

BEVERLY LEWIS'

the CONFESSION

A FILM BY MICHAEL LANDON JR.

DISCUSSION GUIDE



A LOVE FROM HER PAST.
A HOPE FOR HER FUTURE.

BEVERLY LEWIS' THE CONFESSION (2013)

CREW OVERVIEW

Michael Landon, Jr. (Director; Writer: teleplay)

Brian Bird (Writer: teleplay)

Beverly Lewis (Writer: novel)

CAST OVERVIEW

Katie Leclerc (Katie Lapp)

Sherry Stringfield (Laura Mayfield-Bennett)

Adrian Paul (Dylan Bennett)

Julia Whelan (Alyson)

Cameron Dean Stewart (Daniel Fisher)

Katie Sawhill (Alexis)

Michael Rupnow (Justin Wirth)

David Temple (Yates)

Rebecca Koon (Rosie)

Abigail Pagan (Camilla)



USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Intended for use after viewing the film, this study guide provides catalysts for biblically based discussion of various themes found in *Beverly Lewis' The Confession*. The guide features three themes from the movie and is structured in such a way that groups can choose to discuss the entire guide at once or can focus on one or two themes at a time.

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FILM OVERVIEW/NOTE TO GROUP

Special Note: The first film in this series – Beverly Lewis' The Shunning – has a corresponding downloadable study guide as well. You are welcome to access the free guide (theme discussions include Identity, Secrecy and Sacrifice) at AffirmFilms.com under 'Resources and Tools.'

Based on the second novel in the acclaimed "The Heritage of Lancaster County" series, *Beverly Lewis' The Confession* continues the story of Katie Lapp (played by Katie Leclerc), a young Amish woman on a life-changing journey to find her English – or modern American – birth mother, the terminally ill Laura

Mayfield-Bennett (Sherry Stringfield). Katie's mission is thwarted, though, by Dylan (Adrian Paul), Laura's husband, whose elaborate, fraudulent attempt to inherit Laura's wealth conceals Katie's true identity. Despite Dylan's deception, Katie's quiet faithfulness speaks volumes to Laura, who discerns that Katie is much more than hired help.

As the film opens, Katie's Amish sensibilities make it difficult for her to navigate the English world, as evidenced by her failed driver's license test and misplaced trust in dishonest customers at the diner where she works. After one such dine-and-dash incident, Alexis (Katie Sawhill), Katie's roommate and co-worker, tells Katie that Englishers are "liars and thieves," trying to steel her for future disappointment. Between Alexis' warning and unsuccessful attempts to contact the correct Bennett residence, Katie's frustration grows, and she fears she won't find Laura in time.

Meanwhile, Laura receives news that the cancer has spread to her brain, giving her weeks, maybe months, to live. After the diagnosis, Laura sends Dylan to New York City to meet with his addiction therapist, telling him that her problem is terminal, not his. In the city, though, Dylan skips therapy in favor of a sports bar and receives two pieces of bad news: first, his \$50,000 gambling debt is due; second, Laura has cut him out of her will. Dylan shares his woes with Alyson (Julia Whelan), an actress/waitress who may be just the solution Dylan needs.

When Katie finally locates the correct Bennett residence, she arrives to find a web of deception orchestrated by Dylan and featuring an imposter in the role of Katie Lapp – Alyson, dressed as an Amish woman. Laura is so overjoyed at her daughter's

return, though, that Katie holds her silence and accepts a job as housemaid. Dylan grows increasingly suspicious of the faithful, compassionate new maid, and eventually confronts Katie, telling her to consider Laura's happiness before revealing Alyson as a fraud. When Katie counters that Alyson's presence is related to the inheritance, Dylan quickly dismisses the suggestion – another lie on his part.

Katie's behavior piques Laura's interest as well, and thanks to the covert work of Daniel Fisher (Cameron Dean Stewart), Katie's presumed-dead childhood sweetheart, Laura exposes Dylan's charade during the official signing that would make Alyson heir to the estate. With a fresh start, mother and daughter spend Laura's remaining days together, celebrating life with the help of the staff and Justin Wirth (Michael Rupnow), Katie's love interest and trusted employee of Laura's foundation. Laura soon passes away, and though Katie grieves, she also looks to the future.



