

Betrayal in Friendship

MOVIE:
ITALIAN JOB



Lesson Objective:

Betrayal in friendship is extremely painful. Trust is a valuable part of friendship, so broken trust is both hurtful and can have long-lasting consequences. Oftentimes, betrayal leaves scars that only Jesus can heal.

Intro to the Movie:

Italian Job is a movie about a group of thieves who pull off a heist against one of their own. In the beginning, everyone is on the same side. There is a crew headed by Charlie, the protégé of an old con named John Bridger. The two of them, along with four other criminals, pull off a job lifting gold bullion in Venice, Italy, together. This is not their first job as a team; they all have a history together, they know each other outside of the heists, they have confided dreams and secrets to one another. This is a *team* in every sense of the word. There exists reliance, intimacy, and trust among them – even as thieves!

In Venice during the beginning of the movie, there is even a part where they consider abandoning the job because some "extra hires" are not in place. The hiring and placement of them was up to Steve, and, even though Charlie could pull the plug, he clearly demonstrates his trust and confidence in Steve by beginning the theft without everything in place. He believes that Steve is good for his word and will come through for them.

Well Charlie was right that time. Steve's men did come through and the Venice heist went off with barely a hitch. There's only one problem! Trustworthy Steve shoots Charlie's mentor John and takes all of the gold bullion. The wake of betrayal and pain he leaves behind him is enough to spur John's daughter into joining Charlie and the crew in one big effort to take down and destroy Steve.

The colossal shock of Steve's betrayal seems all that more unfathomable when you consider how *untrusting* most criminals would be, and, therefore, how long it must have taken that team to form the bond that they had. How could one man, working in such a friendless world, pass up those relationships for the fleeting pleasure of gold? "Some men steal to enrich their lives, others steal to define it. Don't be the latter." That quote comes from John right after everyone (standing in a circle in the Alps) has been sharing their personal dreams of what they're going to do with their share of the gold.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as trust and betrayal (broken trust), pain and hurt, disbelief, anger and revenge. Look also for the short-term and long-term effects of this particular betrayal.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. In what ways did the different characters respond to the betrayal? Did you see any expressions of emotions that might be present under these circumstances?
3. The team finally got revenge on Steve. How much healing does getting revenge really provide? Is there a better way?
4. Talk about a betrayal you have experienced either personally or through someone else. (Have you ever betrayed someone else?)
5. Consider these statements and discuss what you think about the emotional pain they represent:
 - "But you, my *friends*, you deceive me like streams that go dry when no rain comes. (Job 6:15)
 - "My former companion attacked his *friends*; he broke his promises." (Psalm 55:20)
 - "You have made even my closest *friends* abandon me, and darkness is my only companion." (Psalm 88:18)

Group Input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions.

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *Betrayal in friendship is extremely painful. Trust is a valuable part of friendship, so broken trust is both hurtful and can have long lasting consequences. Often times, betrayal leaves scars that only Jesus can heal.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

Many of you can really identify with the pain and some of the consequences of betrayal in friendship. Unfortunately it's way too common, especially in military teens who know they're leaving or someone else is PCSing soon.

Let me read you a few things that God has to say about this subject:

First, from the wise sayings in Proverbs (Proverbs 6:16-19) it tells us what God really hates! The list has many of the things involved with friendship betrayal:

¹⁶⁻¹⁹There are seven things that the LORD hates and cannot tolerate:

- A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people, a mind that thinks up wicked plans, feet that hurry off to do evil, a witness who tells one lie after another, and someone who stirs up trouble among *friends*.

WOW, these are things God cannot tolerate.

Then there's this one (Proverbs 16:28) that addresses a very real and common form of betrayal:

²⁸Gossip is spread by wicked people; they stir up trouble and break up *friendships*.

We may all have to ask someone's forgiveness for that one.

So what's the answer when we have been hurt and feel discouraged and hopeless? Revenge? Well, maybe not, because the Bible says this:

(from Romans 12:19) ¹⁹Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord."

If revenge isn't what we're supposed to do, then what should we do? God clearly tells us that he will care for us in all of our pain and disappointment and discouragement. Listen to what God promises us:
 (from Psalm 34:17-19, 22) ¹⁷The righteous call to the LORD, and he listens; he rescues them from all their troubles. ¹⁸The LORD is near to those who are discouraged; he saves those who have lost all hope. ¹⁹Good people suffer many troubles, but the LORD saves them from them all;
²²The LORD will save his people; those who go to him for protection will be spared.

And again, the reason Jesus came is captured in this passage from Isaiah 61:1. Listen to why Jesus came to earth:

¹The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me To bring good news to the poor, To heal the broken-hearted, To announce release to captives And freedom to those in prison.

There it is. Jesus promises to heal our broken-heartedness when we suffer through betrayal in friendship. Don't take revenge, that's God's role. Trust him with it. Our response is to come to him with this hurt and receive his care and healing.

Challenge:

1. Attempt to eliminate gossip from your life (it's a form of betrayal) this week by making a pact with your friends that you will not talk *about* someone who is not *present* in the group. This is incredibly hard at first, but it will also show you how many 'little' betrayals you are a part of every day. Ask God to forgive you for that and for strength to eliminate gossiping.
2. Journal about a hurtful betrayal that you've still not healed from. Spend some time asking Jesus to heal your broken heart and discouragement.

*Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives.
 Remind them of the online personal journey for further involvement with this topic of
 Betrayal and Rejection in Friendship*