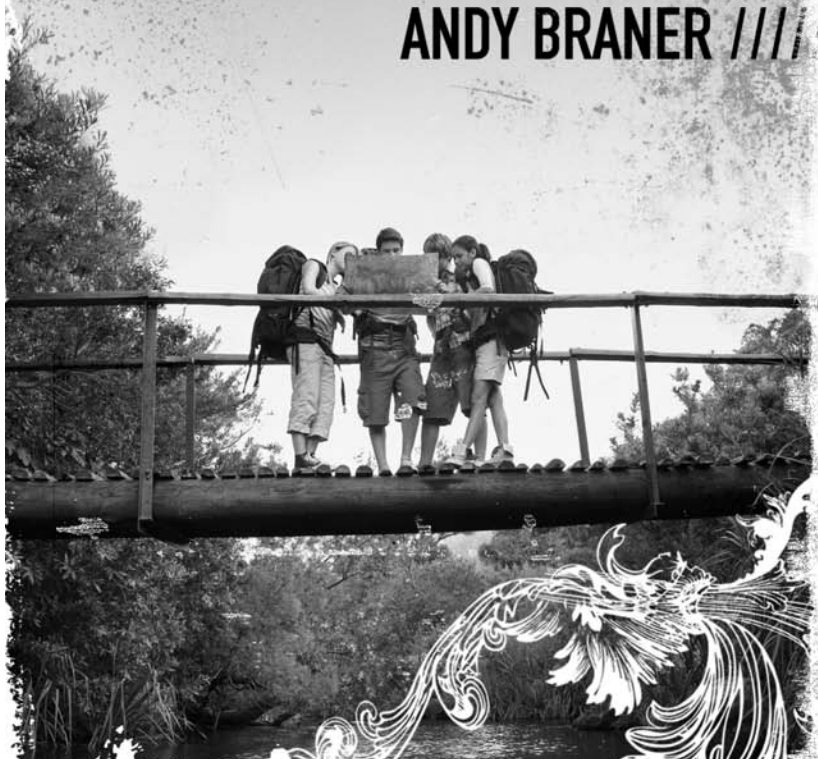




# DUPLICATE THIS!

SHOWING YOUR FRIENDS HOW TO LIVE LIKE JESUS

ANDY BRANER ///



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SECTION 1 ///

# DUPLICATION FOUNDATIONS

The chapters in this section deal with core principles and ideas behind discipleship.

*Read this next!*



A large, intricate, light gray decorative flourish or scrollwork design that frames the top and right sides of the page. It features swirling lines, leaf-like motifs, and elegant curves.

## CHAPTER ONE

# IMITATING TRUTH

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

—PHILIPPIANS 3:17-21 (ESV)

**H**ave you ever wanted to play around and pretend you're someone else? Come on—how cool would it be to have some sort of special power, or be someone great in history, or maybe just have a different personality so you could be someone else, even for just a little while. Well, guess what? You can. Courtesy of one of the greatest forms of communication in our world—acting.

Whether on stage or on the big screen, actors have captured our attention and imagination since time began. After all, acting is one of the most effective ways to share experiences, challenge critical thinking, or purely entertain an audience. These days, although many movies aren't worth watching due to their questionable content, every now and then you find a great one, maybe even a classic—such as *City Slickers*.

It's not that it's an epic work of art; the magic of *City Slickers* is all about the group of actors collaborating to tell the story of a middle-aged man navigating mortality.

Mitch Robbins is an advertising salesman, played by Billy Crystal, who falls into a serious depression on the evening of his 40th birthday. In order to help him out of it, his friends take him on an adrenaline-filled cattle drive in the most beautiful parts of the western U.S.

Mitch and his friends are completely unprepared. Instead of the sound of honking horns in the streets, these city slickers are forced to live with the moan of

the cattle in the pen, use old-fashioned outhouses, and survive without creature comforts and familiar things. Instead of dodging pedestrians in crosswalks, they're dodging the pain of horseback riding day in, day out.