THEME ONE: DECEPTION

Guiding Scripture: Proverbs 10:9 (NIV):
“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but whoever takes crooked paths will
be found out.”

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Proverbs 10:9 (NIV): “Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.”
- Proverbs 12:22 (NLT): “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.”
- Proverbs 19:5 (NIV): “A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free.”
- Proverbs 20:21 (NIV): “An inheritance claimed too soon will not be blessed at the end.”
- John 8:32 (NIV): “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
- Romans 12:2 (NLT): “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”
- Galatians 6:7–8 (NLT): “Don’t be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.”
- Ephesians 6:11 (NIV): “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”
- Colossians 3:9–10 (NIV): “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
- 1 Timothy 6:9–10 (NIV): “Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful

desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

- Hebrews 13:5 (NIV): “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”
- 1 John 2:16 (NLT): “For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.”

DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- Gambling Debt (00:08:48–00:11:58, Chapter 2)
- Out of the Will (00:15:35–00:17:02, Chapter 4)
- “It’s too late.” (00:17:03–00:19:08, Chapter 4)
- Inheritance Suggestion (00:34:45–00:37:23, Chapter 7)
- Close Call (01:01:44–01:07:02, Chapter 13)
- Dylan’s Goodbye (01:15:49–01:19:08, Chapter 16)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Have you ever experienced or witnessed a situation in which poor decisions and practices compounded and led to steeper, more severe consequences? Along those lines, can you recall any biblical figures that chose to pursue selfish desires rather than accept responsibility? As you reflect on these questions, consider too all the possible motivations behind such occurrences.

For Dylan Bennett, a fascination with “the ponies” develops into a relentless gambling addiction that carries a hefty \$50,000 price tag. In a desperate effort to simultaneously resolve the problem and salvage his reputation, Dylan risks everything, pursuing a course of deception so doggedly that he loses sense of what’s most important, including his relationship with ailing wife, Laura.

SCENES TO REVIEW

- Gambling Debt* (00:08:48–00:11:58, Chapter 2)
- Out of the Will* (00:15:35–00:17:02, Chapter 4)

- How does the first scene set up Dylan's background story? What do you learn about his gambling problem and how does the bookie shed light on the severity of the debt?
- Dylan says that he's supposed to be at the "best Manhattan therapist money can buy." What are some possible reasons that he's skipping his appointment and lying to Laura?
- In the second scene, notice how the camera zooms in on Dylan as he hears Yates' news about the will. How does this zooming effect symbolize the pressure Dylan faces?
- Thinking through both scenes, where do you see evidence of deception? What is Dylan already being deceitful about and how does the latest news encourage further deception?

Read 1 Timothy 6:9–10; Hebrews 13:5; and 1 John 2:16 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do 1 Timothy 6:9–10 and Hebrews 13:5 say about the love of money? In Dylan's case, what is the relationship between the love or need for money and deception?



- 1 John 2:16 addresses the craving for physical, worldly pleasures. How is this verse applicable to Dylan's situation? Why should we be wary of pleasure apart from God?

When Dylan returns to the estate, he receives a surprising phone call from the real Katie Lapp, who has finally reached the correct Bennett residence. Since Katie poses the only legitimate threat to Dylan's chance at Laura's inheritance, he tells her that she's too late, insinuating that Laura has passed away. In reality, Dylan needs Laura to believe that Alyson – installed as a fake Katie Lapp – is her long-lost Amish daughter, so she'll consider leaving the inheritance to her.

