



# SURRENDER

ONLY TO ONE

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

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# MEET THE TEAM



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Damon Friedman is an elite Special Tactics Officer and leader in special operations with four combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is the recipient of 3 Bronze Stars (one with valor) and the Combat Action medal among other awards. In 2011 He started SOF Missions, a non-profit organization aimed at helping veterans. He is the executive producer of the film SURRENDER ONLY TO ONE which creates awareness of the PTSD and suicide epidemic among the veteran community. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Lewis University, University of Oklahoma, and a doctorate in Intercultural Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary. He, his wife and two kids live in Tampa, Florida.



## **DEAN BONURA, D. MIN.**

CHAPLAIN (COL), U.S. ARMY (RET.)  
**AUTHOR**

Dean Bonura is a retired Army chaplain with over 30 years of military service including two combat tours and several deployments to the Middle East and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He has ministered to Service Members and their families at military installations in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, and has served at several levels of command from battalion to installation. He is the recipient of the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star, among other awards. He also is the author of Beyond Trauma: Hope and Healing for Warriors (2016) and holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Corban University, Western Seminary, and a doctorate from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Denise, live in Memphis, Tennessee.

# ABOUT THE MOVIE

## SURRENDER ONLY TO ONE WARRIORS WIN WHEN THEY SURRENDER TO GOD

FOR ONE WILL SCARCELY DIE FOR A RIGHTEOUS PERSON—THOUGH PERHAPS FOR A GOOD PERSON NONE WOULD DARE EVEN TO DIE—BUT GOD SHOWS HIS LOVE FOR US IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.  
ROMANS 5:7-8 (ESV)

BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.  
I CORINTHIANS 15:57 (ESV)

**Surrender only to ONE is a movie dedicated to understanding the myriad of traumatic issues military warriors and their families face, and providing spiritual and lasting solutions that enable healing and spiritual growth.**

The stories conveyed in this film are true. The five men and one woman you meet are combat veterans who experienced horrors of war that no one could imagine. All served as Special Operators in the various branches of the military. We'd call them patriots and heroes; but they would say that they were just doing their job. They were fulfilling their oath to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States." We'd say that's a noble thing. They'd say they just wanted to serve because they loved their country and wanted to protect their families. However, they paid a dear price. Each of them came back to us broken, shattered people incapable of enjoying the life they once knew. Their stories are full of pain and heartache. Many of them found themselves unable to adjust to civilian life, haunted by the things they did and the things they saw. Some of them, finding themselves at their wits' end, attempted to end their pain by suicide. Others tried to drown their pain in alcohol or take it out on others in various forms of abuse, such as domestic violence or road rage.



# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IT MEANS TO SURRENDER

**For most people, especially military veterans, the idea of surrender is a foreign notion.**

Warriors don't quit and they certainly don't surrender, not if there is still a will or a means to resist. But this film is not about surrendering to the enemy; it's about defeating the enemy. It's about finding faith and discovering a new purpose for living. It's about experiencing hope where there was despair and peace where there was once hatred and violence.

At the close of the American Civil War, General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia fought a series of delaying actions as it retreated west toward the little town of Appomattox Court House in Virginia. The losses of Richmond and Petersburg, Lee's logistical support and supply base, pretty much spelled the end of his army and the South's chances for victory. It was only a matter of time as Grant's Army surrounded Lee's Army, closing the door for escape.

So it was in April 1865 that Lee met with Grant at Appomattox and agreed to generous terms of surrender. The war was basically over and the South had lost. Yet, the surrender led to reconciliation. It brought a divided and bloodied country together again. It instilled hope for a better future. It also meant peace.

