

BOOK ONE IN THE LIBERTY TRILOGY

CHASING LIBERTY

"Phenomenal
fast-paced
gripping..."

**THERESA
LINDEN**

author of award-winning
Battle for His Soul

Discussion/Study Guide

Ideal for: Homeschool, High School, & Book Clubs

CHASING LIBERTY TRILOGY

DISCUSSION/STUDY GUIDE

Discussion/Study Guide for
The Chasing Liberty Trilogy
by Theresa Linden

Published by Silver Fire Publishing

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Cover: Theresa Linden



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Purpose

This discussion/study guide is intended for use in a book club, classroom, or homeschooling family. Questions are designed to help readers analyze the story and for more in-depth analysis of issues relevant to today's culture. The questions are meant to be adaptable and can be answered verbally in group discussions, or with short answers or longer essays. Select the questions appropriate for your group or student(s). They may also be used as essay or research paper ideas. Scripture and *Catechism of the Catholic Church*¹ references are provided for many questions.

Synopsis

The *Chasing Liberty* trilogy is set in the near future. The government controls everything from cradle to grave. Science and technology have developed without ethical considerations, and the green agenda has gone wild, placing the good of Earth above the good of man. For the sake of the Earth, population numbers have been drastically reduced, and people live in designated areas surrounded by high electrical fences. Life begins in the laboratory, and children are raised in the government's Primary and

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd. ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000.)

Secondary facilities, receiving the education and indoctrination they need to keep Earth safe and this society sustained for generations to come. Those who don't agree or cooperate, those who challenge the system, are in danger of re-education.

Unbeknownst to the all-controlling government, a hidden, underground movement exists, and a girl named Liberty is about to discover it and change everything.

Note from the Author

I originally shared this “note” on [my blog](#), and I gave it the catchy title “5 Reasons We Need Dystopian Fiction.”

Do you find dystopian fiction to be exciting and adventurous or depressing? Or maybe it's a bit of both.

I find it invigorating and inspirational to follow a lead character who recognizes something is wrong with the world—with the culture—and who is willing to do something about it despite the personal costs. We do not live in a perfect world and we each have a responsibility to do something about it.

Reason #1: Dystopian fiction can be inspiring. It can motivate people to take a hard look at the world around them and encourage them to make a difference.

Before I give reason #2 for why we need dystopian fiction, I'd like to share how this trilogy came about . . . because I never really planned to write dystopian.

I was in the middle of writing and rewriting another book when inspiration for the *Liberty* trilogy struck. It wasn't a single factor so much as a compilation of things that bothered me. I'd been reading and watching the news and hearing about disturbing developments in science, technology, and morality. You've probably read similar articles or caught news stories about similar things:

- scientists experimenting on human embryos
- special interest groups insisting that tiny fish are more important than farming families
- other groups radically pushing the population-control agenda
- we can be tracked with our phones and our cars, and through every online search and action
- and most troubling of all: the moral decline of our culture

I love the United States of America and don't want to see her fall. But if we lose focus on the things that matter—faith, family, and freedom—we'll go the way of Rome and every other once-glorious nation.

Reason #2: Dystopian fiction can help us realize what we have, what is valuable to us, and what we stand to lose.

Love of my fellow man and my country prompted me to throw myself into research, and I discovered actual special-interest groups that are influential in our country and the world. So even if you live in another country, these issues still affect you. All the warped ideologies in my story come from this research. Yes, there are actual groups that promote the idea that humans are the scourge of the earth.

The more I learned, the more I realized I needed to write this dystopian story about a possible future for America.

Reason #3: Dystopian fiction can help us to visualize, draw conclusions, and consider where we are headed if we continue down the same path.

I only meant to write one book and return to my other stories. I wanted to end *Chasing Liberty* by showing a seed of change being planted. But I couldn't stop thinking about it. What exactly is this freedom we should be fighting for? Can one person possibly make a difference? The other two stories in this trilogy came to life very quickly.

The *Liberty* trilogy is set in the near future. The technology, science, and ideologies are real. The main character, Liberty, has grown up in a society that has done away with faith, family, and freedom. Thus, the average citizen's concept of right and wrong is sorely lacking.

We see this every day, on the news and in our neighborhoods and schools. The sense of right and wrong has diminished considerably, even compared to ten years ago. And while this is true, it is also true that God is not dead. God does not sleep or hide. He continues to offer His gifts, His truth, and holiness to those who long for it.

