

Ghosts of Girlfriends Past

Connor Mead and Jenny Perotti had been childhood sweethearts. However, Connor's womanizing uncle tells him that the power in relationships lies with whoever cares less. So, at his uncle's ill advice, Connor flees at the first sign of any true feeling and becomes a very proficient womanizer. Jenny, however, holds onto hope that Connor might change his sordid ways, believing there really is a good and kind person deep inside. So, when a wedding brings them together again, the question arises, can Connor be reformed? Will he ever change for the better? Following the Dickens' Christmas Carol tradition, Connor's eyes are opened to see the pain he has caused and the emptiness of his future. He is instantly changed into the man Jenny knew he could be and they presumably live happily ever after.

Is the ending a little naïve though? When a person has the kind of sexual habits and addictions and indiscretions that Connor has in the movie, is it realistic to think that they can suddenly move on to a healthy and monogamous relationship? Certainly, God can intervene and make such instantaneous revelatory changes in a person's life, but I think more often than not, the process of reform is an arduous struggle. Further, just because a person changes instantly, doesn't mean they are spared the consequences of past choices. Can you live a life like Connor's without paying some consequences?

Jenny's character gives a pretty fair representation of the heart of a woman. Women want to be the reason a man changes his ways. They want to believe in the good deep inside another. There is a beauty in such a quality. However, there is also a danger. When women watch this, they are encouraged to think that the rascal they are currently hoping and believing in is worth waiting for (this can be good or bad, depending on the circumstances). They may also be encouraged to forget that there are serious consequences that will still have to be faced, even if said rascal does change. It is a great thing to believe in the good in another person, but an even better thing to have a realistic perspective on the consequences that accompany the bad choices. To have naïve hope and belief only causes pain.

Let me also point out here that although Jenny desperately tried to get Connor to change and frequently reminded him of the good person she knew him to be, her efforts were not enough. Jenny's love was not enough to change Connor. Her influence was not enough to supercede the poisoning advice of Uncle Wayne. It took an outside force, an outside revelation for Connor to change.

In a statement of profound revelation at the end of the movie, Connor says that "Someone once told me that the power in all relationships lies with whoever cares less, and he was right. But power isn't happiness, and I think that maybe happiness comes from caring more about people rather than less." This is really the heart of the movie, being willing to give up power and control in order to care more for others.

Questions for Discussion:

- Have you ever known someone who had a radical change (or have you had a radical change in your own life)? What was the cause of that change? Did religion/faith/Christ have something to do with it?
- Is there someone you are hoping will change? Is there someone who you believe, underneath it all, is really a quality individual, but their actions/habits/behaviors are getting in the way? If so,

what do you think it would take for them to change? Do you think there is anything you can do to help the situation? Do you think that if they believed in Jesus and lived life according to his ways it would solve the problem?

- Are you a person who is afraid to give up control in order to love others more? What is it that you are afraid of?
- Who are the influences in your life who have shaped your thinking and behavior? Are they good influences or bad influences (the fruit of their choices will help you know)? Is it possible that someday they may come to you and tell you they were wrong? What is the standard by which you measure the advice of others to be sure it is good, sound advice?