

# Who's Your Daddy?

**MOVIE:**  
*THE BLIND SIDE*



## **Lesson Objective:**

To help teens discern their spiritual daddy, the one whom they imitate and draw their identity from.

## **Intro to the Movie:**

This movie chronicles the life of Michael Oher, a quiet and shy young man by nature. The first seventeen years of his life were spent in and out of foster care homes, but he never stayed anywhere very long. He often ran away to stay with friends. During those years, he looked out for himself. His schooling was always intermittent, and a warm bed he could rarely find. For Michael, drugs, violence, and abject poverty were the daily norm. Sadly, he bore much of the consequences of his mother's illicit relationships with multiple men and drug addictions. Although he had siblings, he rarely saw them since their lot in life was much like his.

Things begin to take a turn for the better when the father of Michael's friend enrolls him at Briarcrest Christian School (in reality it was Wingate Christian School) in Memphis, TN. It is here that Michael befriends "SJ" Jr., the son of Sean and Leigh Ann Touhy. It is this relationship with the Touhys that initiates the real turning point in his life. Walking alongside a road on a cold rainy night in late November, the Touhys offer Michael a warm bed and a place to stay *temporarily*. Yet this relationship was anything but short term. Michael's quiet, respectful demeanor begins to warm the heart of Leigh Anne, and she starts to care for him as her own child. What began as a simple act of hospitality, ended up becoming the wonderful beginning of Michael's whole new way of life.

While all this is happening off the field, Michael's impressive size and strength are making him into a local football sensation on the field. His rare, dominating athleticism as an offensive lineman captures the attention of Division I college

scouts, and with the sacrificial help of the Touhys, Michael is able to graduate high school with a GPA slightly above the minimum standard for Division I student athletes. Eventually, and under speculation, Michael chooses to play college ball for the University of Mississippi. His outstanding career at “Old Miss” earned him a spot on the Baltimore Ravens roster in the 2009 NFL draft.

Michael’s stardom and decision to attend “Old Miss” over the local rival school of the University of Tennessee, however, raises the concerns of the NCAA recruiting committee. The speculation was that the Touhys shrewdly recognized Michael’s talent and adopted him in the hopes of profiting from his success. Added to that concern was the fact that Leigh Anne and Miss Sue, Michael’s private tutor, loathed the Tennessee Volunteers and lauded “Old Miss.” NCAA officials suspected the Touhys forced Michael to choose “Old Miss,” which is against regulations. The investigation that ensued caused Michael to question the Touhys motives for bringing him into their home. In all the confusion, Michael goes back to his old neighborhood to reconnect with his former way of life. It is a crucial decision that he must make. Will he quit football altogether and revert to his old lifestyle? Or will he choose once and for all to leave his past behind and find a new identity in his adoptive family? It is a real life choice, which holds a great deal of weight for his future life’s direction.

(The 3D Lenses) It is that key moment in Michael’s life that will be the focus of our discussion for this lesson on identity. As you prepare your teens to view the movie, ask them to pinpoint various decision points in Michael’s life and the pivotal moment when Michael decides once and for all who his “daddy” is going to be.

**\* Special NOTE TO LEADERS:** The aim is to draw special attention to Michael’s influential choices and their consequences. While the movie does not ignore racial or socio-economic issues in suburban Memphis, those real issues are not the focus here. It is not about whites vs. blacks or the poor vs. the rich. Depending on the dynamics of your installation, it may be worthwhile to offer this disclaimer prior to viewing the movie.

### Discussion Group Questions:

1. Do you find this movie inspiring? Why or why not?
2. Who is Michael’s “daddy” during his early years? Who is his “daddy” during his later years? At what point do you think Michael decided which “daddy” he was going to identify himself with? Which one has more to offer and why?

3. Deuteronomy 30:15 says, “Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death.” Moses offers Israel this choice near the conclusion of a long speech in which he clearly lays out the benefits of obedience and the consequences of disobedience to God’s commands. In what ways do you see this verse being applicable to Michael’s life? In what ways do you see Moses’ words applying to your life?
4. Jesus states explicitly in John 8:44 that the Pharisees’ father was the devil. In that same passage, he boldly asserts that his Father was God. In reality, Jesus is suggesting that each one of us can only have one of two daddies. Do you agree or disagree with Jesus’ assessment? Explain.
5. As best as you can discern, who is your spiritual daddy? How do you know?

### 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: *To help teens discern their spiritual daddy, the one whom they imitate and draw their identity from.*

### Bullet Objective:

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

Okay, friends, let’s pull this movie together. Hopefully, all of you would agree with me that the most pivotal point in the movie, and in Michael’s life, was when he needed to decide between his adoptive family or his old way of life in the ’hood. And to be real with you, what this decision was all about was one of identity. Who was Michael going to follow? Who was he going to align himself with? What was going to be his source of identification? Who was he really? He had a pretty important choice to make.

Though it may not be quite as obvious as it was in the movie, each of us has a similar choice. We also need to decide who it is we’re going to image, or imitate. In other words, we need to decide who our daddy is. Let me tell you up front, that spiritually speaking we can only have one of two daddies.

