

FREE BURMA RANGERS

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Free Burma Rangers Film Discussion Guide

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FOREWORD FOR LEADERS

Free Burma Rangers is a documentary film exploring the extraordinary 20-year journey of missionaries Dave and Karen Eubank. The film follows them and their three children as they venture into war zones, where they fight to bring help, hope, and love to those impacted by the conflicts.

We've designed this six-session discussion guide to help you and your group walk through some of the themes in the film and discover what it means to boldly follow Christ wherever He leads us. In 2 Timothy 1:7, Paul tells us we have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and self-control. We hope you and your group will walk away from this study with a desire to mirror the life of Jesus, love others, and live without being led by comfort, fear, or pride.

Each of the sessions begins with a clip from the film. After watching the video clip, we suggest you read through each session together and then discuss through the questions as a group. As a leader, your responsibility is to facilitate discussion and encourage curiosity, rather than provide all the answers. The questions serve as a guide, but you are free to explore wherever God might take your discussion. The way you structure your sessions is flexible, and the pace you move through the material is up to you. Whatever your structure or pace, we ask you to approach it with prayer and a willingness to step outside your comfort zone.

As you prepare to lead the study, we suggest you watch the movie beforehand so you can wrestle with your own emotions and reactions to the film before watching with your group. Because the film is one hour and forty-five minutes long, be sure to allow more time for the first session than the following ones.

Thank you for being willing to lead others through this journey.

All clips can be accessed by clicking on the "Watch Clip" buttons in the digital PDF.



THAT COULD NEVER BE ME!

Watch the “Free Burma Rangers” movie as a group.

After you finish, return to this discussion guide and watch the intro using the link below.



INTRO

After watching “Free Burma Rangers”, you may find yourself thinking, “I admire and respect those people in the film, but I could never do that.” We’ve designed this discussion guide to help you explore how God might be calling you to live out this movie’s themes in your life context. The same God who is living and active in places like Burma and Iraq is at work in your neighborhood, workplace, family—and your heart.



One of the time-honored sayings of the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) is, “Don’t be led by comfort, fear, or pride.” The FBR team prays through all their decisions using this lens. During the next five sessions, you may be confronted with some difficult questions and feelings and could be tempted to dismiss them and move on.

On one occasion, Jesus asked His disciples when people were abandoning Him, “You do not want to leave me, too, do you?” Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:67-68)¹ Following Jesus is rarely easy. Will you trust the One who has the words of life to help you process through your questions and feelings?

QUESTIONS

1. What was your reaction to the film?
2. What thoughts or feelings arose in you as you watched the effects of evil in places like Burma and Iraq?
3. Do you find it easy or difficult to connect what you saw in the film with your own experiences in life?





WATCH FILM CLIP

SESSION 2

“COMFORTABLE” CHRISTIANITY?

If we're honest, the way Jesus lived and His teaching about the upside-down kingdom of God can make us uncomfortable. At its core, our human nature craves comfort, safety, and security. Loving others sacrificially and reaching out to those we don't understand or aren't in our usual social or religious circles is difficult. But Jesus' harshest rebukes were directed toward those who considered themselves the most religious. He called them on the carpet for being hypocrites. Their words sounded good, but their lives and actions demonstrated that their hearts were far from God.

In the film clip we just watched, Karen Eubank remembers that before she met Dave, she had “created a bubble that was righteous, secure, and respectable.” Then he came along, and she faced decisions she'd never had to make before. Karen talks about the pivotal moment when Dave turned to her and asked, “Will you marry me, and will you go with me to Burma?” In saying “yes,” she'd be agreeing to an almost immediate departure overseas, with very little time to ease gently into her new reality!



If we want to follow Christ boldly, He will take us out of our comfortable Christianity. He could take us to the jungles of Burma or the battlefields of Iraq. It's more likely He might impress on our hearts to develop a relationship with a neighbor across the street or have a difficult conversation with a friend or family member that we've put off for too long. We know with certainty that He will ask us to willingly surrender everything to Him and follow wherever He leads.

