

## Small Group Guide: "It is a Wonderful Life" Christmas At the Movies with Pastor Mark

*What's your favorite Christmas movie tradition, and why does it matter to your family?*

This week we explored the classic film "It's a Wonderful Life" and the story of George Bailey—a man who spent his life helping others but lost sight of his own value. Through George's journey, we discover powerful truths about rest, our worth in God's eyes, and the impact our lives have on others.

### Key Scripture Passages

Matthew 11:28-30; Matthew 12:34-35 ; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 6:23

### Discussion Questions

#### Section 1: The Weight of Being "The Reliable One"

1. George Bailey was always the one saving the day—for his brother, his boss, his community. Who in your life do you think feels like they always have to be "the reliable one"? How can you lighten their load this Christmas season?
2. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus promises rest to the weary. What burdens are you carrying that you need to surrender to Jesus? What makes it difficult to accept His offer of rest?
3. George gave up his dreams repeatedly to help others. While sacrificial love is beautiful, when does "helping everyone" become unhealthy? How do we balance serving others with healthy boundaries?

#### Section 2: When Stress Comes Home

1. George's worst moment came when he brought his stress home to his family. Why do we often save our harshest words for the people we love most?
2. Read Matthew 12:34-35. Jesus says our words reveal our hearts. What does your "inner dialogue" sound like during stressful times? How does it differ from how God speaks to you?
3. Share a time when stress caused you to act out of character. How did you recover? What did you learn about yourself and God through that experience?

#### Section 3: The Lies We Believe

1. George believed the lie that everyone would be better off without him. What lies does the enemy whisper to you during difficult seasons? (Examples: "You're not enough," "You're too much," "You're alone," "You're a failure")
2. Read Jeremiah 17:9-10. Why is our heart described as "hopelessly dark and deceitful"? Why can't we trust our feelings as the ultimate source of truth?
3. Who is your "Clarence"—someone who speaks truth when you can't see it yourself? If you don't have someone like that, what steps can you take to find that kind of relationship?

#### Section 4: The Impact of Your Life

1. Clarence showed George how many lives he had touched. If you could see the ripple effect of your life, what would surprise you most? Whose life has been changed because you exist?
2. George discovered that the people he helped showed up when he needed them. How does community work both ways—not just you serving others, but allowing others to serve you?
3. How does knowing that "you are worth more alive than dead" change the way you approach difficult seasons? What practical steps can you take when those dark thoughts creep in?

### Practical Application

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE

**Option 1: Rest Inventory**

- Make a list of all the burdens you're currently carrying
- Identify which ones are yours to carry and which ones you need to surrender to God
- Pray Matthew 11:28-30 over each burden, asking Jesus for His rest

**Option 2: Truth Over Lies**

- Write down the negative thoughts or lies you've been believing about yourself
- Next to each lie, write the truth from God's Word
- Share this list with your "Clarence"—a trusted friend who can speak truth to you

**Option 3: Impact Awareness**

- Write thank-you notes to 3-5 people who have impacted your life
- Tell them specifically how they've made a difference
- Reflect on how God might be using you in similar ways in others' lives

**Option 4: Serve Your "George Bailey"**

- Identify someone in your life who is always "the reliable one"
- Do something practical this week to lighten their load
- Let them know they don't have to carry everything alone