Raised in this godless society that has elevated Earth above man, Liberty had never learned about God and moral truth. Yet she has a moral compass that guides her.

We all have this moral compass, even though we often ignore it. Liberty doesn't ignore it. Her choices make life harder for her at times, and she definitely stands out among her peers, but she wants to be faithful to the inner voice. This makes a huge difference in her life.

Reason #4: Dystopian fiction shows that no matter how dark the world around us becomes, we each still have that inner voice and it's important to follow it—not just important for our own life but for the world around us.

Teens and adults have responded to the characters in this book and to the themes of the trilogy. It's been called *an action-packed thrill ride, phenomenal, and a must-read.*

“Chasing Liberty by Theresa Linden is a futuristic look at what our culture might become if we keep on the same trajectory as we are presently heading. Though I dearly hope we have enough sense and compassion to avoid such a catastrophe, I can connect the dots which drew the picture Linden is pointing to. As in the books, 1984 and Brave New World, where the authors pointed to an extreme version of the worst elements in society, the danger is real, even if only in part. Such authors speak to us through fiction and remind us of an important truth about ourselves.” ~ **Ann Frailey, novelist and screenwriter**

This trilogy is aimed at young people, new adults, and adults who enjoy a character-driven story and a relevant, thought-provoking plot.

“I just finished the book, it was excellent. It is a hypothetical of what could happen to this country and the world when government controls you from cradle to grave and how a young woman by the name of Liberty is chasing just that liberty and freedom. It is a must read as this book takes you further in what happens to a society that is government run than the book Agenda 21 by Harriet Parke and Glenn Beck.” ~ **Joe Goldner, co-host at The Truth Is Out There-Voice of the People Radio Show!**

This trilogy starts off gloomily, I admit, but it ends on a note of hope and encouragement. Like Frodo in the *Lord of the*

Rings and Mother Teresa on the streets of Calcutta, one person can truly make a difference in the world.

Reason #5: Good dystopian fiction brings home the message that you are responsible for the culture and you can make a difference in your own unique way.

Thank you for reading this Author Note through to the end. Now I have a challenge for you.

Can you imagine if every person in the world stepped outside, picked up a piece of garbage, and threw it away? With that one effort, imagine how much cleaner our world would be.

But how do you change a dark culture that has allowed science and technology to advance without comparable developments in ethics, that has allowed a government to grow too big and controlling, that has allowed morals to fall so low that faith is no longer welcome in many situations?

I challenge you to do something.

- Pray. It's easy. You can do it anywhere, anytime, and for any reason. Remember God is always in control, and He is waiting for us to turn to Him.
- Be holy. Make the right choices every day, even if it leads to a few inconveniences. Think of the example you set for others!
- Speak up. Talk to people about important issues. Even if you don't agree, respectful dialog can accomplish a lot.
- Share the *Liberty* trilogy with others if you think it makes good points others need to hear.
- If you're a parent, educate your children about important issues. Talk with them often.

- Be a responsible citizen, not just by voting but by staying informed and making your voice heard on important issues. Write editorials and blog posts!
- Show your faith. Live your faith. Stand up for values.
- Don't underestimate the power of fiction. Stories are the basic way we make sense of our world. Unconsciously, our brains organize the information we receive every day in essentially the same form as a story.

And now, I end this Author Note with a quote from Saint Catherine of Siena. This young woman, who lived in the Middle Ages, influenced popes, cardinals, and princes. She negotiated peace between countries, wrote books on spiritual matters, and was declared a Doctor of the Church.

Saint Catherine of Siena did all this before her death at age thirty-three.

***“Be who God meant you to be
and you will set the world on fire.”***

~ St. Catherine of Siena

MORALITY

To live life to the fullest and attain everlasting life, we must be mindful of Catholic morality. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it this way:

“Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God” (CCC, 1691).

Basic Catholic morality used to be part of our culture, but now it is under widespread attack and the culture shouts the same question Pilate once asked Our Lord: “What is truth?”

Moral truth is objective; that is to say, it is valid at all times and everywhere since God is the ultimate source of all moral truth. Additionally, every person can deduce the moral principles of the natural law, and we can use our consciences to apply those principles to specific situations. Unfortunately, sin clouds our vision of truth, and while God has revealed the law directly to us, without faith, one may struggle to accept these truths.