SCENES TO REVIEW

"It's too late." (00:17:03–00:19:08, Chapter 4)

Inheritance Suggestion (00:34:45–00:37:23, Chapter 7)

- What does the first scene demonstrate about Dylan's willingness to protect his own interests? What do you think of his interactions with Katie and Camilla?
- Though Dylan never actually says that Laura is dead, how do his words and falsely sympathetic tone make Katie believe that Laura has passed away?
- In the second scene, how does Dylan advance his agenda? And how does his fake humility help to sell Laura on the idea of leaving the inheritance to Alyson, aka Katie?
- What has been your experience with difficult topics such as betrayal and deception? Can you relate to Dylan, Laura, Katie or Camilla in how deception affects relationships?

Read Proverbs 12:22; Proverbs 19:5; and Colossians 3:9–10 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What do the two verses from Proverbs say about God's view of deception? According to Proverbs 12:22, whom does God delight in and why?
- In Colossians 3:9–10, what is the distinction between the "old" self and the "new"? What does it mean that the new "is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator"?

Dylan is dealing in betrayal and deception, willing to hurt people for his ultimate gain, and the further he entrenches himself in his charade, the more he must lie in his frantic attempt to cover the truth. When he finally confronts Katie about her true identity and motives, he uses emotional manipulation to force her resignation. But, as Proverbs 10:9 says, "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."

SCENES TO REVIEW

Close Call (01:01:44–01:07:02, Chapter 13)

Dylan's Goodbye (01:15:49–01:19:08, Chapter 16)

In the first scene, Dylan looks at Katie across the table and says, "Why don't we just stop pretending?" Dylan's question, though ironic in its very nature, raises an interesting discussion point: Katie isn't being straightforward about her situation at the estate, either.

THEME TWO: FAITHFULNESS

Guiding Scripture: Hebrews 13:8 (NIV):

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Psalm 37:7–9 (NIV): “Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.”
- Ecclesiastes 7:8 (NLT): “Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride.”
- Romans 5:3–5 (NLT): “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”
- Romans 8:28 (NLT): “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”
- Romans 12:12 (NIV): “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
- 1 Corinthians 13:4 (NIV): “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”
- Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT): “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”
- Galatians 6:9 (NIV): “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”
- Philippians 4:6 (NIV): “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

- Do you see a difference between Katie’s silence and Dylan’s deception? If so, how would you explain this difference? If not, what are your thoughts on the characters’ similarities?
- As Dylan talks to Katie, what aspects of his story contain pieces of truth? Why does the inclusion of truth often make a lie more effective or persuasive, so to speak?
- How does the conversation impact Katie? What does her reaction demonstrate about the power of deception to cause damage and pain?
- In the second scene, what do you make of Dylan’s self-flagellation? Does it seem sincere? Why or why not? How does Laura respond to Dylan’s declaration of love?
- What do you think of Laura’s compassionate – and merciful – decision to send Dylan to a treatment facility rather than press charges for his fraudulent activity?

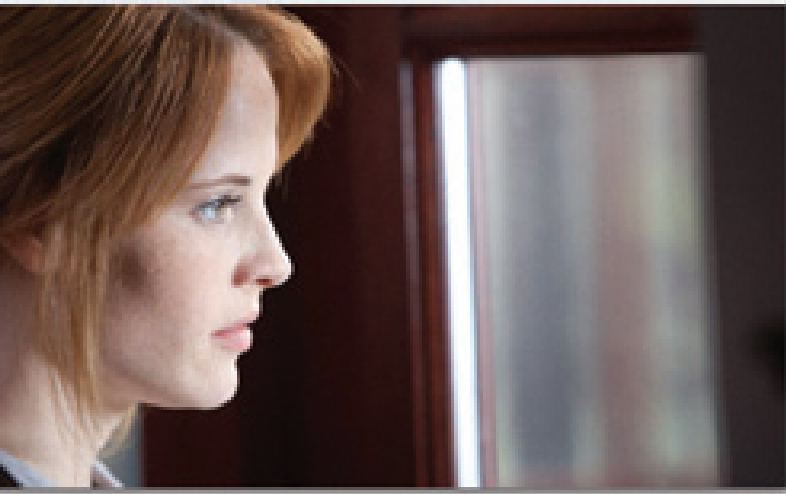
Take a moment to read Proverbs 20:21 and Galatians 6:7–8 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Using your own words, explain the message of Proverbs 20:21. How would you relate this verse to Dylan and his pursuit of an earthly, material inheritance?
- Part of Galatians 6:7–8 says, “You will always harvest what you plant.” How have you experienced this lesson, whether positively or negatively, in your life?

