family's home on a special day, a family reunion. What did you find to be the most interesting? the most unusual? the most beautiful?
2. How were various family members "stuck" in life?
3. Which character did you most relate to, and why?
4. If you could give advice to one character in this film, who would it be, and what would you say?
5. How has this film helped you to see something in your own life more clearly?
6. Why is it so hard for a family to let go of the past and move forward? How did you see this challenge portrayed in this film?
7. The director described the character of the mother by saying that "You don't say bad things to people to their face. You wait until they leave the room, and you say things behind their back. It's a principle for her, her philosophy. It's not limited to just my mother. It's common to all Japanese people to go through life avoiding confrontation." Discuss.