

Discussion Questions

1. What hints do you see, early on in the book, that there is an underlying issue creating tension in the relationship between Ethan and Chase? Have you ever been in a situation where there was tension in a relationship, but neither you nor the other person involved were talking about the real issue? Explain.
2. Why do you think Chase felt responsible for his mother's death? Are there any ways in which Ethan could have behaved differently? If so, describe. If you were in Ethan's shoes, how would you have handled the situation?
3. Do you think Ethan carries his passion for respecting the past too far when he engages CeCe in battles over how "original" to keep her house? Why or why not? If you were a rehabber, how would you handle a client like CeCe?
4. Does Ethan's respect for the past carry over to any other areas of his life other than rehabbing the Carter Mansion? If so, what areas, and how?
5. When have you felt yourself clinging to the past? How did it influence your life at that time? What about now? Explain.
6. Why is Chase's secret room so important to him? If you had a secret place growing up, where was it? Why was that place so important to you? Who did you risk sharing it with (if anyone)?
7. Do you agree with the advice Paige gives Cameron about her interest in Ethan? Why or why not? How did Paige's sharing the past events in her life influence Cameron's spiritual journey?
8. How did Cameron deal with the guilt she felt about her little brother's

drowning? Have you found yourself in a similar position—where you’ve felt guilty about a past event? If so, what happened?

9. How did the tragic event that happened in Cameron’s childhood color her adult life? How did it impact her attraction to Ethan, and to Chase? How has tragedy influenced the way you respond to others? The way you think of yourself?

10. How did Lynne’s death affect Ethan’s life? His work? His faith? Have you ever felt “stuck”? If you’ve become “unstuck” since then, compare your journey with Ethan’s. In what ways are your journeys the same? How do they differ?

11. Who do you think was more aware of how the past tragedy affected Ethan’s life: Ethan, or his son, Chase? Explain, using clues from the story.

12. How did Cameron’s parents deal with the tragedy in their family? In what ways did this affect their daughter’s life? If you were Cameron’s parents, and you could go back and relive life after the tragedy, would you do anything differently? Explain.

13. What made Chase and Elliot’s friendship special? Do you think Chase identified Cameron as a kindred spirit? Why or why not? Who was your kindred spirit when you were growing up, if you had one? Why do you think you were particularly drawn to this person?

14. Why did Ethan turn away from the church? Do you think this was inevitable, given the circumstances? Why or why not? What, if anything, could have prevented his spiral into doubt, unbelief, and anger toward God? Have you (or a loved one) found yourself in a similar situation due to life circumstances? If so, when?

15. In chapter 5, Ethan wrestles with blaming God for his wife's murder. How would you respond to the questions he asks as he contemplates why bad things happen in this world?

16. What risks did the following characters take in choosing to change the course of their lives:

Ethan?

Cameron?

Chase?

17. Have you ever taken a big risk in changing the course of your life? When? What happened? Tell the story.

18. What science project did Chase help Elliot with? In what way(s) is it symbolic of what was happening in Chase's life?

19. What did you think of the appearance and timing in the book regarding the arrival of

Emily Harrington?

Paul Drake?

Have you ever had to choose between two people to love or be attracted to? How did you make the choice? Looking back, did you make the right choice? Why or why not?

20. In what way(s) did God orchestrate the lives of

Ethan?

Cameron?

Chase?

Take a step back into your own past. In what specific events can you see God orchestrating your life to get you to where you are right now? Tell the story. Better yet, why not write it down for the generations to come?