As you finish this theme discussion, read John 8:32; Romans 12:2; and Ephesians 6:11 (see Scriptures Referenced). How do these verses caution against the snares of deception? What can believers do to prepare themselves for encounters with schemes and lies? Spend a few minutes tracing Dylan’s journey – where does he begin and end? Consider the way that deception entangles at an increasingly alarming rate when unchecked, and spend some time reflecting on your own life. Are you struggling with deception in certain areas? Are you standing firm in faith and trusting the Lord to reveal truth? Feel free to conclude this time with thanksgiving and prayer, asking for God’s protection, conviction and healing where deception is concerned.



- Colossians 3:12 (NIV): “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”
- Hebrews 12:1 (NLT): “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”
- Hebrews 13:8 (NIV): “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”



- James 1:2–4 (NIV): “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- “I’m the help.” (00:29:53–00:34:44, Chapter 7)
- An Unfinished Letter (00:45:46–00:48:15, Chapter 10)
- A Concerned Reaction (00:53:42–00:55:02, Chapter 11)
- Secret Language (00:48:16–00:49:53, Chapter 10)
- Flowers for Laura (01:08:43–01:11:37, Chapter 14)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Is God asking you to practice faithfulness in specific areas of your life? Perhaps, like Katie Lapp, you are facing a situation that requires patience and fortitude; how do these trying moments promote faithful character? And how does this trait impact a person’s walk with God? Hebrews 13:8, the Guiding Scripture for this section, points to the ultimate example of faithfulness: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” It is this model – His model – that we must follow in any circumstance, whether good or bad, to learn to develop a posture of faithfulness.

When Katie first arrives at the Bennett estate, she’s relieved to learn that Laura is alive and ecstatic about her daughter’s return. What Katie doesn’t yet understand is that Alyson has taken her place, and when Laura introduces her long-lost daughter to the crowd at her foundation dinner, Katie’s pain and confusion is evident. Instead of causing a scene or demanding the truth,

though, she defers to a course of quiet service and faithfulness in hopes of being near her mother.

SCENE TO REVIEW

“I’m the help.” (00:29:53–00:34:44, Chapter 7)

- Describe Katie’s emotional arc from the beginning of this scene to the end. What might she be thinking as she sees this unexpected turn of events unfold before her eyes?
- Why does Katie remain silent? If you were in Katie’s shoes, how would you respond? Would you make your identity known up front or would you wait and gather information?
- Which aspects of this scene highlight Katie’s faithfulness? If possible, reference specific moments or lines of dialogue to support your answer(s).
- Is faithfulness always learned or forged amidst trials? Or, can it be fostered in a less stressful environment? What has been your experience?

Read Psalm 37:7–9; Romans 5:3–5; and James 1:2–4 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- In what ways is Psalm 37:7–9 applicable to Katie’s circumstances? How does this verse offer encouragement when we are faced with “wicked schemes”?
- According to Romans 5:3–5 and James 1:2–4, what should our response be when faced with trials? And what are the spiritual results or blessings of enduring these trials?

There are only a handful of people at the estate who know that Alyson is not Laura’s daughter, and the longer Katie stays on as a housemaid, the more she learns about the details of the fraud. Still, when she tries to express her frustration in a letter to her Amish parents, she can’t find the right words, and Katie’s writer’s block seems to symbolize her overarching uncertainty in how to proceed. Because of this hesitancy, Katie stays the current course, faithfully attending to Laura.