~ ~ ~

No one seemed to have a problem with breaking laws, all sorts of laws, but everyone worried about what you said.

~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 1

Liberty laments that Aldonians are not concerned about doing something wrong but very concerned about saying something—voicing an opinion—contrary to the government’s ideologies.

1. Do you notice a similar mindset today?
2. How comfortable do you feel voicing an opinion that runs contrary to the culture?
3. What moral issues does today’s culture and authentic Christianity have at odds?

I saw the weeds as my own faults and inabilities, the wheat seed as my potential. In order for the seed to take root, I needed to better myself physically, mentally, spiritually. Perhaps the man who sowed the seed was *My Friend*. I needed to improve my skill at listening to him. ~ Liberty, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 28

4. Liberty’s prophetic dream prompts her to deeper self-evaluation. She wants to change the world, but she realizes she must also change herself. Why is personal holiness so important for making great changes in the world?

GOVERNMENT

The purpose of government is to secure the common good. That means its job is to protect its people from attack and to secure justice. The Church also teaches the principle of subsidiarity, according to which “a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good” (CCC, 1884).

Additionally, the Church teaches that government ought to promote the common good, the rule of law, and the dignity of the human person. It ought to recognize human rights based upon the natural moral law and have a correct conception of the human person.

You should be thankful for the way of life under the Regimen. We have no poverty, no hunger, no homeless, no inequality. No one is forgotten in our society. ~ Dr. Supero's quote from *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 4

1. While there may be no physical poverty, hunger, or homelessness in this dystopian future because the government controls everything and distributes to each according to need, what do you think Aldonians are deprived of? Is the trade-off worth it?
2. Define autocracy, democracy, and oligarchy.

3. What form of government seems to be in power in this dystopian story? Compare our form of government to the one in this story.

4. Define capitalism, socialism, and communism.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, referring to the Church's social teaching, says: "Any system in which social relationships are determined entirely by economic factors is contrary to the nature of the human person and his acts" (CCC, 2423). And "A system that subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production is contrary to human dignity (CCC, 2424)

5. In this dystopian future, individuals' rights are subordinate to the needs of the collective and the perceived needs of the earth. Since the government cares for all from cradle to grave, how does this violate the Church's social teachings? See CCC, 2419-2425.

6. According to the *Catechism* (CCC, 2425) what two ideologies does the Church reject and what aspect of the third does She refuse to accept? What economic system seems best and why? (see also CCC, 2426-2436)

John Paul II wrote: “If by capitalism is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative, even though it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a business economy, market economy or simply free economy. But if by capitalism is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative” (*Centesimus Annus*, No. 42).

7. The purpose of government is to protect the people. The Citizen Safety Station in Aldonia claims to use surveillance to keep people safe. By listening/watching for hate speech and ideologies they consider a threat to society, they can identify potential threats. Can this technique be used morally? How does it become a violation of freedom?

8. What does the culture today classify as hate speech?

9. When views contrary to popular belief are labeled as hate speech, does this interfere with authentic freedom of speech?

10. How can this label stifle evangelization and the universal call to transform the culture for Christ?

Our government has overstepped its boundaries. It has failed to protect our rights and has become the chief violator of them. So it is our right, our duty, the duty of the people of Aldonia to abolish our government and institute a new one. We lay the foundation for our new government on the principles that can bring about a respect for our natural rights. The security of our future depends upon it. This is a new day.” ~ Guy’s speech, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 32

9. What American document begins with similar wording?

10. The document referred to above states that people have not only the right but the duty to throw off an abusive, tyrannical government which tramples on their individual rights. What other founding documents were written to protect our rights, and how important is it that we have a right understanding of these original documents?

TECHNOLOGY

When Liberty learns to write by hand, she considers what people have lost through advancements in technology, including eye/hand coordination and thought processes, intellect, and creativity that come with handwriting.

1. What are some of the positive and negative aspects of technology today (electronic games, phones, computers)?
2. Explain why there is a need for more study and evaluation of our use of technology and its effect on thought processes, intellect, socialization, and creativity?

HUMAN LIFE

“Every baby born in our time is planned and needed. They will be cared for, taught, and have a specific duty to perform, their unique contribution to society. There are no birth defects, no intellectually or physically deficient members in our society. You have no idea what burdens had been placed on others because of natural reproduction.” ~ Dr. Supero, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 4.

