

Discussion Guide

1. Have you ever wished for a better relationship with a parent or family member but not known how to achieve one? Did you find a new path to further your relationship? How did you go about it?

2. Hannah grew up thinking of Joe Sterling as “my hero, my champion against Mama.” Why do you think she was so quick to believe Joe and to accept what he’d told her about her mother at face value? Has anyone ever influenced your view of someone else in a similar way?

3. Why do you think Joe manipulated Lieselotte into marrying him, and into staying with him despite his promise to release her once she regained her health? How did this information change your view of Joe?

4. Do you agree or disagree with Lieselotte’s decision not to confide in her daughter about her past and the identity of her biological father? Did Lieselotte do the right thing in staying with Joe? Please explain.

5. What do you think about Hannah’s decision to investigate her mother’s past? Would you have followed such a trail?

6. Did Lieselotte’s feelings about her father and brother change as the war progressed and their involvement with the Nazi party intensified? Do you think Lukas continued to consider Rudy a friend? Why or why not?

7. Were you surprised to learn that Herr Sommer disowned Lieselotte and abandoned her in Ravensbrück? Why do you think he did that? Do you see evidence that he regretted this decision later in his life?

8. What do you think motivated Dr. Peterson to manipulate Wolfgang and his family?
9. Hannah hesitates to accept what she learns about her grandfather's role during the war and struggles to know how to interact with him once she knows the truth. If you discovered that a relative had committed a heinous crime, how would you respond to him/her?
10. When Lieselotte said she wanted to assist the Kirchmanns in their work to help Jewish people in hiding, Lukas challenged her, asking if she felt the Lord had called her to this. She thought, "If I said yes, I would be lying. If I said no, would they let me help? I could not lie to Lukas or his parents . . . nor could I tell him—explain to him—that if I did nothing I would die inside. I would burst and die of loneliness, of anger, of frustration, of helplessness. 'I only know I must do something that helps someone. Everything I see frightens me, nearly to death. If I am caught, I would rather die for something than live for nothing.'" Have you ever felt this way? What did it propel you to do?
11. Our regrets often come from mistakes we made, but Carl—and to some degree his parents—is haunted more by the family's inaction. Can you think of an example where your inaction has caused you regret?
12. Have you read Corrie ten Boom's *The Hiding Place* or seen the film? If so, how did her story impact you? Do you think you would help others as the Ten Boom family did? What do you think of her forgiveness of the guard at Ravensbrück? How would you have responded in the same place?

13. Hannah learned that it is one thing to believe in the forgiveness, redemption, and the saving power of Jesus Christ and another thing to fully surrender and walk in newness of life. Discuss the difference and how each one is achieved. Why is surrender of our rights in order to forgive or be forgiven so difficult?