SCENES TO REVIEW

An Unfinished Letter (00:45:46–00:48:15, Chapter 10)

A Concerned Reaction (00:53:42–00:55:02, Chapter 11)

- What does Katie discover when she looks in Alyson’s suitcase? Does this additional information contribute to greater understanding or greater confusion? Why?





- In the letter, what does Katie cite as the reason for not coming forward with the truth? What is her primary concern in the overall situation?
- How is her concern (and affection) for her birth mother evident in the second scene? What does Katie's reaction say about the bond between a child and her mother?
- Can you relate to Katie's situation? Have you ever had to wait patiently for the right time to speak the truth, even though you weren't sure the right time would ever arrive?
- How do these scenes relate to the theme of faithfulness? In what ways (think about words, actions, gestures, etc.) is Katie's faithfulness displayed in the film?

Read Romans 12:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4; and Colossians 3:12 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What three commands are given in Romans 12:12? To which action is faithfulness assigned? Why are we called to faithfulness in this specific area?
- List all of the characteristics or qualities mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:4 and Colossians 3:12. To what degree are these traits evident in your life?

In the Bennett household, the hired help is considered family. Because of this closeness, Katie and Laura share several sincere interactions. One day, Laura tells Katie about the secret language of flowers, and Katie later utilizes that knowledge to offer Laura a beautiful flower arrangement that discreetly expresses her feelings for her birth mother. The gesture gives Katie the chance to say in deed what she cannot speak freely, and the message is not lost on Laura.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Secret Language (00:48:16–00:49:53, Chapter 10)

Flowers for Laura (01:08:43–01:11:37, Chapter 14)

- In the first scene, how does Katie interact with Laura? Is there anything in her manner or speech that would indicate she is more than a new maid in the Bennett house?

- Toward the end of that scene, how would you explain the way Laura senses Katie wants to say something (even though Laura's had her eyes closed for a short time)?

In the second scene, while trying to say goodbye, Katie tells Laura, "I'm very thankful to have spent this short time here. I loved getting to know you, even just a little bit."

- What is the subtext of Katie's words? Do you think she should have said something more obvious, or do you think she sent her message fairly clearly despite Dylan's restrictions?
- What are some possible indications that Laura understands more than both Dylan and Katie believe she knows? For example, how does she react to the flowers?

Read Ecclesiastes 7:8; Romans 8:28; and Galatians 6:9 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- What are some ways that we can embrace and practice the truth of Ecclesiastes 7:8 when we live in a modern-day society that usually reverses the priorities in this verse?
- Compare Romans 8:28 and Galatians 6:9. What is the common message in these two verses and how does this message offer comfort when the future seems uncertain?
- What do all three verses suggest about the power of faithfulness? How does each verse apply to Katie's story of struggle, perseverance, patience and faithfulness?

In concluding this theme discussion, read Galatians 5:22–23; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 12:1; and revisit the Guiding Scripture, Hebrews 13:8 (see Scriptures Referenced for all verses). Katie faces a unique, challenging set of circumstances in this story, but she decides to approach the difficulty with composure, grace and faithfulness. In the end, she receives the desire of her heart: to know and love her birth mother. Do you make a concerted effort to practice faithfulness? Are there areas of your life that could be infused with fresh patience and faithfulness? Perhaps you feel the Lord calling you to make room for a more faithful walk with Him. Consider responding to that call wholeheartedly, and using any trials, distractions or uncertainty to further trust Him.

THEME THREE: WISDOM

Guiding Scripture: James 3:17 (NIV): “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

SCRIPTURES REFERENCED

- Proverbs 17:27–28 (NLT): “A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent.”
- Proverbs 18:15 (NIV): “The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out.”
- Ecclesiastes 8:1 (NLT): “How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person’s face, softening its harshness.”
- Isaiah 40:31 (NIV): “But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”
- Jeremiah 9:24 (NLT): “But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the LORD, have spoken!”
- Ephesians 5:15–17 (NLT): “So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the LORD wants you to do.”
- Colossians 2:8 (NIV): “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”
- Colossians 3:16 (NLT): “Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.”
- Hebrews 4:12 (NIV): “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
- James 1:5 (NLT): “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.”
- James 3:17 (NIV): “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”
- 1 John 4:1 (NLT): “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.”

