

BETHANY
HAMILTON

Artist:

BETHANY HAMILTON
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HEARTOFASOULSURFER.COM

DVD Title & Production Company:

HEART OF A SOUL SURFER
BECKY BAUMGARTNER
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Study by:

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downloads + other
resources to use when
you show the DVD to
your group check out:
heartofasousurfer.com



Note

The Heart Of A Soul Surfer is close to 30 minutes in length. This Bible Study is designed to work within the context of an hour time slot.

Theme

God's Sovereignty

Objective

Your students should be encouraged to see that God has His hand on those who follow Him and that He will often do more for them through trials than through easy times.

Warm Up

Most of us take our physical and emotional wholeness for granted. Most of the people we know and hang around with are active and healthy like us. We may notice those who struggle with a handicap – but if we are honest, we really don't know what life is like for them. Having a friend suddenly become disabled rarely happens to us. We all know it could happen – we are just one car accident or renegade cell away from a whole change of life – but the odds are in our favor, so we just don't think about the risk.

In 2003 13-year-old Bethany Hamilton thought the same way. Sure, as an up

and coming young surf competitor she knew there was the "possibility" that a shark could attack her, but she also was aware that the odds of a person being attacked are something like 1 in 8,000,000. Then, in October of that year, she became a rare statistic when a huge tiger shark sliced off her left arm at the shoulder.

Bethany's story is well known. Her faith and resilience have made her the most recognizable name in surfing. (See for yourself, ask your kids to name a top surfer. Chances are that most won't know who the current world champ is, but they will know Bethany Hamilton.) Briefly comment on the story (the movie will give all the details) and explain that Bethany's story might give everyone more of an understanding for the sudden change of life she faced by stepping into her shoes for a few simple chores that became hurdles when she awoke to the fact that she had lost her arm.

Ask your students to put their left arm behind their back and do one of the following:

- Tie a pair of shoes
- Peel a tangerine
- Do a push up
- Braid their hair
- Lift and carry a heavy tray loaded with glasses of water

Transition

Discuss the difficulty of doing these things and the changes that you would have to make if you woke up and found one of your limbs useless or missing.

The DVD

Say something like this: "As we look at this movie about Bethany Hamilton, keep in mind the difficulty this healthy, active, 13-year-old girl suddenly faced with some of the things you have attempted today. Notice her attitude and spirit as she made the decision to push ahead with her life and surfing career." Show *The Heart Of A Soul Surfer* DVD.

Transition

Ask your kids to comment on what impressed them with the story. Then say: "Bethany obviously puts a lot of weight on the idea that God has a design and plans for her life. Let's look at the verse that is key to her story."

Bible Study

Hand out the Student Guides. Read **Jeremiah 29:11** and then form small groups to discuss these questions:

- Do you think God *planned* for Bethany to lose her arm? If yes, do you think that God has a hand in all the "bad" things that happen to people? If no,

explain what you think God's role was in the shark attack – or in any other kind of bad thing that happens?

- Would you see a difference if Bethany had been warned of a shark prowling in the area or if some teenager became disabled because he or she was out doing something he or she shouldn't have been doing? In other words, if you suffer because of your own stupidity or bad actions, is that part of God's plan for you?
- Since her childhood Bethany has planned on being a pro surfer. Although she still competes in and sometimes wins contests, having one arm will make it harder for her to stay on top. Do you think that her response to her trauma plus the resulting notoriety has made her a more effective mouthpiece for God in the world of surfing and beyond than she would be if she were the top world surfer?
- From **Jeremiah 29:11**, do you think God has a plan for your life? If so, do you have any clue to what that is?
- How does this Scripture help a person find hope despite the negative things that could take place in his or her life?

Ask your students to reflect about one lesson that they can take away from this story. Then pass out slips of paper and ask them to write down their thoughts without signing the paper. Share a few of these with the group.