

*A Matter of Control*  
Discussion Questions

Dear Teacher or Book Club Leader,

Below are some questions that can be used to generate thought and discussion around the story *A Matter of Control*. Some of the questions might have a definitive answer but most are written in a way as to allow each individual to bring his or her own personal experience and opinion to the story. Some of the questions may overlap and be answered in a preceding or subsequent question, so participants should not feel obligated to repeat answers, but I did want to make sure the question was asked in case it was not addressed through another question.

In general, the questions deal with character development, conflict, spiritual values, personal application, and writing style. Please feel free to choose the questions that you believe will be most relevant to your group.

I hope you find these questions helpful. God Bless.

*Jody*

*A Matter of Control*  
Discussion Questions

1. Based on the title of the book, the overriding theme is control. What do the various characters learn about being in control of their own lives?

2. What are the dreams of each of the following characters?

- a. Reba
- b. Danny
- c. Travis
- d. Alex

2. What are the conflicts for each of the following characters?

- a. Reba
- b. Danny
- c. Travis
- d. Alex
- e. Martha

3. For each of the following characters discuss his or her strengths and weaknesses. How do those strengths and weaknesses affect his or her dream?

- a. Alex
- b. Reba
- c. Danny
- d. Travis

4. English teacher Martha Richards is extremely well intentioned. Do you think she has done anything wrong? Please defend your position.

5. At the beginning of the book, each of the following characters finds his or her strength, security, and/or identity in what? How does that strength foundation get undermined, shaken, or questioned during the course of the story?

- a. Martha
- b. Reba
- c. Alex
- d. Danny
- e. Travis

6. Take each character and determine where he or she finds relief from his or her problems. Does that choice help in some way? is it flawed?

- a. Martha
- b. Reba
- c. Alex
- d. Danny
- e. Travis

7. The book takes a look at the place of prayer. How is the purpose of prayer portrayed through each of the characters? What do the various characters learn about prayer? Have you learned similar lessons regarding prayer?

8. Parents are often thought to have all the answers. What do you learn about parenting through the various parents in this story?

9. Though the book does not focus on friendship, friendship does play an important part in the story. What do you learn about friendship through the various characters?

10. Each character also learns about sacrifice. In what way does each character come face to face with sacrifice? What kind of sacrifice must each encounter?

11. When Travis accepts Christ, Mr. Washington warns him that life might get tougher not easier because Satan is not happy he was “switching teams” (page 295). Have you experienced the truth in this statement? In what ways? In what ways did life get easier after accepting Christ?

12. Though Travis is surrounded by people, he feels very much alone and vulnerable. Is his aloneness one of loneliness or vulnerability? Have you ever had a similar experience?

13. Though Travis sells drugs, he doesn't use them. Why? Does Travis use something else to achieve the same effect?

14. Which character do you most identify with and why?

15. Though you do not live in inner city Detroit, what themes/concerns/problems/dreams are consistent with where you live?

16. Look at the various family dynamics (the Washingtons, the Richards, the Johnsons) and comment on those families. What is admirable in each, what (if anything) is lacking or dysfunctional? Have you witnessed any truth in these dynamics through either personal experience or observation?

17. Travis is haunted by many scripture verses but in particular Matthew 16:26, which states “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” How does this verse relate to Travis? Does it relate to any other characters?

18. Which verse had the greatest effect on Alex? Why? Amanda?

19. Though no particular verse is used specifically for Reba or Danny, what verses (not necessarily used in the book) would you apply to each character and why?

20. Which verse had the greatest effect on you?

21. Solinski alternates point of view quite frequently, moving from character to character. How does this affect the overall reading of the story?

22. Dialogue’s two main purposes are to help in character development and to move the story along. Which passages of dialogue do you think accomplish one or both of these purposes?

23. Solinski chooses not to show Travis’s actual conversion scene. Do you think this is a strength or a weakness in the book?