**“IT’S ABOUT FINDING FAITH AND  
DISCOVERING A NEW A PURPOSE FOR  
LIVING. IT’S ABOUT EXPERIENCING  
HOPE WHERE THERE WAS DESPAIR  
AND PEACE WHERE THERE WAS ONCE  
HATRED AND VIOLENCE.”**

THIS FILM IS ABOUT A SIMILAR KIND OF SURRENDER:  
THE SURRENDER THAT LEADS TO IMMEDIATE  
**RECONCILIATION** AND **PEACE**. IT'S A SURRENDER THAT  
ENDS ALL THE HOSTILITY OF A WAR THAT RAGES WITHIN  
ONE'S SOUL, THE EFFECTS OF KILLING, THE AFTERMATH  
OF WAR AND ALL ITS EVIL. WHAT IS THIS SURRENDER?  
IT'S SURRENDERING TO THE COMMANDER OF THE  
UNIVERSE, TO **JESUS CHRIST**, THE CREATOR AND SAVIOR,  
THE ONE WHO DIED FOR ALL OF US, THE ONE WHO WILL  
PUT AN END TO ALL EVIL, PAIN AND SUFFERING  
ONCE AND FOR ALL (REVELATION 21:4).

War changes anyone associated with it—the warrior, his or her family, and the myriads of innocent people caught up in it. It’s a nasty but sometimes necessary business. But what’s also unfortunate is that the war often continues inside after the warrior returns home. She or he may experience enormous grief over the loss of fellow comrades, grief or guilt over decisions that were made or actions that were taken. So many of these also experience a deep sense of hopelessness and loss of purpose. They feel isolated and alone, unable to reconnect to family and friends. Many marriages end in divorce. Some relationships lead to abuse or violence. Besides such clinical issues as hyper-vigilance, sleeplessness, or intrusive thoughts, most of these heroes suffer from uncontrolled anger and irritability. Anger, a very common symptom, is easily triggered by a sight, a smell, or a thought, and can lead to violence beyond the battlefield.

Thousands of people in our veteran communities are suffering today from the effects of their combat experience. More have served now in the military in Iraq or Afghanistan than those who served in Vietnam. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have become America’s longest war. According to statistics kept by the Veterans Administration, *over 1000 vets attempt suicide every month, and approximately twenty-two take their lives everyday.* That’s horrific.

BUT THERE’S HOPE. THERE’S HELP. THERE’S AN ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM.  
AND THAT’S WHAT THIS FILM AND DISCUSSION GUIDE IS ALL ABOUT.

The prayer of this writer and the producer is that you will find lasting healing by your full participation in this small group program; that you will discover the answers to the things that give you pain, that have disrupted or even destroyed your life. God is there for you. He loved you enough to give his life for you and provide a way for you to live a whole new life full of joy, hope, peace, and purpose (2 Corinthians 5:17).



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

**THE SURRENDER ONLY TO ONE DISCUSSION GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR USE AFTER VIEWING THE ENTIRE FILM. IT'S DESIGNED TO PROMPT AND GENERATE DISCUSSION AROUND EIGHT THEMES FOUND IN SURRENDER ONLY TO ONE.**

Incorporating relevant Scriptures and probing questions, the guide encourages group interaction and individual reflection to promote understanding and spiritual growth.

While each theme is considered separately as a “stand alone” discussion topic and/or topic for personal reflection, collectively they represent eight parts of a whole that are based on the entire cinematic presentation, culminating in a call for action or decision.

**THE GUIDE CONSISTS OF EIGHT GROUP SESSIONS THAT ADDRESS A SPECIFIC THEME. EACH SESSION PROVIDES FOR GROUP INTERACTION AND INDIVIDUAL WORK.**



**THE EIGHT SESSIONS CONTAIN FIVE SUBSECTIONS:**

- 1 SESSION OVERVIEW
- 2 KEY SCRIPTURES
- 3 GROUP DISCUSSION
- 4 AFTER-ACTION REVIEW
- 5 PERSONAL REFLECTION

**1. SESSION OVERVIEW:** Each session begins with a session overview that's designed for use in a group setting. It introduces the group to the theme that will be the focus of the discussion and later individual work. It also orients the group to the particular topic identified in the film, and prepares the group for the discussion questions that follow. The group leader reads through the session overview and answers any questions from the group. As part of the session overview, the leader also introduces the growth objectives that are listed for that particular session. The objectives are tailored to the session's theme. The leader responds to any questions related to the session objectives. In subsequent sessions, the leader has the option to conduct a brief review of the previous session and allow for sharing of personal reflections from the previous session.

