

REGULATION

EXPLORATION GUIDE

The W with Alex Dee & Ryan Patch
by Luke Brad Bobo, PhD

1

The Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain *unalienable Rights*, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of *Happiness*.” Mia invokes these words upon arriving at Kaleigh’s home when she says, “Every child has a right to be happy... by law.”

Do we have the right to be happy? Does God’s word say that we have the right to be happy, or does the Bible call for a pursuit of something deeper?

2

Kaleigh’s family seems to be socio-economically poor. According to Mia, it is important that people like Kaleigh “regulate” (or manage their happiness). Mia explains to Kaleigh, “Since doctors can guarantee happiness, we made a law so that mental health is taken care of in all kids in families like yours.”

What reasons did Mia give to Kaleigh for recommending this microdoser or happy patch? What assumptions are being made about one’s socioeconomic status and mental health? What is the role of medicine in our society — is it to enhance or to achieve some sense of normalcy? What is the role of government in our flourishing?

3

Mia tells Kaleigh about her brother who hurt himself because he did not self-regulate. Unsure by this, Kaleigh asks Mia, “Why can’t I stay here and play with Ramona and be happy and sad when I want?”

Do you empathize with Mia’s experience? Why do you think she was visibly stumped by Kaleigh’s question? Do you believe in scripture that says, “There is a time for everything... a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance” (Ecclesiastes 3)?

4

The field of medical technology is moving quite rapidly and often outpacing ethical considerations. C. S. Lewis warns in his book, *The Abolition of Man*, that some medical technologies can undermine what it truly means to be human.

This film poses many overarching questions: When these technologies are available, should we use them? Should we enforce them? What other questions should we ask before using such technologies?

5

“Literary characters have a lot to teach us about character,” writes Karen Swallow Prior in her book, *On Reading Well*. She also says that literature offers us “images of virtue [and vice] in action. In the same way, characters projected on the big screen have a lot to teach us and motion pictures offer us images of virtue and vice in action. We learn about human nature and our own nature by unconsciously and vicariously judging film characters through our moral imaginations.

After the film, what had you learned about the character of Kaleigh and Mia? Did their interaction reveal any hopes or worries in you? What did you learn about your own character by watching this film?