

Questions for Use by Book Clubs

Based on the novel *Stay With Me* by Carolyn Astfalk

1. In a conversation with Father John, Chris says concerning Rebecca, “Well, we agree about sex being for marriage, but I’m coming at it from ‘sex is such a great thing we’ve got to save it for marriage,’ and I think she’s more like, ‘sex is so unholy we’ve got to confine it to marriage.’” Do you espouse either of those opinions? Which one? How have others influenced your thinking on the matter?
2. Rebecca’s first experience at Chris’s church leaves her unsettled. How does a Catholic Mass differ from other religious services? How could Chris have done a better job of preparing Rebecca for Mass?
3. Chris grew from a painfully-shy boy to a confident man. Is it possible to change your personality that much? In what ways have you grown and changed by resolving to do and be different?
4. Once Chris discovers the abusive behavior Rebecca endures, he confronts her. She’s incredulous when he asks if her father has ever struck her. Do you think verbal and emotional abuse can be as damaging as physical abuse? What, if anything, could Rebecca have done to improve her relationship with her father and safeguard her own well-being?
5. How has shame and derision inflicted by her father prevented Rebecca from being the woman she’s meant to be?
6. Rebecca’s sister Abby does not mince words. If she thinks it, she says it, with no filter. Do you speak in a blunt manner like Abby or do you wish you could, at least some of the time?
7. When Rebecca asks for Chris’s forgiveness, he answers with a simple yes. His reaction catches her off guard, and she almost wishes he’d yell or say something cruel to even the score. Do you have difficulty asking for forgiveness? What about accepting forgiveness?

8. Father John refuses to counsel Kimberly because he's uncomfortable with his attraction to her. Have you ever declined to help someone in need not because it wouldn't be prudent or appropriate but because being around him or her made you uneasy?
9. Filled with guilt, Chris walks out on Rebecca when she needs him most, when she even begs him to stay. Have guilt, shame or self-loathing ever caused you to pull away from friends or family?
10. Rebecca's father refuses to participate in her wedding. Have you ever declined a wedding invitation because you couldn't support the marriage? Why? For what reasons might a parent deem it best to stay away from a son's or daughter's wedding?