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**2. KEY SCRIPTURES:** Relevant Scriptures are listed for each session and are used to enhance group discussion and aid in individual work that's conducted between sessions. Group members may read each Scripture out loud or silently, and leaders may clarify questions that arise from the readings. Members of the group will have opportunities later in other sections to respond to questions related to Key Scriptures.

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**3. GROUP DISCUSSION:** Group discussion focuses on scenes from the movie, *SURRENDER ONLY TO ONE*. Since the group has already viewed the entire movie, only clips from the movie are viewed. One or more clips approximately 1-4 minutes in length are listed under "Scenes for Review" and are relevant to the session's theme. The clips form the basis for the discussion questions. Space is provided in the guide for members to record their own responses to the questions as well as responses from others.

**4. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW:** This section is designed to summarize the group session and is intended to tie the elements of the session together by integrating the Scriptures, the Scenes, and the Discussion into several “Lessons Learned.” The leader may ask several cognitive, emotive, and behavioral questions such as: “What did you learn from this session?” “What emotions did you experience?” “How did this session help you in your faith journey?” And, “What actions will you take from here?” The section is designed to bring closure to the theme and ensure the group is prepared to do their individual work and be ready for their next session. Leaders also ensure group members feel safe and comfortable before they leave the meeting.

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**5. PERSONAL REFLECTION:** Each member of the group is given an opportunity to further reflect on the material covered in the group session. The section is individually completed after the group session and focused on personalizing the material. It includes a “Let’s Go Deeper” portion that’s geared to more interaction with the Scriptures. During the Session Overview for subsequent sessions, the leader may ask members of the group to voluntarily share their reflections from the previous session. Leaders will allow a few minutes for sharing, and then take a few moments to summarize the previous session as well as introduce the new session’s theme.

# SESSION ONE



## THEME ONE: THE PROBLEM OF SUICIDE

### SESSION OVERVIEW:

In this session you will consider the problem of suicide among veterans and military members. Suicide among Service Members and veterans is at epidemic proportions with 5000 to 8000 vets taking their own lives each year. That's twenty-two suicides every day. No one knows how many more attempt suicide. The issues that lead to suicide are multi-faceted: unresolved guilt, grief, or shame; inability to reconcile with the problem of killing; pain associated with loss of hope, meaning and purpose; and, all the associated effects of trauma fueled by anger, various losses, and inability to adjust to civilian life or manage stress.

### GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- TO APPRECIATE THE VALUE GOD PLACES ON THE PERSON
- TO UNDERSTAND ONE'S UNIQUENESS BEFORE GOD
- TO LEARN THAT THERE IS A PURPOSE FOR EVERY PERSON CREATED BY GOD
- TO RECOGNIZE THE RESOURCES GOD GIVES TO SUSTAIN AND ENJOY LIFE

# KEY SCRIPTURES:

GENESIS 1:28-28A (ESV):

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them.

GENESIS 2:7 (ESV):

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

PSALM 8:3-6 (ESV):

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

ROMANS 5:8 (ESV):

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

PSALM 139:13-17 (ESV):

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

ISAIAH 41:10 (ESV):

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

## **ISAIAH 40:28-31 (ESV):**

HAVE YOU NOT KNOWN? HAVE YOU NOT HEARD? THE LORD IS THE EVER-LASTING GOD, THE CREATOR OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. HE DOES NOT FAINT OR GROW WEARY; HIS UNDERSTANDING IS UNSEARCHABLE.

HE GIVES POWER TO THE FAINT, AND TO HIM WHO HAS NO MIGHT HE INCREASES STRENGTH.

EVEN YOUTHS SHALL FAINT AND BE WEARY, AND YOUNG MEN SHALL FALL EXHAUSTED;

BUT THEY WHO WAIT FOR THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS LIKE EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT BE WEARY; THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT."

