

# American myths, movies, and christianity assignment

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On the other hand, the dream of becoming whatever you want is individualistic, and it is typical for American's to associate that with being "famous" or changing the world. Unfortunately, not all of us can change the world or revolutionize America. In fact, some of us can hardly change our own circumstances, let alone the rest of the world's. Changing the world and making our dreams come true are largely out of our control; we need some sort of external factor to accomplish such things. If you do not see the myth played out in American culture today, just look back at one of America's beloved presidents, Abraham Lincoln.

According to Goodness Inc. He said, "You can have anything you want if you want it badly enough. You can be anything you want to be, do anything you set out to accomplish if you hold to that desire with singleness of purpose." (a quote by Abraham Lincoln) At the very least, this myth has been working its way through American culture since the early sass's. In the movie Captain America: The First Avenger, Steve Rogers, a strong-willed young man, is determined to serve America in the U. S. Military during World War II.

Ultimately, his dream to lead soldiers into combat on the battlefield in hopes of retesting others and saving lives comes to a disappointing halt when he is rejected from the military due to his small and weak stature. The myth becomes true in the film when Rogers displays extraordinary heart and courage throughout the movie. But he does not become Captain America as a result of his own doing or because that is what he always wanted to be. In fact, it was practically a fluke that he ever had the chance to change the world in the first place by becoming Captain America.

During an encounter between a staff sergeant and a scientist the sergeant throws a dummy renamed in the middle of several soldiers to prove the point that Rogers is not qualified for the military. However, Rogers shows his bravery by jumping on top of the grenade shielding others with his body. If not for the sergeant's disbelief in Rogers, he never would have had the chance to show his extraordinary character. Rogers did not choose to be of weak stature, but because of his weakness he was able to become Captain America.

If moviegoers are not watching with a conscious mind they will be deceived into thinking Rogers' transformation into his dream came through his desire to be great. I just admit, because I did not know the context, I was deceived the first time I watched the movie. I thought Rogers created his own reality rather than an outside factor creating it for him. The deciding factor was "Project: Rebirth," a scientific experiment enhancing the height and physical stature of soldiers during WI. If not for the experiment, Rogers would not have been able to become the hero he always imagined.

However, we as moviegoers do not recognize this immediately because interpret the circumstances incorrectly. Lately I have noticed a verse in the Bible that is also often interpreted incorrectly. Philippians 4: 13, " I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. " A lot of athletes quote this verse just before they take the field. It gives them a sense of strength and hope that they can do anything if they believe in God. In a way it is similar to the myth in that through a specific means we can do whatever we want.

In the end, it does not matter whether we accomplish whatever we want through hard work or belief in God because neither of these things are true. Certainly it is possible to do anything with Christ but this is not the context of the verse. We can understand verse 13 better by simply reading a few verses earlier in the chapter. It says, “ 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. In this case, Paul is writing the Philippians about being content in every situation, so that through Christ he can accomplish all things in any circumstance. So often we as Christians believe that God will do things for us if we believe in Him. If we read our Bible, go to church, and pray on a daily basis, we feel like eventually we will catch a break and our dreams will come true. But the truth is that is out of our control. In Rogers’ case, he was subject to an external study that affected his physical stature.

Had he theoretically been any younger or any older he would not have been able to participate in the study. Had he gone to the wrong boot camp, the sergeant may not have found his courage with the grenade test. Other examples are the lives of Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs. They had to be young enough to catch on to the hip life of networking and computer designing, but they also had to be old enough to know what they were doing. Based on the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell (2008), “ Success is not a random act.

It arises out of a predictable and powerful set of circumstances and opportunities... ” (p. 155) In other words, these people did not create their realities; rather their realities were created by external circumstances and opportunity. Comparing the Bible with a movie that is based on a fictional comic book seems a little weird at first but there are some serious similarities. Both are interpreted wrong in most cases. Automatic certainly takes precedence especially when we try to look at things quickly rather than in their original context.

Just like in Captain America a person cannot be anything they want to be, but can rather be anything they want to be within their circumstances. In the same way, a person cannot accomplish “ anything” through Christ who strengthens them, but they can accomplish all things given the circumstances through Christ. It is a simple difference of wording but it makes a huge difference in meaning. The fact that we cannot be anything we want to be is sobering to the point that our dreams seem less attainable.