1. Define “embryo.”
2. Methods for genetic selection and gene-editing are already possible. Can genetic manipulation be used ethically to improve the health of an embryo?

Scientists in Aldonia believe they are doing the right thing by manipulating embryos and keeping only those that meet certain standards. They no longer need to worry about birth defects and the burdens that people with special needs put on others or on society.

3. How does this ideology run counter to the dignity of the human person (CCC, 2270-2275)?
4. Do people with special needs have less dignity, and should they have fewer rights than those without extra challenges?

5. What responsibility do we have to the human person at the moment of conception?
6. What responsibilities do we have to people with special needs?

“There’s more to life than work, more than contributing to society.”

“Yeah? Tell me about that.”

I couldn’t. I didn’t have words for it. I only knew it in my heart. It seemed to me that thinking, caring, choosing, dreaming, being—the things that made us distinct from animals—made us more than just parts of a whole. We, each of one of us, were important for ourselves. *My Friend had taught me this without words, over the years.* ~ Liberty and Darin’s conversation in *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 6

7. A lot of emphasis is put on how much money a person makes or what a person does for a living. Explain how every individual, regardless of their ability to “contribute to society” is important in and of themselves.

“We need to stop thinking life has to be perfect to be worth living. We can be imperfect and still be happy, still be able to love and be loved. Especially by your family.” ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 16

8. Explain why belief that one must be perfect and healthy in order to be happy and valuable is a dangerous frame of mind. What lessons can we learn from our special needs, illnesses, and imperfections?

Shame assailed me. I dropped to my knees and pulled the little girl into my arms. Her deformity made her no less worthy of love and life than the rest of us. Scientists and doctors rid our world of disorders and deformations through gene manipulation, embryo selection, and abortion. This girl would never have survived our day. She would've been aborted. ~ Liberty, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 41

9. In the Re-Education Facility, Liberty was fed Aldonia's system of belief, which measures a person's worth by his or her degree of physical perfection. What consequences of that way of thinking are evident in our world today?

How many others remained off the grid out there in the restricted Nature Preserves? They lived like primates, ignorant of scientific and technological advancements, unaware of global environmentalism. Reckless. Human-centered. As if humans had greater value than any other life form on Earth. If everyone lived like them, the earth would see a complete ecological collapse. ~ Dr. Supero, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 6

10. Some believe that human lives are no more important than other life forms. Others go so far as to say humans

are parasites. What gives human life its value? What sets the human person apart from animals and other creatures? (see CCC, 1700-1709)

“So we saved Mother Earth, saved her from the devastating effects of pollution, though the climate continued to change dramatically. Animals and plants lived without negative human impact, though species continued to die out at a rate equal to the days before the Regimen. Only one life-form suffered under the new regime. Can you guess which one?” ~ Dr. Supero, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 28

11. Dr. Supero eventually uncovers the evil methods the government used to bring about these “positive” effects on the earth. Explain why humans suffer when priorities are skewed and people are no longer recognized for their unique dignity but considered equal with all living things.

POPULATION CONTROL

Research² into this issue will turn up a dark past and plans for a darker future. Some rich, powerful, and highly influential people have deep concerns about climate change, worldwide hunger, and weapons of mass destruction. They believe overpopulation is largely to blame and that drastic measures must be taken to rectify this situation. They believe that population control is a good thing, a compassionate way to end poverty, hunger, and underdevelopment. They believe it is necessary for protecting Earth and for the very survival of humanity.

These ideas and concerns are not new. A look at the past will bring up such figures as Margaret Sanger³ (1879-1966), the founder of Planned Parenthood and advocate for birth control and abortion. She held similar ideas but with the goal of targeting “undesirable” people. She also laid the foundations of a global population control movement. Other figures and foundations include the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, Allen Guttmacher, President Lyndon Johnson, and President Richard Nixon⁴.

Research will also uncover that while the world population is growing, the rate of growth is slowing drastically⁵.

² <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/everything-you-need-to-know-a-history-of-planned-parenthood-part-i>

³ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/a-history-of-planned-parenthood-part-ii-from-population-control-to-abo>

⁴ <https://www.liveaction.org/news/population-control-recruited-president/>

⁵ <https://overpopulationisamyth.com/episode-5-7-billion-people-will-everyone-please-relax/>

Additionally, with more people and more productivity the earth can feed a much larger population than we have. Today, the overpopulation myth⁶ is taught in schools and promoted by radical environmental groups. The Catholic Church teaches something drastically different. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God, is filled with the greatest dignity as a child of God, and is called to eternal beatitude in the Kingdom of God. God is the author of life, and it is not our job to limit it but rather to promote a “Culture of Life.”