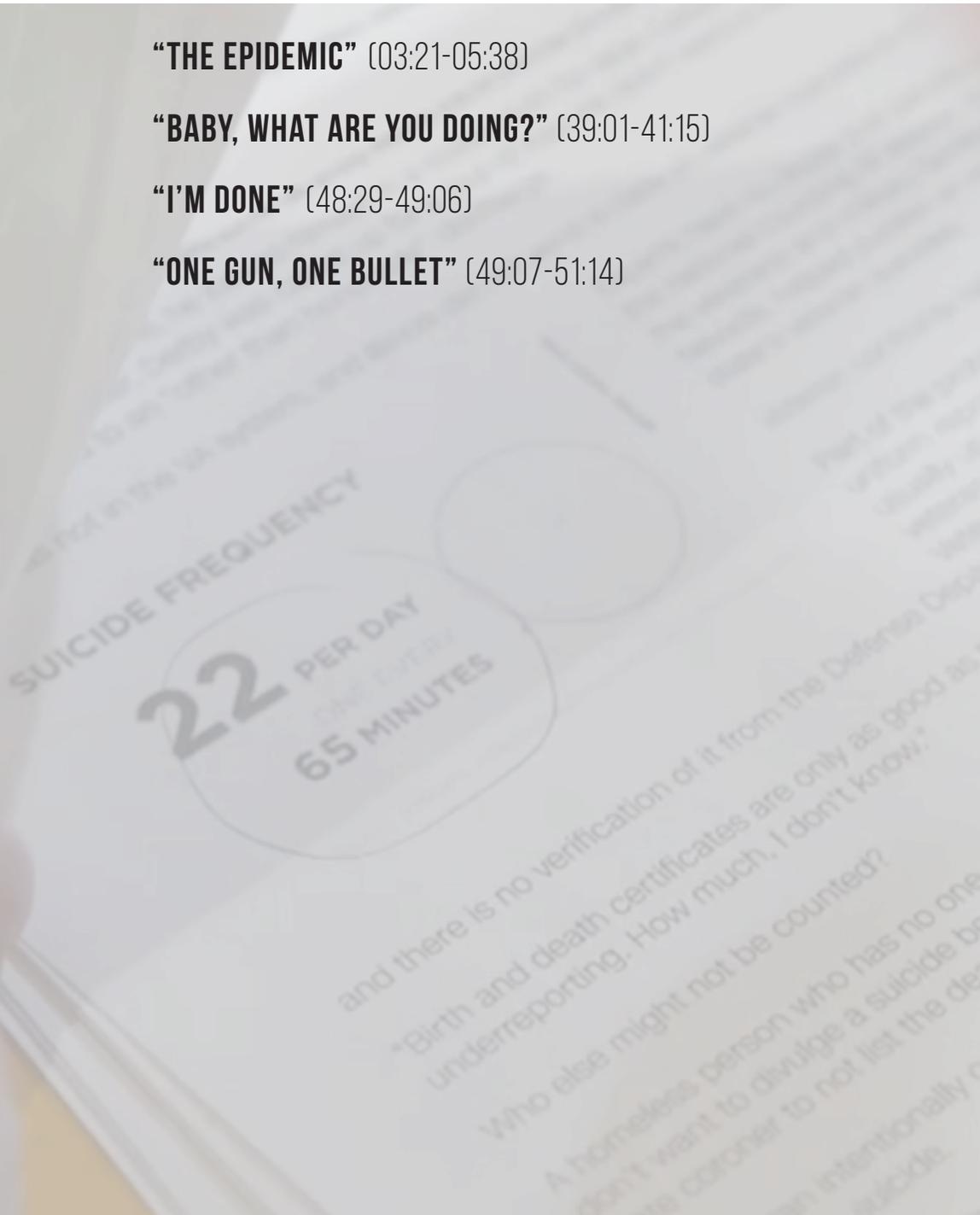
# GROUP DISCUSSION: SCENES FOR REVIEW

**“THE EPIDEMIC”** (03:21-05:38)

**“BABY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?”** (39:01-41:15)

**“I’M DONE”** (48:29-49:06)

**“ONE GUN, ONE BULLET”** (49:07-51:14)



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the “epidemic” referred to in the opening scene of the film. (See *“The Epidemic.”*) Based on the film, what are some of the stressors or signs of potential suicide?
2. In what ways have you been affected by suicide in the military community?
3. Those who contemplate suicide feel all their options are exhausted. Their pain is just too great; they think the only way they can put an end to the pain is to kill themselves. They give up. They surrender to the enemy. How is surrendering to God so much different than surrendering to suicide?
4. Do you think the problem of suicide is spiritual, warranting a spiritual answer or solution? Why or why not? (See *“One Gun, One Bullet.”*)
5. To what extent do you think faith in God helps a person deal with the kind of issues that might lead to suicide? How so? (See *“One Gun, One Bullet.”*)
6. Do you agree with those who say that Jesus saved them from killing themselves? Why or why not?

# AFTER-ACTION REVIEW

1. What new information did you learn about the problem of suicide among military members and veterans?
2. What person in the film did you feel a connection to and why?
3. How were you affected emotionally as you viewed the scenes on suicide?
4. Based on Key Scriptures presented in this session, why are you important and valued? What does God say about you?
5. Based on the scenes in the movie, can you identify some of the resources that were available to those contemplating suicide? Can you think of others?
6. In the final scene that you reviewed, how did the fellow Operator help his teammate who was contemplating suicide? Why is this significant?

# PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Ask yourself: Am I special to God? Why? How does this perspective of being valued by God shape your ability to navigate your faith journey?

2. In one of the final scenes, an Operator is contemplating suicide, calls a friend who connects him to fellow Operator who shares the message of Christ with him. Given the scenes you reviewed, what is that message? How does it apply to you?

## *REVIEW THE KEY SCRIPTURES FOR THIS SESSION*

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- How does the knowledge of being created in the “image of God” help you understand the value of human life?
  
