

UNBROKEN

PATH TO REDEMPTION
BIBLE STUDY

FEATURING

WILL GRAHAM



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Published by B&H Publishing Group • © 2018 Redemption Productions LLC

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ISBN 978-1-5359-2320-0

Dewey decimal classification: 234.3

Subject headings: SALVATION / LOUIS ZAMPERINI / CHRISTIAN LIFE

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Printed in the United States of America

Groups Ministry Publishing • B&H Publishing Group
One LifeWay Plaza • Nashville, TN 37234



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#UNBROKENFILM

About the Movie

Unbroken: Path to Redemption begins where the hit movie *Unbroken* concludes, sharing the next amazing chapter in the true story of Olympian and World War II hero Louis Zamperini.

Haunted by nightmares of the torment he endured as a prisoner of war, Louie sees himself as anything but a hero. Then he meets Cynthia, a young woman who captures his eye—and his heart.

Louis' wrathful quest for revenge drives him deeper into despair, putting the couple on the brink of divorce. Then Cynthia experiences Billy Graham's 1949 Los Angeles crusade, where she finds faith in God and a renewed commitment to her marriage and her husband. Now her most fervent prayer is for God to help Louie find the peace and forgiveness he so desperately needs.

Unbroken: Path to Redemption brings to life the rest of this powerful story of forgiveness, redemption, and grace.

About the Filmmakers and Contributors

MATTHEW BAER is the producer of *Unbroken*, based on Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling book. Angelina Jolie directed *Unbroken*, which earned \$163 million worldwide. Matt has also produced the character thriller *Maggie*; the independent film *The Bachelors*; *City by the Sea*, with Robert DeNiro, Frances McDormand, and James Franco; *View from the Top*, with Gwyneth Paltrow and Mike Myers; *Jack Frost*, with Michael Keaton; and *The Replacement Killers*. He has produced three films with first-time directors.

HAROLD CRONK is the director of numerous films, including *God's Not Dead*, which won the Gospel Music Association Dove Award for Inspirational Film of the Year. He's the founding partner of 10 West Studios and EMC Productions. He won the Best Director Award at the Beverly Hills International Film Festival in 2006 for his film *War Prayer*. He wrote and directed the films *Jerusalem Countdown* and *Mickey Matson and the Copperhead Conspiracy*. He also has extensive theatrical film credits in art direction and set design.

WILL GRAHAM, the grandson of Billy Graham and the oldest son of Franklin Graham, is the third generation of Grahams to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Will serves as the vice president of the BGEA and as the executive director of the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, North Carolina. He has held Celebrations evangelistic outreaches on six continents since 2006. A graduate of Liberty University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Will and his wife, Kendra, have two daughters and a son.

Introduction

Louis Zamperini was a college track star, an Olympic hero, and a decorated World War II veteran. He survived more than a month adrift in the Pacific Ocean and the brutality of a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. His story was chronicled in Laura Hillenbrand's *New York Times* best seller *Unbroken* and in the 2014 film of the same name. *Unbroken: Path to Redemption* tells the rest of Louis' amazing story.

Louis returned home a war hero who still had a war to fight. The war wasn't over just because everybody said it was. After a rocky start, Louis married and focused on training for an Olympic return. When an injury dashed his hopes, he began drinking and pushed his marriage to the brink. Louis placed all his hope in his ability to returned to greatness, but his brokenness led him to a place where God could do something greater in his life.

This small-group Bible study, based on the movie *Unbroken: Path to Redemption*, examines the story of God's work in the life of one man and urges us to examine what God is doing in our lives. Just as God led Louis from brokenness and misplaced hope to redemption and forgiveness, He does the same for all who trust in Him.

God stories are meant to be shared. All people called by God travel their own paths to redemption. Through this study you'll experience Louis' story and learn to share your own.

