

“REEL FAITH”

The Gospel according to Hollywood

Film and Faith in Dialogue

We Were Soldiers - Overview

Directed by Randall Wallace (2002)

Summary

This is the story of the first major battle of the American phase of the Vietnam War, in November, 1965. In a place soon to be known as The Valley of Death, in a small clearing called landing zone X-Ray, Lt. Colonel Hal Moore and 400 young men from an elite American combat division were surrounded by 4,000 North Vietnamese soldiers. The ensuing battle was one of the most savage in U.S. history. Based on Moore's book, *We Were Soldiers Once...And Young*, the movie is a tribute to the nobility of those men under fire, their acts of valor, and their loyalty to and love for one another.



Themes

The paradox of war: its horror and its purpose ... courage ... patriotism ... the importance of our family and faith community to uphold us when our strength is tested ... unity around a common cause



Connections with Scripture

Commitment:

- **Matthew 10:37-39** – “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”
- **Luke 9:62** – “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

The Christian life as warfare:

- **2 Timothy 2:3-4** – “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer.”
- **2 Timothy 4:7** – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
- **Ephesians 6:10-12** – “...be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”

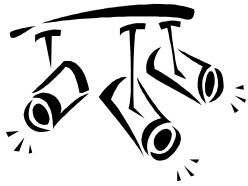


We need one another:

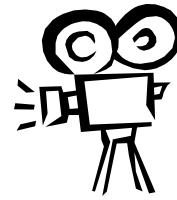
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-11** – “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up.”

Memorable Lines

- Moore: “I'll never forgive myself.” Joe Galloway: “For what, sir?” Moore: “That my men died and I didn't.”
- Moore to Galloway: “You tell the American people what happened here. You tell them how my troopers died.”
- Lt. Col. Moore: “I will be the first to set foot on the field, and I will be the last to step off, and I will leave no one behind. Dead or alive, we will all come home together. So help me, God.”



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***We Were Soldiers* - Discussion Guide**

Readying for battle

We meet Lt. Col. Moore and his men *Start 2/0:09:20, Stop 2/0:12:57*
 Moore as a father *Start 3/0:12:58, Stop 3/0:14:10*
 “Care for each other” *Start 3/0:15:53, Stop 3/0:17:46*
 Moore prays with a soldier *Start 4/0:21:35, Stop 4/0:24:22*

Day 1

The men arrive at Landing Zone X-Ray *Start 7/0:42:38, Stop 7/0:48:36*
 A platoon gets pulled into a fight *Start 8/0:49:36, Stop 8/0:50:58*
 “Stay calm!” *Start 8/0:51:19, Stop 8/0:52:08*
 Night battle *Start 11/1:11:04, Stop 11/1:14:32*
 Telegrams *Start 12/1:14:36, Stop 12/1:19:35*
 A psalm *Start 13/1:20:55, Stop 13/1:22:02*

Day 2

“No non-combatants!” *Start 14/1:31:28, Stop 14/1:32:33*
 Moore won’t leave *Start 16/1:46:16, Stop 16/1:50:02*

Day 3

The aftermath *Start 18/2:01:38, Stop 18/2:05:50*

Questions for Your Table

1. What were your reactions to this movie? What scenes had a particular impact upon you? Why?
2. How does this movie succeed or fail at helping people think Biblically about war?
3. What view of life and the world is presented in this movie?
4. What did you think of Lt. Col. Moore as he is presented in this movie? What can we learn about leadership, friendship, family life, etc. from watching him in action? Do you think he serves as a Christ figure? Why or why not?
5. One critic has called *We Were Soldiers* “war pornography.” At what point, if any, does extreme violence and language in a war movie become inappropriate and/or gratuitous? As a Christian, if you were the director of a movie like this one, what guidelines or criteria would you seek to follow in depicting the horrors of war?
6. What filmmaking techniques did you see today that helped make this movie “work”? Consider things like direction, script, music, location, cinematography, lighting, editing, etc.
7. How could you use this movie to connect with someone who does not share your convictions and values?
8. What message(s) about the Christian life can be found in this movie?