

# Warrior (2011)

Rated R. Our Ratings: V-4 ;L -1 ; S/N -1. Running time: 2 hours 19 min.

*As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

*Colossians 3:12-14*

I was not overly eager to see two estranged brothers face another fight film, but this one off in a mixed martial arts was reputed to be as moving as a tournament.

the Fighter, which turns out to be true. Just as the Fighter was more about family relationships than boxing, so this Mixed Martial Arts film focuses upon family relations as much as the sport in which combatants are allowed, under supervision, to kick and wrestle as well as punch. The Conlon family is one of the most dysfunctional families ever seen in a sports film.

2011 Lionsgate Films

Brendan is a popular teacher whose home is about to be foreclosed, so he decides to return to the sport that he had given up years before in order to win the huge prize being offered at the "Sparta" world tournament in Atlantic City. His estranged brother Tommy also decides to enter for his own

reasons that are tied to something that happened when he was in the Marines serving in Afghanistan.

The brothers are not speaking, but their hostility toward their now reformed alcoholic father Paddy (Nick Nolte) is even greater than their animosity toward each other. Tommy asks his father to train him, but stipulates that he is not interested in re-establishing their family relationship. There follows a series of sequences in which each brother emerges on the fight scene, much to the skepticism of fight fans and sportscasters, thus establishing that this is another underdog come from behind tale.

The film will be too violent for many, but for those who can stand it, there is an unusual and moving scene of reconciliation that will be remembered for a long time. The brothers and father will have a long way to go before they attain anything like the apostle Paul meant in his Colossians epistle, but they are heading in the right direction. Probably appealing more to young males than women, the film does offer the opportunity for some reflection upon family, alcoholism, and reconciliation.

**Note:** Discussion questions are available with this review for those subscribing to the Visual Parables journal. The journal also includes many extras—book reviews, the use of films for church seasons, a lectionary related column, and more. Hundreds of old reviews are also available in the subscribers; section. Check out the [sample issue](#).