One hundred twenty-seven live births per year were permitted in that particular facility. It was a precise number, determined by teams of scientists and environmentalists who had in mind the amount of resources available for quality of life, the needs of the people, and the amount of damage that the earth would inevitably sustain from our existence.

It has been this way for generations. We were a society that cared for the earth, balancing resource consumption with replacement initiatives, unavoidable pollution with clean-environment efforts. Before this time, people had been the earth’s worst enemies. ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch.1

In this dystopian future, the world governments are united in a concerted effort to protect Earth. Over the course of the trilogy, it comes out that population numbers were

⁶ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/dubunking-the-over-population-myth>

intentionally reduced and then maintained at a specific level.

1. What is the dignity of the human person?
2. How does population control violate the dignity of the human person?
3. Is it ever acceptable for the government to control population numbers?
4. When a government cares about its people and supports faith and traditional family, how does this benefit the earth?
5. How can we balance the proper use of natural resources without violating the dignity of the human person through population control?
6. Do the math: divide the square feet of the state of Texas (over 7,494 billion *sq* ft) by the number of people in the world today (7.6 billion in 2018). How many square feet would every man, woman, and child have if we all squeezed into that state?

7. What about food resources? The world currently produces enough food to feed 10 billion people. As the number of people increases, imagine how much more food we will be able to create. So why does hunger still exist in the world? Oxfam, an international humanitarian organization stated that “Famines are not natural phenomena, they are catastrophic political failures.” How important is a good government for the good of the people?

8. Research the overpopulation myth. Here is one online source: <https://www.pop.org/debunking-the-myth-of-overpopulation/>

9. Citizens of this dystopian future are taught that the earth can only sustain three or four hundred million people. (see *Testing Liberty*, ch. 26) Do you think people are misled by statistics, research, and claims today? What could be the purpose of promoting misleading information? What can a person do to discover the truth?

CARE OF CREATION

“We have no rights, only responsibilities—responsibilities to the Regimen and to nature. We’re the bad guys, polluting, corrupting, bringing destruction into the world. And the Regimen has found a way to help us live in harmony with nature. Only thing, we have to deny our freedom and our individuality and follow their rules. . .” ~ Bot, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 14

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come” (CCC, 2456).

1. While the care of creation is very important, how can good intentions throw this care out of balance?
2. Has the care of Mother Earth become almost a religion to some?
3. What is the proper balance on this issue? What do we stand to lose?

A newscaster blathered on about another endangered species and a hole in the ozone that scientists had yet to repair. Propaganda. He knew that now. Not that it

bothered him. It assured citizens of the necessity of strict Regimen ways. It promoted compliance to rule and order. And as long as citizens made their contributions to society, he stood a better chance of securing the funds he needed for his pet projects. ~ Dr. Supero, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 2

4. Regardless of political opinions and faith, most people believe in taking care of the earth. How can this legitimate concern be used to push harmful ideologies? Do you think this goes on today?

FAITH

I couldn't imagine people offering bloody sacrifices in this day and age. Nor could I imagine a people putting credence in things they couldn't detect with either their senses or technology. Most of all, I couldn't believe people would tolerate a man telling them what they could and couldn't do, making them feel guilty over personal choices. That was the main point that remained with me from our lesson on priests and religions of the past generations. They controlled people by making them feel guilty about personal choices. Our generation didn't need them, we were told. We could decide matters for ourselves. I laughed to myself. No, we couldn't decide matters for ourselves. The Regimen did that for us. If a person did not properly respect nature, accept his vocation, or agree with the ideology of the Regimen, he wasn't just made to feel guilty. He was sent to re-education. ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 15

Once the government took control of the children, they raised them up on godless ideologies, misrepresented Christianity, and devalued faith.

1. How is Christianity represented today among different audiences? How accurate are those representations?
2. How does the priest with the straw hat in Chapter 20 show the true meaning of Christian sacrifice?

3. What is the sacrifice offered at every Mass? (CCC, 1362-1368)
4. What is objective truth and what is subjective truth? Which one does our culture seem to promote today?
5. What does the Catholic Church teach about objective versus subjective truth?