How to Use This Study

Group Study

Each group session consists of five sections: “Start,” “Watch,” “Discuss,” “Respond,” and “Pray.” Participants will complete an additional “Tell Your Story” section during the week following the group session. Allow forty-five to sixty minutes for each session.

START. Each group session begins with an introductory overview of the lesson to come. Read the section and answer the introductory questions together as a group.

WATCH. Each Bible-study video session contains a brief clip from the film *Unbroken: Path to Redemption* with accompanying teaching by Will Graham. The total length of each video session is four to eight minutes.

DISCUSS. This section is the primary focus of each group session. Leaders should spend the majority of the session teaching while asking the questions in this section.

RESPOND. This section closes the group session with a few questions designed to engage the hearts and the hands of participants. These questions take the themes of the week and bring them home through practical application.

PRAY. Close the group session by praying together. Thank God for the group study and pray for the personal study and the conversations group members will have between sessions.

For help in leading the group sessions, see the leader guide on pages 60–63.

Personal Study

TELL YOUR STORY. *Unbroken: Path to Redemption* Bible study centers on four key moments in Louis Zamperini's story. Each week participants will be asked to record the story of what God is doing in their lives and to share it with someone else.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER. At the end of study, members will be encouraged to use the four "Tell Your Story" sections to record short testimonies. Composing their testimonies will help participants prepare to share the hope of Christ that is in them.

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WEEK 1

BROKENNESS

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PATH TO REDEMPTION



Start

Use these questions to introduce the group session.

What are a few of the most significant moments in your life?

How have those moments shaped your life for good or bad?

Unbroken: Path to Redemption picks up Louis Zamperini's story at what you would imagine to be a high point. Assumed dead, abused in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp, Louis returned home alive. His family rejoiced because their lost son had returned to them. His country lauded him as a hero. Yet when the war ended, Louis' real battle began. The war wasn't over just because everyone else said it was.

The war followed Louis home. The trauma he experienced shaped the way he saw the world. His captors tortured him in dreams. He was desperate to find a release from his pain, but his brokenness drove him further into darkness.

Each of us deals with brokenness. *How* we deal with our brokenness determines the course of our lives. Taking it on ourselves leads to more brokenness. Handing our brokenness to God leads to healing and restoration.

Watch

Use this space to take notes as you watch video session 1.

Video rentals available through bhpublishinggroup.com/unbroken

Discuss

Use the following questions to discuss the video teaching.

What did the Holy Spirit impress on you in this week's video teaching?

Anyone paying attention will notice the brokenness in the world. Natural disasters, sickness, death, national tragedies—all these events point to the reality that the world isn't as it should be. It has been broken by sin, and so have we. Today we'll examine the cause and the cure for brokenness.

Describe a time when you felt your brokenness.

Read Genesis 3:1-7. What caused the brokenness we experience?

The root cause of brokenness is sin, and the root of all sin is idolatry. Adam and Eve knew God's standards, but they thought they knew better. They had more faith in their own instincts than in God's decrees. Their choice led the world into sin. Ever since the garden of Eden, men and women have grappled with sin and brokenness, both as a result of the fall and as a result of their choices.

What's the difference between brokenness caused by the presence of sin and brokenness caused by the choice to sin? In which category would you place Louis' brokenness?

Some hurts come from living in a fallen world. Louis didn't choose to enter a prisoner-of-war camp. This brokenness came from the hands of others. Yet Louis chose to cover his brokenness with poor decisions. He abused alcohol in an attempt to hide his brokenness. Louis' alcoholism became a signpost leading back to his hurt.

Louis covered his shame with drinking, whereas Adam and Eve had attempted to cover their guilt with fig leaves. What steps do we take to mask our brokenness?

Read Romans 2:4. Why should your brokenness lead you to God instead of away from Him?

Fig leaves couldn't hide Adam and Eve's brokenness. In fact, they accomplished the opposite effect. The fragile leaves highlighted their nakedness instead of concealing it. When we try to mask our brokenness, the results aren't more convincing. Feeling broken is a gift from God that's meant to demonstrate our need for Him.

