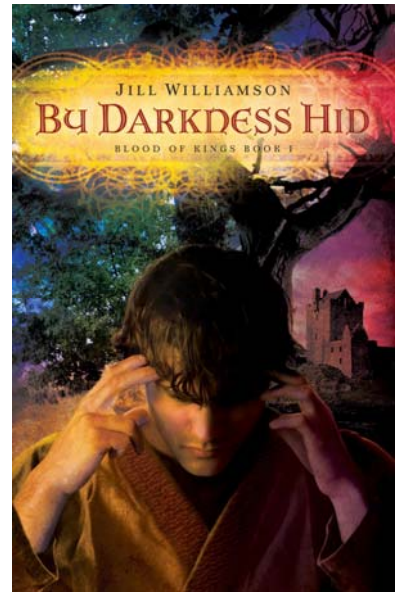


Discussion Questions

By Darkness Hid by Jill Williamson



1. At the beginning of *By Darkness Hid*, Achan encounters two bullies picking on a younger boy. What do you think of Achan's actions? Do you think he did the right or wrong thing?
2. Have you ever been picked on by bullies or seen someone being picked on? How did you handle it?
3. Do you think it was right for Achan to disobey the law to train as a knight behind his owner's back? Why or why not?
4. What do you think of Achan giving offerings to Cetheria? Does he seem to believe in the act, does he do it because everyone else does, or does he only remember to give an offering when things in his life aren't going well? How do his actions compare to those of many believers today?
5. Vrell is hiding so that she doesn't have to marry a man who is evil and doesn't believe in God. Do you think this is wise? Why or why not?
6. What do you think about the lies that Vrell tells in order to keep her secret?
7. Is it wise for a girl to go alone on a journey with two men? Why or why not? What else could Vrell have done?
8. Gren loves Achan but she will not run away with him because she does not want to disobey her parents. What do you think about this? Here are two verses to add to your thoughts:
 - a. "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you." (Genesis 20:12)
 - b. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

9. Achan and Vrell both feel alone and isolated. Have you ever felt that way?

10. Vrell always thanks Arman for her meal no matter who is watching. Do you give thanks for your meals? Why or why not?

11. Several times throughout the story, Achan hears Arman's voice. All of us may not have had such a powerful encounter with God, but we have all had times when we can see that God was present if we are looking. Think back over your life. Can you recall times when God was with you?

12. Achan thinks the idea of one god is laughable, but he starts to doubt himself through the course of the book. Have you ever doubted God was there? Did you know that doubt is man's way of trying to control his own life? God wants you to trust him to deal with all the hard stuff in your life so that you can lean on him. Have you seen that in your own life? If not, have you seen it in another person's life?

13. Achan throws Gren's letter away without reading it. Why do you think he did that? If you were in his shoes, what would you have done?

14. Achan often sacrifices himself to help others. What do you think of this trait? Would you ever consider doing the same for someone? A loved one? A stranger?

15. Achan learns that he has been lied to his whole life. How does he respond? Can you identify with that? Have you ever been lied to? How did you respond?

16. Despite all of Vrell's prayers, she does not reunite with her mother or Bran in this book. Do you think Arman has not answered her yet or that his answer to her prayer to go home is no? Has God ever said no to something you prayed hard for? How did you deal with that? Did you trust that God's plans are best, even if they don't seem like it at the time?

17. Sir Gavin said that Darkness is growing. Why do you think that is? Have you ever seen evil grow in a person or a place? How did you notice it? Have you ever been in a place that felt evil? What did you do? Do you think evil is growing in our country? Our world?