We also know with absolute confidence that He will be with us and never forsake us. In fact, Jesus will never take us anywhere He hasn't already been. As Karen contemplated an unknown life in Burma, she heard God say to her, "This is the best gift I have for you, and I'll be with you every step of the way."

QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that following Jesus into uncomfortable situations is a gift?
2. What do you think "comfortable Christianity" looks like?
3. In what ways do you think Jesus disrupts and challenges our modern culture and our church culture?
4. Is there something you hope Jesus will never ask you to do?
5. Scripture to discuss: John 12:23-26.





WATCH FILM CLIP

SESSION 3A

TRUSTING GOD WITH YOUR KIDS

Use This Version if Your Group is Primarily Comprised of Parents

Perhaps one of the most thought-provoking or jarring aspects of the film is watching Dave and Karen take their children into conflict zones that are often not safe. The choice to do this flies in the face of conventional American wisdom. Our culture today stresses more than ever the need to protect our children and keep them safe at all costs, even though it may delay or prevent their emotional and relational growth and health, as studies now show.

As parents, we have a God-given responsibility to care for, protect, and nurture our children, as well as the privilege of modeling and reflecting God's heart and character to them. We are also called to teach our children to follow Jesus, a task which requires Spirit-filled wisdom and much prayer. Being a good parent can be both joyful and overwhelming. The enormity of the task causes even the best of us to fear we don't have what it takes.

In the film clip, Karen shares that when the children were young, she would lay in bed at night and question whether they were right in taking their children into the jungle. (What parent hasn't agonized over their decisions at some point?)



She asked God about this, and He told her,

Don't deny them the opportunity to call out to me and have a relationship with me. You are trying to insulate them so much that they will never have a reason to need me. If you can wrap them so carefully that nothing ever touches them, how will they ever know that I am sovereign, and I am their Savior and Deliverer? You cannot control the danger and the future, but you do know that I am in control, and I will take care of them. Let go, Karen.

A crucial question to ask ourselves as parents is whether we are fostering opportunities for our children to know God and experience His help. Are we allowing them to experience age-appropriate hardships, or are we insulating them from situations which might be difficult but could foster spiritual and emotional growth?

In the movie, we watch Dave throw Suuzanne into a rushing river to teach her how to navigate rough water. However, he doesn't stand on the shore and watch her flail; he calls out words of encouragement and then jumps in after her to provide aid if she needs it. In the same way, we can encourage our children to follow the cross-shaped way of Jesus, even when it's difficult, by standing with them, reminding them they are not alone, and urging them to call out to a faithful God for help.

Karen states, "I learned early on not to play with fear," and neither should we. Regardless of where we live or our life circumstances, we can entrust our children to a good God who is in control and will take care of them.

QUESTIONS

1. What was your reaction to seeing the choice Dave and Karen have made to bring their children with them wherever they go?
2. What areas do you feel the most fear as you raise your children?
3. Does it feel challenging for you to let your kids struggle with difficult or painful things?
4. Think of a specific parenting issue that causes you to worry. What might it look like in this situation to not give way to fear?
5. Scripture to discuss: Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 46:1-3.





WATCH FILM CLIP

SESSION 3B

LOSE YOUR LIFE TO SAVE IT

Use This Version if Your Group is Primarily Comprised of Non-Parents

Consider these words from Matthew 16:24–26: “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?’”

In his book *Think Again*, Adam Grant retells the tragic story of the smokejumpers who died fighting the Mann Gulch fire in Montana in 1949.² In the aftermath, it was discovered that many of the firefighters died clutching their axes, tools, and packs. They had been trained to hold onto these precious and costly tools while fighting wildfires. Tragically, it was later determined that many of these men might have survived if they had dropped their heavy equipment and outrun the blaze.



What things, possessions, or relationships are we clutching tightly, believing they are the path to good living? In the film clip, Dave says,

You have one life, and you might as well go for it. You're gonna lose your life one day anyway. Anything useful to do that I can do, I want to do it. I want to say no to the swamp of sin on one side that gets me bogged down and the swamp of good things that God didn't ask me to do that will also bog me down.

