

***A Tailor-Made Bride* Discussion Questions**

A Tailor-Made Bride by Karen Witemeyer

Early in the story, Jericho is frustrated because he believes Hannah's arrival interferes with his calling to minister to Louisa James. He had planned to provide Louisa with a new building for her laundry business, but the Lord saw fit to give it to an outsider. Have you ever experienced confusion or frustration when a ministry you felt called to doesn't progress in the way you expect? Does resentment or envy ever creep in when you hear other believers talk about the way the Lord has blessed them?

Tom Packard is an enthusiastic young man with slow mental functioning, yet Jericho trusts him to run the livery when he's not around. What kind of giftedness did Tom exhibit despite his disabilities? How well do you think today's society welcomes and involves people with similar mental challenges? Are they viewed as important contributors to the community or simply as a responsibility?

Several times Tom's simple way of viewing the world made Jericho reconsider his assumptions. Describe a time when someone with a different perspective or worldview caused you to rethink your position on a particular issue or to dig deeper into your faith.

Jericho believes concern with one's outer appearance leads to vanity, while Hannah sees herself as imitating the Creator by using her giftedness with a needle to create items of beauty. Both concepts are supported by Scripture, and both characters are motivated by pure hearts. Have you ever come up against an issue in your church or family where both sides seem to be right even though they oppose each other? Is it possible for truth to reign on both sides? How can you work through the disagreement with love and respect and learn from each other instead of damaging relationships and splitting churches?

In the 19th century, it was common practice for children, like Tessa, to work alongside their parents several hours a day. Whether working on the farm or in a laundry, parents often relied on their children to help support the family business. How has this model changed over time? What are the pros and cons of this change? How do we instill responsibility and a good work ethic in our children without exploiting them?

Cordelia decides to change her outer appearance in order to gain Ike's attention. Do you think she was right to do so? Why or why not? Have you ever done something drastic to gain the good opinion of someone? Were you glad you took that action, or did you later regret it?

Ezra was a man steeped in grief until Hannah took the time to look past his filthy exterior and validate the man beneath. Would you have welcomed conversation with a man who stank and who was infested with vermin? How does Ezra compare to the person in your workplace who holds people away with a grouchy demeanor or the church member who always complains about everything? What can you do to reach through their barriers to minister to the hurting souls beneath?

In today's world, how do we find balance between modesty and dressing to impress (for work, in dating, when out in public)? Should a Christian dress differently than the rest of the world? If so, in what way? Do you ever catch yourself making judgments about others based on their appearance? How can we change our attitudes to see people from the inside-out instead of from the outside-in?

Jericho's deep concern about fine clothes leading to vanity stemmed from his past experiences with his mother. How do our past experiences shape the way we view God's teachings? In what way can this be a blessing? A detriment?

What were some of your favorite scenes in this book? What was it about those scenes that drew you in? Did you learn anything about yourself by sharing Hannah and Jericho's journey? If so, what?