

***The Postcard* Discussion Questions**

The Postcard by Beverly Lewis

1. The morning he dies, Jacob tells Rachel, "We always miss what we don't have." These words prove prophetic in Rachel's life. Can you think of some things in your own life you didn't fully appreciate until it was too late?
2. When Esther and her husband hear of Rachel's loss, they come "to help, to bear your sorrows." What are some ways in which we can help bear another's sorrows? Have you ever experienced a painful loss? What brought you comfort?
3. Esther asks Rachel to consider that God might have preserved her life "for a special purpose." What do you think that purpose might be?
4. In what ways does an Old Order Amish funeral differ from the funerals you've attended? How is it similar?
5. Rachel keeps Aaron's black shoes as a token of remembrance. Why do you think she chooses her son's shoes over something of her husband's?
6. Contrast the response of the Bird-in-Hand Plain community to widows like Rachel with that of the modern, outside world. What do you like or dislike about each approach?
7. Following the accident, Rachel resigns herself to the blindness, that self-imposed haven where no painful image could ever intrude. What do you think of Rachel's reaction to both the accident and the blindness? Can you understand why she might almost welcome the loss of her sight after witnessing the deaths of her loved ones?
8. Philip fears halting his hectic schedule long enough to seriously consider the direction of his life, claiming he functions best when busy. Would you agree that it is generally easier to maintain the status quo than to stop and think about alternatives?
9. Susanna assumes keeping busy would help Rachel to heal by taking her mind off herself. In this respect, Rachel's problem is the opposite of Philip's, with his overly busy life. Which character do you more easily relate to?
10. At one point, Philip muses on some of the qualities he finds desirable in a spouse—a woman who is mannerly, appreciative, and demure and who will allow him to lead. What do you think of Philip's list? What kinds of traits do you believe

are important in a mate?

11. When Susanna ponders the unusually close relationship Rachel and Jacob once shared, she thinks, How much easier to confide in another woman—someone who truly understood how you felt, how you thought. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

12. Before reading *The Postcard*, had you given much thought to the idea of "generational sins," as Esther describes them?

13. Rachel thinks of her mother as a woman who fought against most everything a person has to say. Do you find this to be an apt description of Susanna? Why or why not?

14. Gabriel means "God is my strength," a name his father says fits because God is the only possible source of strength such a scrawny boy could have. Can you think of other ways in which the name suits Gabriel?

15. Scripture forbids the occult healing techniques embraced by hex doctors. Can you think of other spiritually questionable health practices people might fall prey to?

16. In what ways is Rachel reminiscent of her great-uncle Gabe? In what ways is she like his sweetheart, Adele?

17. Adele sees the long-lost postcard as "a reminder of God's faithfulness to me—though I allowed great disappointment to rob me of my faith." If applicable, talk about a time when you allowed disappointment to come between you and God. Like Adele, have you had a "postcard" moment when you've been reminded of His hand on your life?