He makes an interesting point. Many of the things we cling to are inherently good, such as spouses, children, careers, or activities. These are often gifts from God. But when they become the most important things to us, they keep us from knowing God fully and living fruitful lives for Him.

Jesus invites us to live in His upside-down kingdom of God. He tells us that true life is found in setting aside our own interests and serving others in love, no matter the cost. In order to hold tightly to Him, we must hold loosely to things of this world. What Karen Eubank heard God say to her, He also says to you: "This path I have is the safest place—and the richest place—for you."

QUESTIONS

1. Is there anything in your life you would have a hard time giving up if Jesus asked you to?
2. What would it look like for you to let go of what you are holding onto and follow Jesus?
3. What feelings are stirring in your heart and mind as you consider what it could look like to step out in faith?
4. Scripture to discuss: Matthew 16:24-26





WATCH FILM CLIP

SESSION 4

JUSTICE, REVENGE, AND FORGIVENESS

What stirred in your heart as you watched Dave Eubank wrestle with his human desire for justice and revenge in the face of such blatant evil? My guess is that many of us can relate to him. When we are confronted with the horror and pain of genocide, sexual abuse, mass shootings, and acts of terror, our response as people made in the image of God is to protect the innocent and bring about justice for the perpetrators. In this, we reflect the heart of God as seen in many places in Scripture.

Vengeance, however, is another thing altogether. If we are willing to confront the dark places in our hearts, we must acknowledge our desire to cause pain to those who inflict pain on others. "They'll get what they deserve" can feel like justice to us.



We may wrestle with these thoughts and feelings as we watch the news or read the headlines. But what about things that happen closer to home? We will probably never confront an actual terrorist, but we may face a painful relationship with a spouse, a spiteful coworker, or a parent who has caused abuse. Although we may never use the word “vengeance,” it’s easy to want someone else to hurt in the same way they’ve hurt us. Forgiveness? It can be the farthest thing from our minds and the most difficult thing to do.

What was Jesus’ response when faced with those who inflicted the most horrific acts of violence on Him? Forgiveness. Jesus’ willing death on the cross was the Father’s ultimate expression of love and mercy, not just for terrorists but also for you and me. It’s true that we will all be held accountable for our actions, but God’s ultimate judgment over us is mercy. He conquered sin and death through love rather than wrath.

In C.S. Lewis’s book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, an evil witch curses the land of Narnia and all its inhabitants.³ Aslan the lion, who is a Christ figure, seems to be the only one powerful enough to reverse the curse. But when a close companion betrays him, the witch reminds him of the Deep Magic, which has been established by the Emperor at the beginning of time, telling him, “Unless I have blood as the Law says, all Narnia will be overturned and perish in fire and water.”

Rather than give the betrayer over to the witch, Aslan allows himself to be tied up, tortured, and killed by the witch. Believing she has triumphed and won, she readies herself to exact her evil purposes on the land. But Aslan returns to life, to the astonishment and joy of his dearest friends and Narnians. Aslan tells them, “Though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know...If she could have looked a little further back...she would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor’s stead...Death itself would start working backward.”

We live in a world where Jesus Christ has defeated sin and death, and the upside-down kingdom of God reveals that love and mercy are stronger than vengeance. As those who have been forgiven and are dearly loved, one of our greatest acts of strength can be to offer this forgiveness to others.



QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel like forgiveness and love are effective tactics for overcoming evil? Why or why not?
2. What do you think about the statement above, “God’s ultimate judgment over us is mercy”?
3. When have you had to forgive someone who wronged you? What was that process like?
4. Is there anyone currently in your life God might be asking you to forgive?
5. Scripture to discuss: Matthew 18:21–22.





SESSION 5

THE EASY WAY OR THE HARD WAY

At this point in the study, you might be feeling overwhelmed or inspired—or both! So far, you've been asked to step out of your comfort zone, let go of your grip on what you hold dear, and forgive those who hurt and wound us. The model you've been given is a former Army Ranger and Special Forces major who has taken his family to Burma and Iraq.