In a sense, we did have priests. The Regimen. And they sacrificed our freedom at the altar of the world. Nature became our god, a god we could see and touch, as permitted by our priests — a fragile god that needed the enormous, powerful Regimen to keep it safe. ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 15

6. Aldonians are taught that religion was once used as a method of controlling people by making them feel guilty about personal choices. They are encouraged to decide matters for themselves. Explain why one should not avoid proclaiming or listening to moral truth for fear of how they or another will feel about it.
7. Based on all the indoctrination Aldonians receive and the continuous spying on citizens, does the government in the story really want people to decide matters for themselves?

“If there is an all-powerful, uncreated Creator,” Bot said, “where is He?”

“I imagine there is much you don’t know about genetics and cells, but they exist. And there is much you don’t know . . .” His eyes went to Jessen. “. . . about electronic databases and communication.” He returned his gaze to Bot. “There is more to existence than you can even imagine.” ~ Bot and Dedrick, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 14

8. If someone questions you about the existence of God, what would you say? Do you know where to look for answers?

FAMILY

“The Regimen has utterly destroyed every concept of family. That’s how they took over. It’s how they survive.”

~ Dedrick, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 13

I recognized the strength in the union of a married couple, the promises of forever, and the forming of families. We didn’t have that in Aldonia today, but we once did. The Regimen must’ve feared strong families. That’s why, in the early years, they’d destroyed them. ~ Liberty, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 32

1. The family is the basic building block of society. Give several reasons that explain why strong families are important for the success of society. Consider the example of the families in the Maxwell Colony and compare it to the attitudes of most Aldonians.

We see the concepts of marriage and family being destroyed in our day, as it has been in this dystopian series. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes marriage in this way:

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament" (CCC, 1601).

2. What is the traditional family and why is it important?
3. How do efforts to redefine marriage and family undermine this key building block of society?
4. In Chapter 16, Liberty laments, “How had we allowed our lives, our freedom, and our families to be taken over and destroyed? . . . I couldn’t imagine people letting go of the family so easily.” What is being done to safeguard traditional marriage? What more could be done?

A family lived together, each member caring about the others, putting up with each other, and enjoying each other. Parents made little sacrifices all the time, unbeknownst to the children, in order to provide for a family need or for that of a particular child, or just to make someone happy. The older people, the grandparents, often lived with the younger families. ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 17

“Families are an invention of the capitalists of old, a means for mass production, like machines in a factory, the machines you wish to build and repair, machines that nearly devastated the earth. The Regimen has ended that exploitation of women and children through equal opportunity and education. The Regimen has ended the exploitation of the earth.” ~ Dr. Supero, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 20

5. Compare Liberty's observations of the family with Dr. Supero's view. Add your own thoughts about the family.

“She simply needs to learn how the modern world works. She’s been sheltered from that. It’ll take time to help her realize the mistakes of her parents’ ideology.”

“Do not refer to them as parents. The word insinuates they have a unique relationship with her, or that they have some authority over her. She needs to understand that the Regimen is the only authority over her now. She is free of the radical influence of others.” ~ Dr. Supero, Testing Liberty, ch. 6

6. Why is language important when trying to influence a person's beliefs? Can you think of words, once common in the past, that are shunned by the culture today?
7. How might these changes in our language contribute to or cloud our understanding of human dignity?

Dedrick wanted no part of that battle. He wanted an untroubled life where family and community were everything. Granted, troubles went hand in hand with life, especially living out here off the Regimen's grid. Still, Mom and Dad had sheltered the family, giving them a happy, carefree childhood but also instilling in them a respect for and a desire to help others. He knew freedom and

security. He was willing to sacrifice and fight for it. He wanted it for everyone. ~ Dedrick, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 42

8. What does it mean to live a sheltered life? What advantages are there to growing up secluded from the evils of the world? Can parents allow their children to enjoy childhood and still prepare them to face the challenges of the culture without exposing them directly?

8. In Chapter 10 of *Testing Liberty*, Dedrick thinks of the group of troublemakers in the alley as “lost boys, created by a cold society, cared for by no one.” What would a culture without traditional family look like? What type of children would it create?

