

GSD DISCUSSION GUIDE



This is a long list of suggested questions. Please feel free to choose a few, adapt them or add your own questions.

HEALING & SUFFERING

- What methods do the Macdonald family use to gain healing? (chapter 11) —List at least 3-5 methods. What is their thinking behind each method? Is their thinking correct? Back up your answer with references from the Bible (being careful of context).
- What are the dangers of placing a huge emphasis on God healing?
- Why do some people believe that God is there to bless and make life smooth? What is their support for the idea? What parts of scripture might not support this idea?
- Why didn't Esther recognise that Joy was talking the truth the first time they met? What factors 'blocked her ears'?
- What was Esther's worldview on the issue of suffering/hard times—prior to meeting Joy? What does this reveal about her view of God? What impact do her views have on her life?
- How does her worldview change by the end of the book? How has her view of God changed? How does that impact her life?
- What things has God taught you through suffering?

DEALING WITH PAIN AND CONFLICT

- Each character had different ways of responding to pain or conflict.
 - William—could also consider his teenage response to his brother’s death
 - Esther
 - Nick
 - Blanche
 - Naomi—to her son’s and husband’s deaths.
- What are the implications of each of their coping methods? How could they have responded in a healthier way?

RELATIONSHIPS/FRIENDSHIP

- Why did Esther and Nick date and get engaged?
- What were the hints their relationship was in trouble?
- How can someone recognise when they’re in ‘love with love’ and not a person?
- Could Nick and Esther’s relationship have been saved? What needed to happen?
- Gina wasn’t chosen as a bridesmaid—how did she prove to be a true friend? What can you learn from her?

CHOICES

- Naomi says, “We don’t start the way we turn out. We become what we are by a series of choices.” Trace the choices of someone in the book.
- What choices have made you the person you are?
- How might you have ended up if you’d made different choices?

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS

- What can we learn from how Joy shares the good news with Esther?
- What stops you sharing about Jesus with others? What could you learn from Esther?
- God used a cleaner in the hospital to share Jesus with Esther. Outline the flow on effect, that is, the other people who were touched by the gospel because of that cleaner sharing with Esther.

BIBLE STORYTELLING

- Which of the Bible stories told in this book most touches/challenges/inspires you? Why?
- Have you experienced Bible storytelling before? What might be the advantages of it as a communication method?
- Sharing the message of the gospel was done through stories but it wasn't only for evangelism, how else did Joy use stories?

OTHER QUESTIONS

- The title of the *Grace in Strange Disguise*. Which characters in this book is this true for? How?
- When you look back at your life, were there any times when you were disappointed in how God worked but now you can see it was 'grace in strange disguise'?
- What impresses you about Joy? What are some of the factors that have led to her character?
- In what ways is Joy, 'God's grace' to Esther? How can you encourage other believers in their walk with Jesus?
- Who is your favourite character? Why? OR Which character can you relate to? Why?
- What is something you learned from this novel that you could apply in your own life?