DVD SCENES TO REVIEW

- Amish Marmalade (00:11:59–00:13:35, Chapter 3)
- Foundation Financials (00:13:36–00:15:35, Chapter 3)
- Signing Day (01:11:37–01:15:48, Chapter 15)
- The Letter (01:18:05–01:19:08, Chapter 16)
- Jacob Glick (00:58:02–01:01:43, Chapter 12)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Laura is a compelling character in this film, and she has a fascinating journey as well. Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of her story is that she grows in wisdom and discernment even as her physical sight increasingly fails her. Because of her walk with God, she absorbs biblical insight and applies it to her daily life, and it is this discernment that allows her to see Dylan’s gambling addiction, Katie’s true identity and an everlasting life that transcends her illness.



Early in the film, Laura meets with her staff regarding the upcoming foundation gala. Knowing it may well be her last, she asks that her dedicated crew stop at nothing to make this an evening to remember. The head housekeeper, Rosie, mentions that she is praying for Laura’s healing, and Laura responds comfortingly that she will be healed, either on this side or the other.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Amish Marmalade (00:11:59–00:13:35, Chapter 3)

- How does Laura exhibit wisdom in this scene?
- What does Laura’s composure in general (and regarding estate affairs in particular) suggest about the way she’s processing her most recent cancer diagnosis?
- When Laura tells Rosie that God will heal her on this side or the other, how does the comment demonstrate Laura’s inner strength and spiritual peace?



As Laura tells the staff to spare no expense for the upcoming foundation dinner, she says, “This is my chance to outlive myself.”

- People desire posthumous fame for various reasons. What is Laura’s motivation for leaving a legacy? How is her foundation involved? What is she hoping to accomplish?
- Why might a terminal diagnosis (such as Laura’s) or other life-changing experience compel someone to pursue wisdom? To seek God?

Read Isaiah 40:31; Ephesians 5:15–17; and Colossians 3:16 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Name all of the promises found in Isaiah 40:31. Can you think of any moments in the film when Laura is renewed with the Lord’s strength because she hopes in Him?
- What counsel do Ephesians 5:15–17 and Colossians 3:16 give as to how to live life? What do these verses say about the importance of wisdom?

Laura is well aware of Dylan’s gambling addiction. She has tried sending him to therapy; intervening with treatment; and loving him unconditionally, but she has to face facts. If she wants to protect her inheritance (money and the estate) and her foundation from Dylan’s ongoing financial foolishness, she must change the terms of her will and leave him with very little.

SCENE TO REVIEW

Foundation Financials (00:13:36–00:15:35, Chapter 3)

If not for Yates, Dylan would be unaware of Laura’s new will until such a time as she decided to tell him, since she shrewdly holds the financial meeting while Dylan is out of town.

- Why is Laura’s timing wise? In what ways does this scene demonstrate Laura’s ability to address not only immediate needs (Dylan’s addiction), but also long-term solutions?
- Laura says tough love – cutting Dylan out of the will – is the only kind of love that will end his addiction. If you were in Laura’s place, what would you do?

- Compare and contrast Laura and Dylan for a moment. What is each character’s priority? Which character is focused on eternal matters and which on temporal ones? Why?
- How about you? Give yourself the same evaluation that you just gave Laura and Dylan. Do you tend to focus on the here and now or on eternity – or perhaps on both?
- What is the relationship between an eternal perspective and wisdom? How does a focus on earthly, fleeting matters diminish the pursuit of spiritual fruits such as discernment?

Read Proverbs 18:15; Ecclesiastes 8:1; and James 3:17 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Notice that Proverbs 18:15 and Ecclesiastes 8:1 associate the benefits of wisdom with physical features (e.g., heart, ears and face). Why?
- Based on the description of wisdom in James 3:17, think about the ways in which Laura expresses these characteristics. Point to specific examples from the movie.

