

GRACE IN THE SHADOWS DISCUSSION GUIDE



This discussion guide is designed to help you dig deeply into the book while deepening relationships with others in your discussion group.

GUIDELINES

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

1. Which of the characters do you most relate to? Why?
2. Who is your favourite minor character? Why? What can you learn from that character?
3. What issues was Rachel not dealing with? Why? What methods did she use to cope? What were the results?
4. Esther had a longing that was unfulfilled for many years. What kinds of longings might be unfulfilled in Christian's lives? How should Christians deal with these unfulfilled longings? (compare it with how a non-believer might deal with the same issues).
5. Esther concentrates her prayers on Rachel changing. Why can't she see that she has some things that need to change too?

6. Esther seemed so mature at the end of book 1. Why is she back to struggling in book 2? Have you seen this in your own life or others' lives? What can we learn?
7. Esther tried to manage things her own way. Why? What does this reveal about her view of herself and her view of God? What would have been a better way to deal with her situation?
8. This book is entitled - Grace in the Shadows. What kind of shadows are there? How are the characters impacted by these shadows?

EVANGELISM RELATED QUESTIONS

9. What prevents Rachel from listening to the good news?
10. What factors prepare Rachel to accept the good news? (i.e. what were her 'links in the chain')
11. What were the 'links in the chain' towards belief for you? Share with the group.
12. What is it about Dirk that makes him able to influence others towards Jesus? How does he share?
13. Why does Esther love sharing about Jesus?
14. Why might Esther struggle with sharing Jesus with Rachel?
15. How does Josh share about Jesus? What could you learn from him?
16. Is there anything about evangelism that you can learn from this book? What goal(s) could you set for the next two months?
17. What are your biggest struggles sharing your faith? What strategies have you learnt in the book to help you overcome these struggles?

BIBLE STORYTELLING

18. This method of communication is used in both evangelism and discipleship in this book. What might be the advantages of storytelling in each of these contexts?
19. Which of the Bible stories in the book has the most impact on you? Why?
 - Adam and Eve's rebellion;
 - Abraham and Sarah;
 - Daniel 3;
 - Christmas story;
 - Martha;
 - Prodigal Son;
 - Samaritan woman at the well;
 - Two thieves at crucifixion.

VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

20. What is the general attitude to death/dying in your culture? How do people face death or the fact that a friend is dying?
21. What attitude do Naomi and Esther have to death? Why?
22. Do you know anyone walking through this shadow at the moment? How might 'Grace in the Shadows' help you? What could you do for your friend?
23. Rachel is shocked by Esther saying that death can be beautiful (when she explains Anna's death). In what ways is the death in this book 'beautiful'?
24. What do you like about the funeral in this book? What makes a 'good' funeral?

OTHER ISSUES

25. Towards the end of the book (chapter 46), Rachel asks Esther if she's ever considered shortening her suffering. What answer does Esther give? Compare the assumptions behind their views? Why is this important?
26. Have you ever believed something and later discovered it wasn't true? How did it make you feel? How can you avoid being drawn into deceptive teaching?