

Do You Know How to Film God?

It seems like a lifetime ago that I was a full-time college professor just outside of Chicago. I made my first film, *Finger of God*, during my spring/summer breaks and with equipment I had to borrow from my university. At the time, becoming a full-time filmmaker was the furthest thing from my mind. I mean, I was teaching kids how to write term papers. I didn't know how to make movies! But I followed what I felt was a calling from the Lord to try and document some of the crazy stories I was hearing about around the world. It was supposed to be a 15-minute short film, but the farther I went down the rabbit hole, the more I realized I might just be making a full-blown feature film.

The only formal film training I had was on the writing end of things. I'd never touched a camera in my life, never edited anything, never tried to light something—I was about as raw as it was possible to be. But God had obviously called me to do this, and if He calls you to do anything, you can rest assured that He will provide you with exactly what you need to accomplish the task. *Finger of God* doesn't look or sound all that great, but the story continues to touch people around the world today.

Fast forward about 12 years, and it's safe to say I learned a few things. Having directed six feature films, produced a seventh (*Finger of God 2*), and created two television shows, I've made pretty much every mistake there is to make, and I've also stumbled into a few successes as well. But no matter how many movies or shows I may create, I'm never going to be able to get the teaching bug out of me. I still remember the wonderful feeling of attending seminars or classes where new ideas, techniques and just plain good advice helped shape the creator I was eventually to become. Without good teaching from others, I never could have made anything even remotely good.

Frankly, I've missed teaching, which is why I am launching the second iteration of my Filming God Teaching Intensive this April. I want to help train the next generation of filmmakers how to make stories that are powerful, entertaining and that glorify God without being religious and cheesy. I'd also like to provide people with a shortcut around 12 years of mistakes!

I often hear people lamenting about the state of Christian films. I've never really liked that approach because, 1) it's adversarial—we're all on the same team here; and, 2) most people don't have a clue how difficult it is to make a movie, let alone one that's really good and works on multiple levels. We've become quite sophisticated in our consumption of stories, but for Christian filmmakers to begin to make a bigger dent in the culture, we need to become more sophisticated in how we tell our stories as well.

There are so many great teachers of storytelling and filmmaking out there, both secular and Christian, and I continue to learn from many of them. I just want to step into the space God has given me and do my part. I can't teach you how to make the next big blockbuster, but I can teach you how to make low-budget, reality-based media that packs a punch. This year, I'm getting back in the director chair with *The God Man*, but first, I need to get back into the classroom, even if it's a virtual one.

For more information on Darren's Filming God Training Intensive, [click here](#).