

The Atonement, The READING GROUP GUIDE

The Atonement by Beverly Lewis

Readers' Discussion Questions

1. "Lucy had managed to free herself from the heartache. Either that or she'd shoved the pain away, where it couldn't gnaw at her heart. *Like I've tried to do . . .*" Talk about how Lucy Flaud and her father, Christian, relate to the past. How does that change throughout the course of the story?
2. Despite the fact that God doesn't seem to answer, Lucy continues to pray for others. "Even if heaven's silent . . . I won't quit knockin'." Have you ever experienced a time when God didn't seem to hear your prayers? How did you handle that?
3. While Lucy's parents and sister Martie are aware of the extent of her transgressions, Lucy's twin sisters and *Mammi* Flaud are not. Why do you think this is the case? Do you agree with Lucy and her parents' decision not to tell everyone in the family? Why or why not?
4. Like the Amish, Dale shares an appreciation for the simpler, more traditional ways of doing things. In what ways his approach to technology similar to theirs? In what ways is it different?
5. As frequently as Lucy volunteers, she doesn't feel worthy of forgiveness. Why do you think some people become fixed on trying to earn forgiveness versus accepting the forgiveness God offers through Christ?
6. Discuss how Lucy reacts when Tobe asks if he might court her. Do you think she's right to respond as she does? What would you do in her situation?
7. What are a few reasons a number of Amish in this story are considering a cross-country relocation? What are some unique challenges such a move presents to them versus Englishers? How might day-to-day Amish life vary based on where people live?

8. Lucy wonders now how she ever could have thought Travis was right for her. Have you ever made a decision that you look back on now with surprise, perhaps even regret? What's something that you've learned from that experience?
9. Despite feeling inadequate to discuss faith with Wendell Keene, what are some ways Lucy is able to minister to people even in her spiritually broken state? What do you think this says about her? About God?
10. Clinton and Dorothea's love story inspires Lucy. Do you see any parallels between their story and Lucy's own? Discuss.
11. Sometimes we can be more receptive to what an outsider has to say than to the advice of anyone close to us. What are some things that Lucy learns about herself and about faith from Dale? Were you surprised at his role in the story?