



*The Wisdom of Pixar: An Animated Look at Virtue*  
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*Toy Story. Finding Nemo. Ratatouille. WALL-E. Up.* All of these endearing films come from a common source: Pixar Animation Studios. From its formation as an independent company in 1986 through its purchase by Disney in 2006 for a sum of \$7.4 billion, Pixar has enjoyed an unbroken string of box office success. Families the world over have come to trust the Pixar brand and its breathtaking computer-generated depictions of toys, fish, rats, robots, cars and more.

But Pixar films aren't just for children. Pixar movies and their themes resonate with kids and adults alike because of the attention-grabbing animation, but that is not the sole factor. The stories told in Pixar films are also key elements of their appeal, as are the characters. Even though we may be watching toys or cars that are brought to life, or monsters or even rats, these characters contain a quality of reality to which we can relate. Moreover, in our often dark and negative world, Pixar films offer hope, imagination, beauty, and a degree of purity and innocence that is countercultural in our age.

Yes, human nature has a dark side. It is capably depicted—in much detail—by many gritty, non-Pixar films. Pixar, however, calls our attention back to the almost forgotten world of virtue. We sympathize and perhaps even empathize with the characters in Pixar films because we relate to their struggles. The characters help us understand how to better build our *own* characters—morally speaking, that is. But Pixar doesn't preach to us. There is no First Church of Pixar to offer us sermons, pews, committees, incense or flowing choir robes (though one might say that Pixar does pass around the collection plate before every screening!). Instead, we come to better understand virtue through entertaining and engaging stories.

Pixar tells stories. These stories, in turn, have the power to wholly engage us—heart, soul and mind. The characters and plots need not be overtly Christian in order to instruct us in virtue. Christ engaged his listeners by telling parables, not by preaching to them or delivering dry lectures. He shared stories that have, at their center, practical moral lessons that stick with us. We remember the tales of the good Samaritan and the prodigal son not because they sound like they come from a textbook on ethics, but because they are stories that resonate with us as human beings and capture our interest.

This book does not seek to turn Pixar films into Christian parables, or even to suggest that Pixar's films are somehow secretly Christian. *The Wisdom of Pixar* explores the content of Pixar's films primarily as they relate to virtue and applies the insights practically to the Christian life.

—Adapted from the introduction