



# GOD IN FILM

## STUDY GUIDES



Producer



Director



Reviewer

# CHARIOTS OF FIRE

The classic story of Eric Liddell and the 1924 Olympics

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of  
God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

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*God in Film study guides combine your two favourite things, God and movies. Upskill yourself for group discussions that explores deep themes. Learn to be the Producer, Director and Reviewer of your own film discussion group.*



## PRODUCER

Prep for the discussion

*How can you make the most use of your time?*

- Watch the movie first alone to prepare to facilitate the discussion
- Read the guide for the movie you are watching, decide what your group needs
- Have a running sheet for the way the event will run, or use our template.
- Arrange your physical or online space for group dynamics
- Pray for the group before you meet.



## DIRECTOR

Keep the discussion rolling...

*How can you make sure the night runs smoothly?*

- As the "director", you are not the expert but the person who makes sure the night runs smoothly, not the final authority on film or God.
- Ask an opening question, to get people thinking.
- Watch the movie together all the way through to allow people to develop their own ideas
- Prepare key clips to re-watch and discuss (provided in guides). These help with engagement



## REVIEWER

Help your group members become reviewers

*How can you encourage your group to engage with deeper questions?*

- Establish a positive culture. Affirm people's comments and encourage respectful listening from the whole group through your example.
- Don't correct ideas but listen, mirror their response and then ask for the group's opinions to keep discussion flowing
- Encourage experiential comments and opinions. When people become more analytical, try and bring it back to the person's experience of the film by asking questions. Use your pre-prepared clips to refresh their initial reactions

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## Film Synopsis

*Chariots of Fire* is based on a true story, set against the background of the 1924 Olympics. The movie depicts the stories of two outstanding runners with strikingly different motivations. Eric Liddell (Ian Charleson) is a Scottish Presbyterian university student (later to become a missionary in China) who runs to honor the gift of athletic skill that God has given him. Harold Abrahams (Ben Cross) is a secular Jewish student at Cambridge University who runs for himself in order to prove to his prejudiced upper-class schoolmates that a Jew can compete and excel at sports (and, metaphorically, at all levels of enterprise and society). While superficially that sounds as if Liddell is the hero and Abrahams is his foil, nothing could be less true. The movie is a story of two courageous men of integrity, each running for a worthy purpose.



## Produce

### *Planning List*

- 1) Watch the Film, what themes can you see? What will your group connect with?
- 2) Prepare some discussion points to highlight these themes (suggested clips (p. 3)
- 3) Prepare a run sheet or adapt the template
- 4) Pray and prepare your space (online or physical)



## Direct

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Did you enjoy the film? What events, characters or scenes particularly stood out for you?
2. Does faith have a direct correlation to sport?
3. To what lengths would you go to stand up for what you believe in? Did Eric Liddell go too far?



## Review

Early in the film, after Eric Liddell wins a race, he speaks to an admiring crowd of fans and says, "I have no formula for winning the race. Everyone runs in her own way, or his own way. And where does the power come from, to see the race to its end? From within. Jesus said, 'Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you. If with all your hearts you truly seek me, you shall surely find me.' If you commit yourself to the love of Christ, then that is how you run a straight race."

Does the movie portray Liddell as a great preacher? How does the crowd respond?



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## Discussion points

“When I Run I Feel His Pleasure” [56:07–1:00:21]. When Eric Liddell’s sister Jenny warns him that he is losing track of his primary call to return to China as a missionary, that “your mind is not with us anymore, it is full of running and starting and medals and pace,” he responds gently, saying, “I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel his pleasure.” In what pursuits do you feel God’s pleasure?

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

How does Liddell honor God by running? Does his faith give him a competitive edge? Why?

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work. Exodus 20:8–10; cf. Deuteronomy 5:12–15



## Close the Curtain

It is easy to see who wins a race. But how can we tell if we are winning the race that God has called us to run?

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
Philippians 3:14