Even though it seems that Dylan fools Laura where Alyson is concerned, it could be said that Laura orchestrates a counter-drama, one that takes Dylan by utter surprise. At the signing of the codicil, Laura reveals her knowledge of the situation, including Dylan, Alyson and Yates’ scheme and Katie’s true identity as her daughter. Despite failing eyesight, Laura sees clearly.

SCENES TO REVIEW

Signing Day (01:11:37–01:15:48, Chapter 15)

The Letter (01:18:05–01:19:08, Chapter 16)

In the first scene, Laura stops the signing and approaches Katie. She says, “I wanted so badly to believe that Dylan had returned my daughter to me. I tried to convince myself that my doubts were wrong, but something inside me told me she wasn’t who she said she was.”

- When Laura says, “... something inside me told me she wasn’t who she said she was,” what do you think she means? When we walk with the Lord, who guides our steps?



- How would you describe Laura's reaction and temperament in this scene (e.g., angry, calm, relieved, etc.)? Why might her response be directly related to her discernment?

In the second scene, Laura explains to Katie why she felt she had to remain silent about the fraud until this point: "This is my last chance to force Dylan to get him the help he needs."

- Interestingly, both women – mother and daughter – forfeit their own immediate happiness for someone else's benefit. How does wisdom play a role in this selflessness?
- Can you relate to Laura's thought process? Have you ever felt that the wise thing to do was the hardest thing to do? Why does wisdom sometimes seem paradoxical?

Read Proverbs 17:27–28; Colossians 2:8; and 1 John 4:1 (see Scriptures Referenced).

- Proverbs 17:27–28 should shed some light on the question regarding Laura's temperament during the signing ceremony. How does this verse apply to that scene?
- What is the common message in Colossians 2:8 and 1 John 4:1? According to these verses, why are wisdom and discernment essential in guarding believers' hearts?

Feel free to watch the following Optional Scene to Review in which Daniel Fisher visits the Bennett estate under the guise of Jacob Glick, Katie Lapp's distant (and nonexistent) cousin. Laura references this visit in the aforementioned Scene to Review called *The Letter*.

OPTIONAL SCENE TO REVIEW

Jacob Glick (00:58:02–01:01:43, Chapter 12)

As you conclude, take a few minutes to look over Jeremiah 9:24; Hebrews 4:12; and James 1:5 (see Scriptures Referenced). What

do these verses say (either directly or indirectly) about wisdom? In Laura's case, she exudes a supernatural peace as she faces the end of her earthly life. And this peace stems from a close walk with the Lord. Through time spent with Him in Bible study and prayer, Laura gains otherworldly wisdom; she sets her sights on eternity, and this perspective allows her to care for others in a way that surpasses human wisdom. Do you actively pursue wisdom? What are some daily disciplines that could help shape your faith in this area? And if you need help getting started, remember that you can always approach the throne of grace and ask our generous God (James 1:5; see Scriptures Referenced).

FINAL THOUGHTS

- What additional themes does the film address? Can you think of scenes and/or dialogue that support your answers? (No theme is too small if the message resonated with you.)
- What do you think of Daniel Fisher? Even though his storyline is limited, he plays an important role in the film. How does he help change the course of events?
- Take some time to discuss Alyson and the way she changes throughout the film. How does the stress of her role as an imposter affect her?
- Though Katie has been in the English world for a little while, how do her Amish roots guide her actions and words?
- The end of the film raises interesting questions about Katie's future. What do you think will happen with the estate and with a potential choice between Daniel and Justin?



"A TOUCHING STORY OF DECEIT, TRUST, AND LOVE."

- FRANCINE BROKAW, LA FAMILY



Raised by an Amish family, Katie Lapp (Katie Leclerc, TV's "Switched at Birth") starts a quest to find her birth-mother, Laura Mayfield-Bennett (Sherry Stringfield, TV's "ER"). Along the way, two very different men try to help her overcome a devious scheme to steal her rightful inheritance and divide her heart between two worlds.

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