- What does it mean to you that God has given humanity a unique and honored place in creation? (*See passages in Genesis 1, 2 and Psalms 8, 139.*)

## *LETS GO DEEPER.*

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- What verses could you use to help someone thinking about suicide?
  
- Review Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10. How does the knowledge of God’s strength and presence help you look at your life differently?

**EVERY 65 MINUTES  
WE LOSE ONE  
AMERICAN HERO,  
NOT FIGHTING AN ENEMY  
DOWN RANGE, BUT A  
VICIOUS INWARD ONE.**

**GEN OHMER**





SOF Missions is a military and veteran's service organization made up of veterans, health care professionals, contractors, group leaders, missionaries, volunteers and everyday people who are passionate about making a global impact for God's Kingdom. SOF Missions creates awareness of the severe challenges our veterans are experiencing. We develop support groups to help veterans who struggle with PTS and PTSD, and sponsor veterans through an intensive, personalized program that provides a holistic path of wellness. Our goal is to help warriors know God, the Commander of the Universe, and recognize their ultimate purpose in this life.

Please visit [www.SOFMissions.com](http://www.SOFMissions.com) to check out the resources we make available to military members, veterans, and their families.



The Warrior's Journey is an interactive online resource for military members, veterans and their families. It presents the message of faith as a path for them to find wholeness in everyday life. In cooperation with other military partnerships, foundations, and non-profits, TWJ presents a wide range of resources that cover the unique issues that they encounter in service and at home. VISION of The Warrior's Journey is that warriors and their families will live in wholeness and be equipped to navigate the issues of life. MISSION of The Warrior's Journey is to help warriors and their families discover and grow in their journey with God by providing contextual opportunities to participate in an active faith community of believers. STRATEGY of The Warrior's Journey is to interact online with warriors and their families in finding wholeness in daily life by searching, presenting, connecting, growing, and belonging.

Please visit [www.TheWarriorsJourney.org](http://www.TheWarriorsJourney.org) to check out the resources we make available to military members, veteran and their families.