

Discussion Questions

****Please Note:** Some of these questions contain spoilers and should be read after you have finished reading the book.

1. Reverend Curtis Black was estranged from his mother and sister for decades. Do you think they should have tried harder to connect in previous years? Are there reasons that justify cutting yourself off from family? If so, please give examples.
2. When Curtis and his sister Trina do in fact reconcile, he learns that she doesn't have very long to live. Have you experienced something similar, or are you currently not speaking to one or more of your family members?
3. While Curtis and Trina are getting to know each other again, Charlotte is drifting away. Were there clues to Charlotte's problems that Curtis should have been aware of? If so, what were they? Is it possible to cope with more than one crisis at a time in a way that is healthy? With our lives getting busier and our attention being claimed by more and more demands, how can we focus on things that really matter?
4. Charlotte feels so much pressure as the wife of a pastor. Why do you think she felt unable to discuss the situation with Curtis? Do we have unrealistic expectations of our church and other community leaders and their immediate family members? Is there a way to combine the pursuit of one's personal dreams with the pursuit of the greater good? If so, how?
5. As the book continues, Curtina's behavior becomes progressively worse, and social media is a big factor. What do you see as the positives and negatives of social media? Are they different for adults and children? If so, in what way?
6. Curtina's story sheds a light on how complicated children's lives are. Do you think children are better off now than say twenty years ago, or is it the other way around?
7. Curtis's mom was unable to protect Curtis from abuse. Given the realities of life for so many women worldwide, do you think she could have done something to save her children or herself? If so, how?
8. Do you personally know a family member or friend who is struggling with battered-wife syndrome? If so, what are your feelings about it, and have you tried helping them?

9. Throughout the book, Curtis wrestles with demons from his past. Is it possible to really put the past behind us? If you were in his situation, could you forgive your father? What about your mother?

10. Curtis has committed many sins himself, and Charlotte has too. How many times can a person repeat the same mistakes, over and over again, before you would cut all ties with them?

11. At the end of the book, Curtis and Charlotte's marriage seems stronger than ever. Do you think they've finally found their happily-ever-after? Or do you see more problems for them in the future?

12. For years, Kimberla's goal was to show that even the worst of people can change for the better if they choose. So, with that said, do you believe Reverend Curtis Black is a good example of this sentiment?