

MOVIE: The Family Man

**** Please read the Introduction to Large Group Studies in order to best utilize this material**

Sub Topic theme:

NO CONTROL – JUST DEAL!

Lesson objective:

Understanding that being faced with having no control in situations often forces us to move from looking at and dealing only with the externals of life, and it forces us to develop an awareness of internal values and belief systems. Coming face to face with our beliefs should move us to act out of that center and not just what's happening around us. When our belief system offers us hope and goes beyond simply what we can control, we can discover solace and strength. Helping teens embrace the value of faith in Jesus Christ, who has ultimate control, can provide an everlasting peace and hope in all of our external situations.

Intro to the Movie:*The Family Man*

Jack Campbell, a successful and talented businessman, is happily living his single life. He has everything, or so he thinks. On Christmas Eve, two days before he pulls off a multi-billion-dollar merger, the Wall Street hot-shot gets a phone message from a woman he almost married 13 years before. He decides not to call back, and on his way home he darts into a store for some egg nog. He makes a business deal with a street punk who is holding a gun in the store because of a lottery ticket. Jack tells a gun-toting street guy that he (Jack) has everything he needs. The punk laughs and says, "Remember, Jack, you brought this on yourself." He doesn't know it yet, but all semblance of having control over his life has just ended!

Christmas day Jack wakes up in a new life in which he didn't leave his college girlfriend for a London trip. He's married to Kate, lives in Jersey and has two kids. He, of course, desperately wants his other life back. He's president of P. K. Lassiter Investment House and not a tire salesman at Big Ed's. He drives a Ferrari and not a mini-van that never starts. And most importantly he doesn't wake up in the morning with kids jumping on the bed. After a rough start and much disbelief to his new situation, Jack begins to become more confident and appreciative of his new life. He even starts to see what he's been missing as his values begin to shift over time from the prior focus on money to the deeper, internal values of relationship and love and

family. When his glimpse of the ‘other’ life is abruptly ended and he’s back in the Wall Street life, he realizes what is really important. His values have completely shifted and he is now living out of a new belief system where loving family is more important than anything money can buy.

(The 3D lenses) Look for themes such as being out of control, complete life change, what we value, how belief systems are formed, what it takes for us to adopt new beliefs (it’s hard, but good), disruption of our lives, what part faith plays,

Discussion Group Questions:

1. If **you** were cast in this movie, which of the main characters would you rather be and why?
2. Have you ever been in a place where you felt like you lost control of your life? Describe it.
3. What are some of the beliefs or values that changed for Jack? Why do you think they changed?
4. Jack’s life was totally disrupted. He had no control. But it brought about some positive changes. How have you experienced something that was hard but made a significant positive change in your life’s values and beliefs?

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: **Understanding that being faced with having no control in situations often forces us to move from looking at and dealing only with the externals of life, and it forces us to develop an awareness of internal values and belief systems.** Coming face to face with our beliefs should move us to act out of that center and not just what’s happening around us. When our belief system offers us hope and goes beyond simply what we can control, we can discover solace and strength. Helping teens **embrace the value of faith in Jesus Christ**, who has ultimate control, can provide an everlasting peace and hope in all of our external situations.

Bullet Objective:

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

We start off seeing a Jack Campbell who seemed really in love with Kate at the airport. When she said, "I choose us!" it sounded like he bought into that, but then he still decides to take his one year trip to London; and then we check in with his life 13 years later.

He is an amazingly gifted Wall Street financier, and he is the master of his own life with everything he wants and needs. Sweet. Let's stop right there. Who wouldn't want that? Seems just too good to be true. Funny thing though, you can do a search and find that some of the wealthiest, most accomplished men in the world have committed suicide. Somehow, money and making money and having everything you want just isn't what life is all about.

Jack learns that the hard way. His whole value system is challenged through this experience. Up until now, he has put his faith in making money and living the 'good life.' However, as he is exposed to a whole different life and people who love him and rely on him, his whole value and belief system begins to change...dramatically! Maybe for the first time, or at least the first time in a long time, he sees what really has meaning in life; and he is drawn to it. His disrupted life of no control has led him to reorient his whole life around his new-found beliefs.

There was a time when some of Jesus' friends had a similar experience. Life was going great as they traveled around with Jesus and saw some pretty cool things happen. They had been selected by Jesus to follow him, they had seen people healed and watched Jesus take on the religious leaders. Life was good with this preacher. Then this story that we find in Mark 4 happened:

³⁵ On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples,
 "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."³⁶ So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too.³⁷ Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water.³⁸ Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said,

"Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

³⁹ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind,

"Be quiet!" and he said to the waves,

"Be still!" The wind died down, and there was a great calm.⁴⁰ Then Jesus said to his disciples,

"Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another,
“Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

This group of men, several who were fishermen, had lost control over their external situation when the storm came rolling in. They were seriously scared because they knew they had no control with this massive storm. They saw the very real possibility of dying, and they cried out to Jesus for help.

When Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to “be quiet” and “be still,” value and belief systems for his friends were challenged like never before. It was a really hard thing for them to live through, but it made it possible to confront their values from that of a nice life with Jesus to a new internal realization and belief that Jesus was actually much more than a mere man. They began the road to understanding that Jesus was the Son of God, and he held ultimate control over everything, including the external things of our lives. Being out of control had led to their faith in Jesus, which is a very worthwhile tradeoff.

Challenge:

1. Identify a place in your life where you feel like you have no control. Now think about some values or beliefs that should be challenged because of it. Now ask Jesus to act on your behalf and build your faith in his power.
2. Decide on a value or belief that you sense is important for you to embrace in your life. Talk to a Club Beyond leader or counselor or chaplain about how you might accomplish that.
3. Write out a prayer asking Jesus to show his power and control over the things in your life. Pray it his week and feel free to share it with other friends and leaders.

Pray for God's purpose and power to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of NO CONTROL – JUST DEAL!