

Discussion Questions: *The Captive Heart* by Dale Cramer

THE DAUGHTERS OF CALEB BENDER, Book 2

1. Miriam is haunted by a strange dream, and throughout the story it affects her biggest decisions. Her feeling is that the dream was a pointer from God. Does God talk to us through dreams?
2. After the Shrocks and Hershbergers arrive, Caleb quotes Genesis 2:18: "It is not good that man should be alone." He says this applies in the communal sense as well as the personal. Sense of community is paramount among the Amish. How important is it to modern evangelical Christians? What are the positives and negatives of such total commitment to community?
3. Domingo talks to Miriam about respecting another man's fences and the inherent difficulties in a relationship between Christian and non-Christian. Wise words from a pagan, but later he changes his mind. Why?
4. Micah holds off the bandits with an empty shotgun and his father berates him for it, saying it's better to die once than to burn in hell forever. The question of when and how to respond to violence comes up frequently in the book. How do modern evangelicals differ from the Amish in this regard? Who do you think is right?
5. Why does Miriam agree to let Micah court her?
6. When Micah fails to out-wrestle a chimp it appears to be a defining moment for Miriam. Why? What are the irreconcilable differences in their personalities and expectations?
7. The preacher fails to show up, children die in a diphtheria epidemic, bandits kill and kidnap, and yet most of the Amish choose to stay in Paradise Valley. Why? What does this say to us about our own life choices?
8. When Ada takes Little Amos and flees cross-country through the wild mountains, her thought processes are those of a child and yet she overcomes obstacles and fears she doesn't even understand. What motivates her? What does Ada's childlike faith say to us?
9. Micah tells Miriam she won't be teaching school after they're married. He would be within his rights as an Amish husband. How does Miriam respond? How would you respond?
10. Domingo's profound respect for Caleb appears to be a deciding factor in much of his thinking, yet Caleb never preaches to Domingo. What does this say to us about how we present ourselves to others?
11. Despite being raised as a warrior, after the battle at El Ojo, Domingo is wracked with remorse. How was the reality of battle different from what he expected and why did it affect him so?
12. Domingo lies to Jake about the bandit in the barn. Later, Rachel has every opportunity to tell Jake the truth, but she doesn't. Why? Do you think she's being selfish?
13. Miriam and Rachel keep dire secrets from each other, perhaps for the first time in their lives. How does this change their relationship?