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Essential Christianity

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Character Development of Reuven and Danny

When the movie began with the baseball game, tension was very high. Danny was ready to kill Reuven, and Reuven was falling into peer pressure and judging the Orthodox Jews. As the main plot plays out you see Danny genuinely trying to reconcile with Danny, at least that was what interpreted. At the point where Danny went to Reuven’s house to hopefully make it up. Reuven then starts to like him, and you begin to see character development. At first, Reuven is very taken aback about the amount of studying and knowledge the orthodox Jew has, and it inspires him to get better grades!

When the boys first met, Danny was an orthodox Jew secretly pursing education and knowledge without his father’s permission, which was a big deal. Danny’s thirst for knowledge pushes him to get to know Reuven. This strive to get to know him made me think it was an almost manipulative relationship where Danny wanted to “extort” Reuven and his life. Because of this I believe that the beginning of the relationship where Danny wants to apologize for the baseball was really a scheme to live vicariously through Reuven.

Reuven was very inspired to pursue knowledge in the area of Orthodox Jew. Reuven was very intrigued by the way they lived and was quickly immersed into the Orthodox Jew culture. He was skeptical at first, not understanding what was happening, but soon grew to enjoy the culture. I believe this was a major developing point in his character. At that point it was as if his mind became more open to different cultures and different ideas.

The movie portrays Reuven and Danny’s relationship as if Reuven left his other baseball friends and solely hung out with the Orthodox crew, I don’t think this is true, but would definitely play into the following character development.

As Danny continued to pursue education in the area of psychology, he was rebellious against his father wishes of not only pursuing education at the library, but especially pursuing psychology. At that time in the movie my thought was that he was just rebellious, which is the reason why he was so dedicated to learning.

As Danny was becoming more and more rebellious, Reuven was developing curiosity for Orthodox Jews and their customs, why they do what they do, he was also consistently asking his father about them adding to his curiosity. As this was developing you could barely see the kid that was at the beginning of the movie that was making fun of people that act differently without want to learn. The kid that wouldn’t look someone in the eyes when they where trying to apologize.

What I found extremely interesting is that Danny was willing and wanting to rebel against all the orders given him, except when it came to shunning/ignoring Reuven, this ties into my assumption and theory that Danny was using Reuven as a way to essentially “escape” his orthodox culture and live through him, in a way manipulating him. At the end of the movie you can see Danny has developed a lot, becoming a psychologist while Reuven pursues finding peace.

In my own life I can often have trouble seeing the views of other people and other walks of life that might differ from my own. Recently I have found it much easier to be receptive to hearing other points of view or opinions. Much like Reb Isaac Saunders, Danny’s father, I have a tendency to believe that only my view matters and is right without consideration for other’s feelings. It can often be interpreted as me imposing my views on others, essentially forcing them to see my point of view and only my own. This past year I finally came to that realization of what I was doing and started the journey to listen. At this time in my life I find it necessary to listen to others point of view and opinion about subjects, I am no longer have tunnel vision for that one topic but can accept that others do not think my way.

I have also recently found my curiosity to grow exponentially based on who I surround myself with, if I surround myself with people with no desire to learn and only want to minimal their way through schooling, I find myself doing the same. However, when I surround myself with people with such a desire to learn and study a subject, I feel that burning feeling to learn as well! Much like Danny in this scenario, surrounding yourself with those that have a vast amount of knowledge can usually only have good effects on your life!

In conclusion, Danny had some development, towards the end It felt as if he cared for Reuven and was no longer using him. I believe his character almost stayed the same the entire movie, he just slowly allowed more to show. Reuven however had the most character development allowing himself to be immersed into different cultures growing in faith and knowledge, essentially allowing him to bridge the two communities and cultures because of his experience in both.