

Ransomed Dreams Discussion Questions

1. Gracie struggled with feeling helpless and allowed that to drive her life in many areas, trying to prove she *wasn't* powerless. What lies do you struggle with? How do they keep you from living? Or drive you so hard you don't enjoy the life you have?
2. Another common lie we believe is "I'm not good enough." How did Steven handle this lie and find freedom? What helped him decide others' opinions don't define him? If what other people think about us doesn't define us, then what does?
3. When you read Jeremiah 31:3 about God's everlasting love, what does that stir up in you? If we lived like we believed this verse, how would our actions show it?
4. What do Isaiah 43:1; Zephaniah 3:17; John 13:34; and Ephesians 5:1 say about how God thinks about you? Is it difficult to believe God really feels this way? Why?
5. It can be so hard to trust God and believe that He loves us when life screams differently. Read Psalm 91 and John 16:33. How do those Scriptures go together?
6. How does Philippians 4:6–7 help us to believe that even when life is hard, God is still good?

7. One huge thing Steven struggled with was the question *why*? He fumed at Clint about why children die and why marriages fail—even when people pray. He turned away from God because of his hurt and unanswered questions. Can you relate to Steven or do you know someone who does? How?
8. Is it okay to fume at God and ask why? I love the book of Job because Job gets real with God and demands an answer from the Almighty concerning his heartache. What does he receive? Job 38:1 says God answered. What was Job’s response? Read Job 40:3–5.
9. While there are no easy answers, here are a few verses to ponder and discuss with regard to the deep-seated “why” questions in our lives: Jeremiah 31:18; Romans 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 1:3–6; 7:10; 1 Peter 2:19–24; 4:12–19. How do these verses impact your “why” questions?
10. Sometimes we won’t find or understand the answers to our “why” questions. It seems life would be better if we had no trouble (or at least less trouble) and that the Christian life should guarantee fewer problems. Consider Joseph, King David, Job, Daniel, and Paul. More often than not, they didn’t have complete answers to the trials they endured. How did they respond? Read Genesis 50:19–20; 2 Samuel 12; Job 13:15; Daniel 6; and 2 Corinthians 12:9. How did they benefit from their responses? How have we benefited from their examples?
11. What did you think about Gracie’s picture of forgiveness? How did emotionally keeping her hand around the neck of the one who’d hurt her cause her more pain?

12. Forgiving those who have hurt us is a painful and difficult choice. But to live in unforgiveness is far worse. Matthew 18:23–33 shows some very painful consequences of unforgiveness and not receiving God’s forgiveness for ourselves. How did Gracie and Steven suffer for choosing not to forgive?
13. What does it mean to forgive from your heart? Gracie found she could truly forgive only after she’d taken her lies about herself to God and heard His truth. First Peter 1:22 talks about being cleansed by obeying the truth, then loving deeply from the heart. How do you think it would help you to forgive if you took your hurt and lies to God first and allowed Him to cleanse you and speak truth?
14. Who is harder to forgive—yourself or others? Why?
15. As Gracie became aware of the need to deal with her lies and forgive, she described what her parents provided as heart-chocolate. My definition of that phrase is: “words that wrap around the heart and bring excitement, comfort, and an expanded perspective of how awesome God is.” Can you think of some heart-chocolate in your own life, a moment when you experienced God and it encouraged you? How can you share that same type of encouragement with others?