



THE LEGO NINJAGO MOVIE (2017) | *Spiritual Sonship* | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: *We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.*

PRESS START

At its core, **The LEGO Ninjago Movie** is a story about a son who has lost his father; a father who he hates, but also desperately needs. Throughout this film, I was struck by the stark reflection of our spiritual journey in the events of each scene. In our walk with God (or, in the case of the movie, the pursuit of the Ninja way), we are often defined, whether it be in a limiting or empowering way, by our relationship with our earthly Fathers. These relationships color the way we look at the rest of the world, and they can enable us to reach a new level of maturity and self-realization or even prevent us from doing so.

EQUIP

Lloyd didn't choose his fate, or his father. He does his best to follow the Ninja way and fight evil to save his city, day after day. He is faithful to his calling, but feels empty and damaged by a sense of abandonment. Lloyd longs for the love and approval of his father, Garmadon. This reality prevents him from being able to unlock his full potential. It is only as he begins to develop a relationship with his father that he truly starts to walk in self-confidence.

Even though Lloyd faithfully follows a "spiritual father" (his Ninja Master, Wu) who loves him and has great confidence in him, he is not able to reach the goals Wu lays before him; this is because of the limitations present in his life from his relationship with Garmadon. I can't help, but think of **John**

15:13:

John 15:13 (NKJV) ¹³ *Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's for his friends.*

LEVEL UP

ASK: What does our relationship with our earthly father look like? Do we still have bitterness over old hurts or current ones? It can be as simple as the first story that always comes to mind when we think of our father (the perfect gift he gave us or the worst thing we remember him doing). It could also be as subtle as the fact that we still haven't thought through old events from our childhood with the new perspective we gain as adults, or even as parents ourselves. We may have never tried to understand our father's choices. Whatever the situation, old hurts and resentments don't go away until we change our minds about them. Too often, we try to ignore them away, but they still sit in the background and corrupt our current reality without us noticing.

ASK: Do our expectations of how God will treat us reflect our expectations of our earthly father? Or do they reflect the biblical representation of God's unconditional, fatherly love? If we grew up needing to be perfect, to stay silent until spoken to, to always obey instantly and never question, or live up to the family's successes, we might unconsciously assume we need to do the same with God. Even after years of trying, it can be a hard and subtle mold to break free of. Childhood foundational perspectives on life are hard to even become actively aware of, much less change. Still, God is able to do all things, and He is always willing to help us take the next step.

MOD

Beyond our Father, many of our day-to-day relationships can affect our walk with God, whether they tint our perspective on who God is or tempt and hinder us from pursuing him at all. These may include intimate relationships with unsaved partners, co-dependent relationships, or even old roots of bitterness towards those who have wronged us. Our earthly relationships often have a much greater effect on our walk with God than we realize or give them credit for.

ASK: Are there any other relationships or parts of our lives that are affecting our relationship with God? How do our relationships affect us, and do they help us live for God or hinder us?

Are we helping our friends live for God, or are we hindering them?

1 John 4:20 (NKJV) ²⁰ *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

PRAY

Does anyone have anything we need to pray about? We will pray the influences of our relationships with people on our relationship with God will become clearer to us, and that God will reveal Himself to us on a deeper level.

THE NEXT LEVEL

Even after years of healing and forgiving, sometimes we can still fail to realize the love of God fully, because we have never had an earthly example of such love. God Himself is the only true source of that love. Being in His presence daily is the best way to know Him more deeply; are we remembering to do that?

God is a gentleman; He won't force himself on us or make us spend time with Him. Every moment we spend with Him is a free choice and a new opportunity to be transformed anew by love itself.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) ³³ *Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV) ⁵ *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;* ⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

Matthew 7:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*

Knowing God as a Father and accepting His fatherly love is key in our spiritual journey. Though our earthly misconceptions and their roots can be hard to face, it is well worth the price!

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