Read Hannah's story in 1 Samuel 1. Eli saw Hannah's brokenness and misdiagnosed the cause. What happens in our lives if we misdiagnose the cause of our brokenness?

What helped Hannah walk through her brokenness? What comfort does her experience give you?

In the teaching video Will spoke about our need to take our brokenness to God. Why do we take our brokenness to other places first?

Hearing Hannah's wailing, Eli mistakenly believed she was drunk. He missed the true cause of her brokenness. If we misdiagnose the disease, we won't find a cure. Louis couldn't cure his brokenness just by abstaining from alcohol. The problem ran much deeper. Louis needed what Hannah already knew:

*The LORD is near the brokenhearted;
he saves those crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18

Read Romans 3:23. When we're talking to others about brokenness, why is it helpful to remember that this condition affects all people?

Why must we hear the bad news about sin before we hear the good news of the gospel? Why is this bad news offensive to people in our culture?

Romans 3 levels the playing field. Sin introduced brokenness into the world, and all people feel its effects. Because sin is a universal condition, brokenness is a universal condition. Only God can forgive brokenness. He alone can repair our souls. Like Hannah, we can cry out and receive God's help. Recognizing sin and brokenness paves the way toward redemption.

The good news of the gospel is that we can cry out to God. The brokenness that separates sinful people from a holy God was bridged by the cross of Jesus Christ. When we repent of our sin and we trust in Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death on our behalf, we're reconciled to God. A new life begins at that very moment.

How are you experiencing brokenness? Have you ever turned over your brokenness to God, repented of your sin, and trusted Jesus as your only hope in life and death? If not, would you like to do that right now?

Respond

Apply this session's teaching to your life.

Sin creates a hole in us that only God can fill, yet we try to fill it with other things. Louis tried; we try as well.

Maybe you wear your brokenness on your sleeve. Maybe you bottle it up inside. Louis bottled up all the pain and hurt inside until he could no longer keep it hidden. Brokenness poured into his life through anger and drinking. Your brokenness might not look like Louis', but it's still there below the surface. Maybe you recognize it; maybe you don't. Regardless of the way you handle your brokenness, you must deal with it.

If you're a Christian, how has the way you deal with brokenness changed as you've grown in your relationship with Christ?

**Whom do you know who's struggling with brokenness?
How could you point them to the hope of Christ in the middle of their struggle?**

**With whom do you need to share your story of brokenness?
Take some time to pray for them as we end the session.**

Pray

Close the group session in prayer. Remind members to record their stories in “Tell Your Story” before the next group session.

The Bible says:

*The LORD is near the brokenhearted;
he saves those crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34:18

Praise God for providing a path
out of sin and brokenness.

Ask God to be near people who are walking
through long, painful seasons of brokenness.

As you consider the truths of Scripture,
ask God to place people in your path
who need to hear that the gospel of
Jesus Christ can heal their brokenness.

Tell Your Story

Your Brokenness

Unbroken: Path to Redemption is the story of what God did in Louis Zamperini's life. God is doing something in your life as well. This section will help you tell the story of what God has done for you.

For the gospel to be good news to us, we must first deal with the bad news. Brokenness touches all people because brokenness proceeds from sin. Paul wrote, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This is the bad news in our story. All of us come to the point when we realize the way we're living may seem right to us, but that path leads us to death. We're traveling down a road that leads to a dead end.

Some recognize their brokenness only after years of hard living. Others realize their distance from God at a young age before they've had the chance to do much living. Wherever your starting point, use the following prompts to process your brokenness.

I knew I needed a Savior when ...

Who or what helped you realize your brokenness?

What needed to change?

Keep the following points in mind as you record your story.

- Be honest.
- Keep it simple.
- Acknowledge your brokenness without glorifying it.