Listen to something interesting Jesus says in **John 8:31-47** to a group of people called the Pharisees. Bear in mind that Jesus and the Pharisees are at great odds with one another. The Pharisees resent Jesus' popularity with the people and seek to discredit and dishonor him at any opportune moment. This is one of those scenes where we find Jesus in a bit of a verbal spat with the religious leaders of his day. So imagine a great crowd of people, with Jesus being the center of attention. Both the believing Jews (meaning supporters and followers of Jesus) and the Pharisees are present within this crowd. We pick up where Jesus is directly addressing his Jewish followers. Listen for who Jesus claims as his daddy and who he claims as the Pharisees' daddy:

<sup>31</sup>So Jesus said to those who believed in him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; <sup>32</sup>you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

<sup>33</sup>"We are the descendants of Abraham," they answered, "and we have never been anybody's slaves. What do you mean, then, by saying, 'You will be free'?"

<sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: everyone who sins is a slave of sin. <sup>35</sup>A slave does not belong to a family permanently, but a son belongs there forever. <sup>36</sup>If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free. <sup>37</sup>I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are trying to kill me, because you will not accept my teaching. <sup>38</sup>I talk about what my Father has shown me, but you do what your father has told you."

<sup>39</sup>They answered him, "Our father is Abraham."

"If you really were Abraham's children," Jesus replied, "you would do the same things that he did. <sup>40</sup>All I have ever done is to tell you the truth I heard from God, yet you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like this! <sup>41</sup>You are doing what your father did."

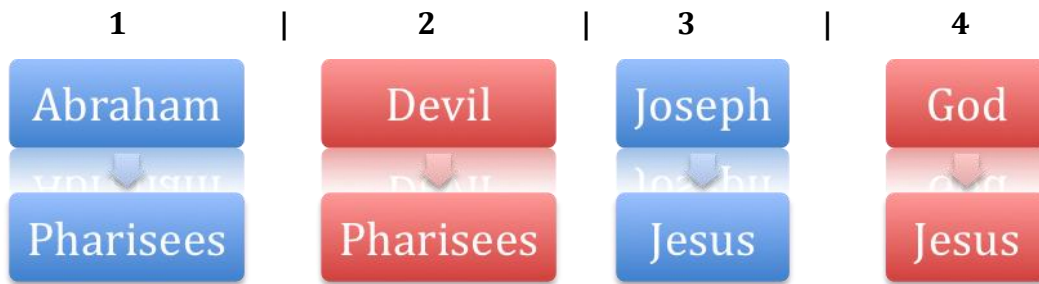
"God himself is the only Father we have," they answered, "and we are his true children."

<sup>42</sup>Jesus said to them, "If God really were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own authority, but he sent me. <sup>43</sup>Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to listen to my message. <sup>44</sup>You are the children of your father, the Devil, and you want to follow your father's desires. From the very beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is only doing what is natural to him, because he is a liar and the father of all lies. <sup>45</sup>But I tell the truth, and that is why you do not believe me. <sup>46</sup>Which one of you can prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, then why do you not believe me? <sup>47</sup>He who comes from God listens to God's words. You, however, are not from God, and that is why you will not listen."

Okay, let's summarize some things:

1. Who do the Pharisees' claim as their daddy? Answer: Abraham and God (verses 39, 41).
2. Who does Jesus claim is the Pharisees' daddy (spiritually, not biologically, speaking)? Answer: the Devil (verse 44).
3. Who do the Pharisees claim as Jesus' daddy? Answer: Joseph (see John 6:41).
4. Who does Jesus claim as his daddy? Answer: God the Father (verses 38, 42).

Here's a visual representation of what we just summarized above (the correct options are highlighted in red):



Notice that the options for both have either a human or spiritual origin but that it is the spiritual "daddy" that bears the most significance. That means that the same is true for us. We can only have one of two spiritual daddies – one offers life; the other offers death.

In the movie we just saw, Michael had to chose between a "daddy" that offered a life of opportunity and chance to realize who he really was created to be or a "daddy" that offered nothing but dead-end streets, shaping him into its destructive habits, and eventual ruin. He could not have chosen both; it was either one or the other. The same is true for us.

### Challenge:

1. Here is what we want you to do while you're here: We simply want you to come face to face with your real spiritual daddy. Each of you will be given a 3 x 5 card with this graphic on it (see below). As best as you can discern right now, who is your daddy? **Do NOT circle who you want your daddy to be or who you think your daddy should be.** Please answer honestly. If you are

pretty sure who your daddy is, then circle the appropriate box. We encourage you to drop your card in the box as you leave this evening.

But, know this: Leigh Ann Touhy did not *force* Michael to choose a life with them. She allowed him the freedom to decide on his own and in his own time. In the same way neither are we saying, “You have to decide who your daddy is at this moment!” So if you are not comfortable circling a daddy right now, or you just aren’t sure, take this card home with you, stick it in a safe place, and keep it until you are fairly confident that you know who your daddy really is. Then, circle the appropriate the box labeled “Satan” or “God”, then draw a line from that box to the word “YOU.” Please return it us when you get a chance.

(sample card)

As best as I can discern, I believe my spiritual daddy to be...

Satan

God

YOU

I would like to visit with a leader. Yes or No

*Lord, sometimes it can be hard to know who it is we represent, or image. We ask that you open our hearts to the truth of who our spiritual daddy really is. Thank You! Amen.*