MOTIVATION

“People need to know what they’re missing first. They’re so wrapped up in themselves that they don’t get it. They can’t imagine what it could be like, what it *should* be like. They ache inside. They’re miserable and lonely. But if you let them choose, I think they’d take the easy way the Regimen offers. Freedom doesn’t matter to them.” ~ Bot, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 17

Our fallen human nature tends toward selfishness, but selfishness leads to feelings of dissatisfaction and emptiness. We were made for God, and fulfillment can only be found in following His will, which is often expressed in serving others.

1. How does one resist the urge to take the easy way out?
Why should one resist the easy way out?
2. How can strong families play a role in combatting this weakness?

***Because of your example and my experience here, I am a different person than when we first met. I have come to realize there is something I must do, a sacrifice I must make.* ~ Liberty’s letter in *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 17**

While Liberty was a light in a dark culture to begin with, and thus drew the attention of the Mosheh, she also continues to grow over the course of the story. The example of the

Maxwell colonists changes her and makes her realize that she must do something to help another.

3. List the people in your life that might be affected by your example.
4. How can you set an even better example that might one day motivate another to make positive changes?

“So the Battle of Trenton is a small victory in the Revolutionary War, but it came after much failure. The army was on the verge of collapsing. They were cold, hungry, lacking in supplies, dragging themselves through harsh weather to do battle against the well-fed, well-rested Hessians.” He smiled. “But they won. They took the Hessians by surprise. The battle was bloody, chaotic, and quick. It was over in two hours. Most of the Hessians surrendered. General George Washington had led them to victory.

“News of this battle spread and gave hope to all the Americans. Soldiers pledged to serve longer. New recruits came. These people, they risked their lives for the sake of their fellow Americans, for the sake of freedom.” ~ Bot discussing the 3D game, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 33

5. In the story, Bot believes that a firm knowledge of our history can inspire us to make positive change in ourselves and in the world. Do you agree? What historical events have inspired you?

“Aldonians have no one to fight for,” he said. “And nothing to fight for. They don’t know what they’re missing. They don’t even know they have rights. We need to get our people fired up for freedom. And you, Liberty, things don’t always work out the way we want, but that’s no reason to give up. Dig deep and find your American spirit. Then go out and do what only you can do.” ~ Bot, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 33

6. How would you describe the spirit of America? List the virtues that made our country strong.

“Our Regimen is a part of the world government. Who are we? What can we possibly accomplish? Rebels would only end up in re-education.”

“It can start small . . .” Bot turned toward her and spoke, gesturing with his hands. “. . . with the dissemination of ideas. They’re all asleep right now, everyone seeking their own interests, their own pleasure, content with their games and narrow pursuits. We could wake them up, give them something to think about, something bigger than themselves.” Bot looked at me. ~ Jessen and Bot, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 14

7. We are called to be the light in the dark culture around us. How aware are you of the problems in our culture? What can you do to learn more and then to make a difference in the culture around you?

8. What keeps many today from noticing the ills in society or from doing anything about it?

FREEDOM

“Freedom is not the ability to do anything we want, whenever we want. Rather, freedom is the ability to live responsibly the truth of our relationship with God and with one another.” ~ Pope John Paul II

“With freedom comes responsibility. Not everyone is prepared to accept that. Many prefer the handouts and conveniences the Regimen offers. Our way of life isn’t easy. You will each have to work and work hard. The conveniences you enjoyed yesterday are no longer yours.”

~ Dedrick, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 11

1. What does Dedrick mean by saying, “With freedom comes responsibility”? How does that apply to us today?

2. Bot begins to explain why people came to North America. What reasons does he give in ch. 14?

A gray-haired man with an easy smile taught us about life in the colony, about responsibility, virtue, selfless love, and family. A person wasn’t considered free until they could master themselves. ~ Liberty, *Chasing Liberty*, ch. 16

I no longer lived as a prisoner in a cell, yet I had not found true freedom. I was a slave to my passion and impulses. My Friend had tried to warn me of my impatience and impulsivity. ~ Liberty, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 33

3. Liberty has been looking at freedom as simply getting away from the all-controlling government, but she's learning that freedom is about something so much more. Explain this freedom.

The lessons on true freedom, which had begun in the Maxwell Colony, continued here. At Re-Ed. I understood now that inner freedom had more value than physical freedom. Inner freedom came from making right choices no matter the consequences or from accepting the consequences of bad choices. Inner freedom allowed one to have confidence in trials. ~ Liberty, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 1

4. Explain how inner freedom is more important than physical freedom. Can you think of examples of saints or from life that can support your answer?