The trail boss, Curly, is a 70-year-old man, wrinkled from years in the sun. The kind of guy who shaves with a bowie knife; who carries an air of intimidation everywhere he goes. When Curly enters the scene, a strange music whistles in the background to warn the audience of his presence. A cast of cowboys add further ambience to the recreation of a real cattle drive.

The *City Slickers* writers did an incredible job of integrating humor. I mean I love to laugh, but sometimes I find it hard to laugh out loud in the theater. This movie had me laughing uncontrollably. My side hurt so badly sometimes I couldn't breathe.

It was a great film, but none of it would have been possible if the actors didn't sell their characters. They understood that the various nuances of each character added to the overall feel of the story. The actors used their abilities to become different people, and the sum of their efforts helped create a cinematic classic.

After I saw *City Slickers*, I decided this craft of acting was something I had to do. A calling? An intuition? Maybe just the possibility that I could be good at something? I don't know what the draw was, but one thing I knew for certain—it was extremely important for me to create. I had to be involved in an art form that communicated big ideas to an audience.

Biology was too structured.

English had too many grammatical lessons.

Engineering? Yeah, right. I haven't been good at math since the day the maternity doctor slapped me on the behind and said, "Welcome to the world!"

I felt it in my gut—I had to become an actor; I had to create in this way. I was compelled to indulge my life in the stories of different characters to ultimately make a difference in the world. I figured if I could logically present an idea onstage, I might be able to address social problems plaguing the human condition.

As I think back now, it seems pretty clear. God chiseled in me a desire to tell stories, but to that point in my life, the only storytelling I'd been doing was when I was trying to act cool in front of girls at the freshman dance. The year I saw *City Slickers*, girls were the most important part of life, but something deep inside kept calling, *There has to be something more than this dating scene.*

The theater directed my energy in positive, productive ways. I was determined to master characters and collaborate with others to bring about true forms of stories that we could use to develop a laboratory of thinking. It wasn't that I wanted to be in the spotlight; I simply desired to help people think about certain issues by using my newfound artistic medium.

And so, acting became my life. I threw everything I had into mastering the craft. Everything I read was

theater. Every job I took was strategically designed to grow my imagination. I watched people eat. I watched people talk. I watched people walk. I went to school and rehearsed for hours on end, and I can truly say it became my obsession.

Think of the great plays you've been exposed to: *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*—all masterpieces. But they aren't good stage productions without good actors. When *Hamlet* is performed well, you don't even notice the difficult language, and the story leaps from the stage. In fact, for a split second you can feel that strange emotion inside your soul compelling you to understand truth.

You want to kill the king.

You feel betrayed by your mother.

You want to rise to the throne and make all things right.

You feel the ghost of your father whispering to you in the night.

Hamlet ceases to exist, and you become the Danish prince.

That's why I wanted to be an actor.

I wanted to harness the artistic part of my life and create a moving piece of work that forced an audience to look at the core of its collective existence and ask, "Why?"

It didn't matter if my vehicle was *City Slickers* or *Hamlet*; I was dedicated to posing certain questions to a populace so it could see life from a different angle. I wanted audiences to ask questions such as...

*Why do I live like I do?*

*Why do I act like I do?*

*Do I really believe what I say?*

*How would I respond in that situation?*

All are questions well worth the price of an admission ticket; and more than merely playing characters, I wanted to propose problems that could lead others to find solutions.

Sure, you can look at a painting and be moved, but what if the painting could talk? What if the painting could sing? What if the painting could give you various options for belief? That's what good actors do, and to be good, you have to learn a few tricks of the trade. You have to create a palette of invisible colors so that a piece can come alive.

## IMITATION (ACTING 101)

My first lesson in acting was a bit of an awkward situation. I decided if I wanted to learn, I'd best begin taking a class. So I showed up for the first day and thought, "This is the greatest decision of my life."