



“Oh, God!”

SYNOPSIS:

“Jerry Landers, a supermarket assistant manager and a good yet non-religious person, suddenly finds a note in the mail one day that grants him an ‘interview’ with God. Thinking it to be a hoax he tosses it away, but when it keeps reappearing he finally gives in. Skeptical at first, he ends up carrying His personal message – that the world can work with what God has given us.” (courtesy IMDB)

The message in the movie is that God is alive and that he cares for us. His message tells us that he believes in human beings, and that everything is going to be fine if people do right by each other and take better care of things and each other. The message also tells us that we are in control of our lives, not God.

One of the points of this movie is that people in general tend to expect God to fit into their limited ways of perceiving him. We expect him to prove himself by miracles or playing the role of “Mr. Fixit.” Our attitude can often be “let God take care of it.” This film says that while God certainly does care about how we handle our lives on earth, he also says that we are responsible for what happens here. (article from Daniel Sweet)

Discussion Questions for “OH GOD.”

Exploring some of life’s toughest questions...

1. **When Jerry Landers asks God why he won’t work some magic and solve all the world’s problems...**

God responds: *“I gave you a world and everything in it.”*

Landers says: *“But we need help!”*

God replies: *“That’s why I gave you each other.”*

In thinking about God’s response to Landers, can you describe a time when you or your community came together or joined with others outside your community to help solve any of our world’s problems? If so, describe what it was and how they did it together.

2. **Why does God allow suffering in the world?** The following brief interaction between the two lead characters helps us to explore this question:

Landers: *How can you permit all the suffering that goes on in the world?*

God: *Ah, how can I permit the suffering?*

Landers: *Yes!*

God: *I don't permit the suffering. You do. Free will. All the choices are yours.*

Landers: *Choices? What choices?*

God: *You can love each other, cherish and nurture each other or you can kill each other. You're also turning the sky into mud. I look down, I can't believe the filth. Using the rivers for toilets, poisoning my fishes. You want a miracle? You make a fish from scratch. You can't! You think only God can make a tree? Try coming up with a mackerel. And when the last one's gone, that'll be that. Eighty-six on the fish, goodbye sky, so long world, over and out.*

According to this film, God gave us free will to make our own choices which can sometimes lead to suffering in the world. This is in contrast to what some believe that God is in control of everything. What do you believe to be true in your life? Why?

3. **Does God hear your prayers?** Another fantastic point in the film to take notice of is concerning *prayer*.

Jerry Landers: *People are always praying to you. Do you listen?*

God: *I can't help hearing. I don't always listen.*

Jerry Landers: *So then you don't care.*

God: *Of course I care! But what can I do?*

Jerry Landers: *What can you do? You're God!*

God: *Only for the big picture. I don't get into details.*

What are your thoughts when God says he is only for the big picture and that he doesn’t get into the details.? What has been your own experience with prayer?

4. **Why does God choose simple unassuming people to perform enormous tasks?** When the main character Jerry Landers was wondering why God chose him over others seemingly more qualified in religious matters, such as evangelists, priests, bishops or even the Pope, God answered in a very surprising way.

Jerry Landers: *Why me?*

God: *Why not you?*

Jerry Landers: *You mean there's no special...*

God: *Life is a crap shoot, like the millionth customer that crosses the bridge gets to shake hands with the governor. You thought I picked you because you're better than everyone?*

Jerry Landers: *I'm not?*

God: *You're better than some, but not as good as others, but you crossed the bridge at the right time.*

Jerry Landers: *I don't even go to any church!*

God: *Neither do I.*

The script writers had an interesting question to ponder about God not being interested in religion. In the film's message, God looks on the heart, not on the religion. Share your thoughts and views on this idea that the film offers.

5. **Why doesn't God talk back when I talk (or pray) to him?** A lot of people pray to God and wonder if their prayers are being heard. Some wonder deep down inside if he even exists. After all, we're doing all the talking and many of us are not hearing anything back, like in a conversation. It's odd how others will more readily believe the devil exists and interacts with people but then scoff at the idea of God's existence and human interaction. In the film God says...

God: *Why is it so hard for you to believe? Is my physical existence any more improbable than your own? What about all that hoo-ha with the devil awhile ago from that movie? (Note: A reference to the 1973 movie titled "The Exorcist".) Nobody had any problem believing that the devil took over and existed in a little girl. All she had to do was wet the rug, throw up some pea soup and everybody believed. The devil you could believe, but not God? I work in my own way. I don't get inside little children; they got enough to do just being themselves. Also, I'm not about to go around to every person in the world and say, 'Look it's me, I wanna talk to you.' So I picked one man. One very good man. I told him God lives. I live. He had trouble believing too, in the beginning. I understood. I'm not sure how this whole miracle business started, the idea that anything connected with me has to be a miracle. Personally, I'm sorry that it did. Makes the distance between us even greater. But if a miracle helps you believe that I am who I say I am, I'll give you one. A good one.*

God is willing and capable of speaking to your heart. How do you find ways to remember how to listen, cut through the chatter in your own mind and hear his voice in your heart?

Words to reflect on during Lent on the encouragement of having faith.

In the film God says...

God: *I know how hard it is in these times to have faith. But maybe if you could have the faith to start with, maybe the times would change. You could change them. Think about it. Try. And try not to hurt each other. There's been enough of that. It really gets in the way. I'm a God of very few words and Jerry's already given you mine. However hopeless, helpless, mixed up and scary it all gets, it can work. If you find it hard to believe in me, maybe it would help you to know that I believe in you.*

Finer words are seldom spoken in the movies, especially these days.

To sum it all up: Let's try to get along better in the world, have faith in God and in yourself to improve. God believes in you. And try to keep it simple. God's ways are not complicated. Man makes it hard. God chooses the base things of the world to humble the proud.

Do unto others as you would have done unto you, and love those who care for you. Take personal responsibility for your free will actions and for the impact you have on the world around you. If we all did a little bit more of that, then life would be more fulfilling, and the world would be a better place for everyone.

Portions of this were borrowed from an article from Daniel Sweet.