This facility had been built many years ago as emergency housing for communities displaced by war or other disasters. Government leaders soon realized the most destructive force to society was the non-compliant individual. Those with opposing views were the terrorists. With the good of society in mind, the facility was modified to accommodate those in need of re-education. ~ Dr. Supero, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 31

5. Terrorism is real, and a country has a responsibility to protect its people from it. How can a country reach the point where it sees good as evil and evil as good, and therefore deny freedom while claiming to protect it?

This was the History Lesson. I was witnessing the wretchedness and oppression that grows in the human heart when people are given freedom. The small-mindedness of ordinary men and women prevented them from making good choices and progressing. They needed an all-powerful sovereign like the Regimen Custodia Terra to govern their affairs. ~ Liberty, *Testing Liberty*, ch. 41

6. What other reasons might a government give when usurping the rights and freedoms of the individual?

After gaining my freedom, I'd dreamt of a man scattering wheat in a field of weeds. This dream forced me to realize freedom belonged to everyone though few possessed it. And I, as one of the free, had a responsibility to help others claim it for themselves. ~ Liberty, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 11

7. Liberty believes that she has the responsibility to help others find freedom. What can we do today to help others find inner freedom?

I didn't need to feel so driven and anxious. I could have the things I deeply wanted, too. In some way, faithfulness to my little part, to my calling, to the things I wanted deeply, would help bring about true freedom. I didn't need to do something big. I could carry a carpet roll or deliver a message. I could live my life as a wife and mother, raising children and teaching them truth. And courage. That's what we needed in addition to freedom. In addition to

truth. We needed courage. ~ Liberty, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 32

8. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches about freedom in paragraphs 1730-1748. Name the virtues you see as necessary for living in true freedom.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

I hope that in reading this trilogy many will be inspired to take a hard look at the culture around them and find themselves eager to make a difference. One theme of the third book is that every one of us is called to make a difference. This change must start with ourselves and extend to those in our lives.

“You know they will rebuild,” Elder Lukman said. “You must change the people, which is why our assemblies, integration into society, and outreach are so important.”

~ Fight for Liberty, ch. 21

1. What methods can you think of for sharing the truth and bringing light into the culture around you?

Without truth, people live in darkness. Humanity is threatened. It was silence by the shepherds and believers of past generations, fear of offending or a desire to compromise, that put us in this mess.” ~ Father Damon,

Fight for Liberty, ch. 22

It is natural to not want to offend another and to maintain pleasant relationships, but as members of the Body of Christ, we have an obligation to speak the truth. This truth is meant for everyone, regardless of their openness to it.

2. Do you feel that the shepherds of today speak out enough? Name those outstanding bishops and priests who courageously speak the truth we need to hear. Pray

for and encourage them and recommend their words and example to others.

3. What can you do to encourage and support your parish pastor?

I was a Patriot, small and uncertain, coming up against the greatest world power of the day. ~ Liberty, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 18

4. No matter how small and insignificant we feel, God can use us as He used countless others throughout history. Name little figures from Scripture, history, or the news who accomplished big things. What fictional characters can you name?

“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.” ~ 1 Cor 1:27

5. Why do you think God works this way?

This may seem like a daunting task, but we know you are ready. And we are ready. We need those who know freedom and truth to plant seeds. You are called to bring the wheat that must conquer the weeds. You are called to *be the wheat.*” ~ Elder Rayna, *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 2

6. How ready are you to be the wheat that conquers the weeds in the world today?

7. Elder Rayna explains that the Mosheh are to seed the words of truth in several ways: through literature, messages, learning the values of the past, and the example of their lives. What methods can you think of for your mission today?

My Friend appeared as the second sower, the enemy of the first. Together we appreciated the grain. I knew that I had little, if anything, to do with the golden field, that I was but a single grain myself, but he made me feel like his coworker. ~ Liberty, Testing Liberty, ch. 41

“For we are God’s co-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:9 NABRE).

God can do all things, yet He has asked us to be His coworkers. See also 2 Cor 6:1. Let us not let this great honor and privilege be lost on us! Plan today what you can do to grow in holiness and bring truth and goodness to the world.

Remember the words that Dedrick spoke to Liberty in *Fight for Liberty*, ch. 31.

“Sometimes the truth reaches us through the little things.”

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