



Disc 14 ~ Episode 1 A New Dawn in Sicily ~ Acceptance

Y Video Summary

This powerful dramatic two part series was filmed in Sicily, Italy where the Italian mafia has its roots. In this first episode, we see Chad searching for acceptance, power and influence. To gain these things he decides to join the mafia. This involves seeking out the blessing of Don Vito and gaining his backing. Chad joins the mafia family and begins to start enjoying his newfound influence.

Y Icebreaker Lunch Trouble

A Mexican man, an Italian man and blonde female construction worker were involved in a high-rise construction project. One day, during a break, they were opening their lunch. The Mexican found a taco in his lunch, which had been packed by his wife. In disgust, he said "I hate tacos and if my wife ever gives me tacos again, I am going to kill myself." The Italian opened up his lunch and found spaghetti. He said the same, "if my wife ever gives me spaghetti again I am going to kill myself." Well the blonde opened up her lunch and found a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. She said "if I ever get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich again, I will kill myself." Well the next day during their break the Mexican found a taco again in his lunch. He threw himself off the building and killed himself. The Italian found spaghetti and he also jumped and killed himself. Finally the blonde found a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and also jumped and killed herself. At the funeral the two wives and the blonde's husband were crying. The Mexican's wife said "if only I had known he didn't like tacos, I would have given him a burrito." The Italian man's wife was crying and said "if only I had known he didn't like spaghetti, I would have packed him

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some Pizza." The blonde's husband was also crying. He said "I don't understand, I don't understand. SHE PACKS HER OWN LUNCH."

Y Primary Lesson Seeking Acceptance in All the Wrong Places

This is the first of two lessons on the power of peer pressure. Most peer pressure starts because people are seeking acceptance from the wrong places. It is all based on perception. Most people think that if they hang with the right crowd of friends, that others will accept them. Some also believe that if they wear the right clothes or do the certain things or join the right group, that then they will be seen as cool.

The first lesson to overcoming peer pressure is for people to realize that true acceptance comes from God and is not based on what you do but on who you are. If you are content with who God created you to be then you will be secure in yourself and others will be much more likely to accept you.

Y Facts, Figures & Illustrations

- The Sicilian Mafia is the original mafia in Italy and dates back to the 19th century.
- The term Mafia is not one that is actually used by members of this crime organization in Italy. The term *cosa nostra* or 'our thing' is preferred by Sicilian mafia members.
- Like all mafia groups in Italy, the Sicilian Mafia operates a code of honor and has a strict hierarchical structure. Recruits to the Mafia are sworn in to the family through secret ceremonies, after which point they become mafia members and are expected to stay so for life.
- The Sicilian mafia is most famous to the outside world because of its branch in America which arose out of mass migration from Sicily in the late 19th century.
- Inside Italy, The Sicilian mafia is particularly known for its assassinations of high profile figures including police chiefs, judges and politicians.

- The Mafia in Italy constitutes a formidable economic force which accounts for approximately 10% of Italy's Gross Domestic Product. Annual turnover of the Italian Mafia is estimated at around 10 billion Euros or about \$13.5 billion USD.

Source: <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk>



Key Scriptures

(From NKJV, unless otherwise noted)

Matthew 6:31-33 ~ *So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing. Why be like the pagans who are so deeply concerned about these things? Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern. (NLT)*

Philippians 3:9-10 ~ *I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. (NLT)*

Luke 16:15 ~ *And He (Jesus) said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

Matthew 6:19-21 ~ *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*



Complimentary Story

Moving a Mountain

A UK minister, David Hathaway, wrote the following. The people who imprisoned him tried to use every kind of pressure possible to get him to change his beliefs. David learned that trusting in God's intervention was the only way to overcome the ungodly system that was holding him. I will let him tell in his own words how he came across this remarkable true story.

Source: <http://www.propheticvision.org.uk>

32 years ago I was put in a communist prison in Czechoslovakia. They said if I did not give up my faith, they would not let me out alive – the only way to get out was to become a communist! They gave me books to re-educate me, one was the true story of Marco Polo (a merchant venturer from Italy 1254-1354) and his travels in China with the Emperor, Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan.

One day the Chinese Emperor and Marco Polo came to a village and found a small group of believers. The Emperor was very cruel and commanded his soldiers to kill them. But, he said, "Before I kill you, I will prove that your God is dead and your Bible is a lie. Your Bible says, if you've got faith like a mustard seed, you will see a mountain and command it to move, and it will go. Outside your village is a mountain – I'm going to give you three days to move it!"

The believers had three days to move the mountain! So Marco Polo said that they cried out the first day, "Oh God, we're going to die, move the mountain!" And the mountain did not move. The second day, they found one man 'more spiritual' than the rest and they made him do the praying. He prayed all day, "Oh God, we're going to die, move the mountain!" And still the mountain did not move. The third day, the Emperor came back, commanded his soldiers to line the believers up outside the village and cut off their heads!

But first, he said, "I gave you three days to move the mountain and it's still there! You have no God, your Bible is a lie, and I want you to die knowing that there is no God – you must pray one more time while I watch you! Then I'll kill you."

In that communist prison, with no Bible, this is what I read: Marco Polo said, that this time those believers began to pray differently. They looked at that mountain, and began to command it to move in the name of Jesus! As the Emperor watched, the mountain MOVED! He became a believer and sent Marco Polo back to bring missionaries to evangelize China. Because of that one miracle, the whole nation was opened to the Gospel and today there are more than 100 million believers in China! Why? Because God moved a mountain.

This story that David Hathaway read in that Czechoslovakian prison so inspired him that he began to speak to the mountain of his imprisonment. After only one year in the prison, the Prime Minister of England flew to Prague just to secure his release. He flew back to the UK with the Prime Minister and ended up on television and in the newspapers declaring the miracle God had done.



Discussion Questions

1. Talk to your group about the most difficult type of peer pressure you face in your life. Each person's can be different or the same.
2. Discuss how people evaluate their sense of identity (Hint: sports, clothes, music, etc.) How do most of your friends see themselves? Is it based on God's value of them or on other's?
3. All people want acceptance, which can only be found in Jesus Christ. Discuss the basis of acceptance that the father had for his son in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Did the father take him back because of good behavior, looks, or merit? Why?
4. Pray for each other that you will accept yourself the way God sees you and not fear what others think, say or do to you.

