



The Sister Wife

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Questions for Discussion

1. Mary Rose introduces Gabe to the Mormon faith even though she isn't sure of it herself. Why do you think she waits so long to tell Gabe that the "miracle" of Bronwyn's baby's birth was preceded by herbal medications and earnest prayer from someone other than Brigham Young?
 2. Do you think God listens and responds to the prayers of those whose beliefs are not in agreement with your own? Why, or why not?
 3. Do you agree with Mary Rose's choice to stay with Gabe after his marriage to Bronwyn? Did she have a choice? Did he?
 4. What do you think motivates Mary Rose to agree to the consummation of Gabe's marriage to Bronwyn? Is it only because she believes that if she doesn't, she won't spend eternity with the baby she has lost? Or is there deeper motivation, perhaps hidden from her awareness? What do you think it might have be?
 5. Do you see a connection between Mary Rose's acceptance of her circumstances, her seemingly enduring love for Gabe, and a contemporary woman who might remain in a dysfunctional relationship because she thinks she has no other choice? Why, or why not?
 6. Mary Rose is a reluctant "Saint" from the beginning. What do you think most influences her choice to remain with the group and embrace the teachings of the Prophet, even as Joseph Smith's revelation about plural marriage breaks her heart?
 7. What in Mary Rose's background could have helped her recognize and stand up against the false teachings? Do you think she has an "inner plumb line" that causes her to question these teachings?
 8. As a boy, Joseph Smith asked God to reveal to him the one true church that he had established on earth. Is this a legitimate question for us to ask today? Can a person only know God by belonging to a church? Why, or why not? What are the inherent dangers of a leader proclaiming that his (or her) way is the only way or that his particular brand of religion is the only one?
 9. Mormonism teaches that man can become a god in the next life through good works on earth. How does this teaching correlate with Genesis 3:5 in which the serpent says to Eve, "For God knows that when you eat of it [the fruit from the forbidden tree] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God"?
 10. LDS historians say that Joseph Smith's revelation about plural marriage had to do with taking care of the widows and orphans in a violent society where women had no protection or means of support without a husband or father. Please reread Chapter 21 in this book, which describes Smith's revelation on the subject, keeping in mind the author used his direct quotes as his dialogue. Do you think today's explanation for polygamy is in agreement with the original revelation?
- Historically, only those men in positions of power and those with the means to support a large household took multiple wives. Why do you think the revelation was made after the practice had already begun? Do you think that rumors of polygamy had anything to do with the persecution of Mormons by outsiders?
11. Ultimately, *The Sister Wife* is a book about relationships. Is it possible, in your opinion, to extend forgiveness, grace, and mercy to a friend who has betrayed you? Is it possible to love this friend again? In your own life, no matter the offense, does it matter if a friend asks for forgiveness? Can you forgive anyway?
 12. What about a spouse's betrayal with someone outside marriage in today's world? If this happened to you, do you think it would be possible to extend mercy, forgiveness, and grace to the one who betrayed you? Can such a tragic break in the relationship ever be restored? Do you think it's possible to incorporate this prayer into actual practice: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us*?

Take a few minutes to think of someone you need to forgive . . . or of someone you need to go to for forgiveness. Consider God's mercy, grace, and love toward you and ask him to help you extend that same compassion toward the one he has brought to your mind or the strength to act if you are the one in need of forgiveness.