When they are going through training, the Rangers are taught about “the easy way versus the hard way.” When faced with a situation where there might be a difficult but ultimately better choice versus a choice that is easier but not optimal, they are challenged to be ready to choose the more difficult task, if necessary.

Being willing to choose the hard way isn't limited to the Ranger training. Jesus presents this to His followers as a model for spiritual life. Jesus tells us the way to eternal life is narrow, and few find it. He calls all of us to completely surrender our lives to Him and follow wherever He leads. Christ also tells us that abundant life is found in Him, and He offers that freely! This message appears paradoxical, especially when following Jesus is challenging or when He calls us to take the hard road.



In the film clip, Dave Eubank shares why it's been vital for him to take the hard road at times: "When I give everything to God and listen to Him, there's good fruit...I feel more compassion today...I feel my heart is softer...I feel love for people at a level I never had before." God uses difficult situations to produce good fruit in our lives and the lives of others.

Jesus inaugurated His earthly ministry not by seeking comfort but by going into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. He followed His Father to the cross and experienced physical and emotional pain beyond what any of us will ever understand. But His story didn't end at the cross; it culminated in His resurrection! Beauty and life was birthed out of pain and death.

Where might Jesus be calling you to follow Him into difficult places? Can you use your sanctified imagination to envision the good fruit you will experience by surrendering to Him? If we are willing to push through the discomfort, pain, and challenges, we will often discover Jesus leading us to a more abundant life than we could ever imagine.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the thoughts and feelings that arise when you think about doing hard things?
2. Was there a time when you did something difficult because you felt God was calling you to do it, and good fruit resulted from it?
3. What do you think Jesus means when He talks about abundant life?
4. Is there something you feel God may be asking you to do or surrender to Him that feels difficult?
5. Scripture to discuss: John 10:10.





SESSION 6

GO!

In the last five sessions, we've wrestled with some crucial questions and allowed our hearts to be stirred, perhaps in new ways. So, what now?

In the film clip, Dave states, "In life, it's not what you're going to die for but what you're going to live for." Your heart may resonate with this, and you may be moved towards compassion for those who are hurting in this world. But you may also be unsure of where to start and what to do. How do we hear and discern what God wants for us? There are so many people who need help and so many places to give our time. It can be easy to look at someone like Dave Eubank and feel envious of his unmistakable calling.

But what does he have to say about this subject?



Most of the time, I don't know what to do. Most of the time, I don't hear a clear voice. It's important for me to keep asking God where I should be because He knows best what I should do. We should ask ourselves, 'God, what do you want me to do?' And then look at what's in front of you, the invitations you have, and the things that sync with what you want to do in your heart. And if the door keeps open and we feel peace in our heart, and it's not comfort or fear leading us, we go!

So, where do we start? Here are some things to consider:

- Ask God for help and direction.
- Look around you and identify the needs.
- Consider how God has uniquely created and gifted you. Ask yourself what brings you joy that you can offer others and what feels in sync with ways you desire to help and serve.
- Examine your heart to determine if you are being led by comfort, fear, or pride.

It's astounding to think that God invites us to partner with Him in what He wants to accomplish in the world. We can be part of bringing His kingdom here on earth.

Start somewhere, even if your efforts feel small. Allow God to multiply your endeavors and trust Him for the results. As Dave says, get on the horse behind God, hold on, and enjoy the ride!

QUESTIONS

1. Did the film and this study stir you towards making an impact in your world or not?
2. What needs do you see around you?
3. Share some of the ways God has uniquely gifted you.
4. Do you regularly hear from God or not?
5. As you consider ways to volunteer and give in your community, do you feel like you may be held back by comfort, fear, or pride?
6. Scripture to discuss: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 1 Thessalonians 2:8.





OUTRO

A MESSAGE FROM DAVE EUBANK

Thank you for watching the movie and engaging with the questions in the study guide. We hope you have been challenged to consider what it means to live a life characterized by love rather than comfort, fear, or pride. May God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, and may He use each of us to this end.

¹ The Bible. New International Version (NIV), Zondervan, 1978.

² Adam Grant, Think Again (Penguin Books, 2023).

³ C.S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, (Geoffrey Bles, 1950).