

1. Have you ever wished for a better relationship with a parent or family member but not known how to achieve one? Did you find a new path to further your relationship? How did you go about it?
2. Hannah grew up thinking of Joe Sterling as “my hero, my champion against Mama.” Why do you think she accepted what Joe told her about her mother at face value? Has anyone ever influenced your view of someone else in a similar way?
3. Why do you think Joe manipulated Lieselotte into marrying him, and into staying with him despite his promise to release her once she regained her health? How did this information change your view of Joe?
4. Do you agree or disagree with Lieselotte’s decision not to confide in her daughter about her past and the identity of her biological father? Did Lieselotte do the right thing in staying with Joe? Please explain.
5. What do you think about Hannah’s decision to investigate her mother’s past? Would you have followed such a trail?
6. Do Lieselotte’s feelings about her father and brother change as the war progresses and their involvement with the Nazi Party intensifies? Do you think Lukas continues to consider Rudy a friend? Why or why not?
7. Were you surprised to learn that Herr Sommer disowned Lieselotte and abandoned her in Ravensbrück? Why do you think he makes this decision? Do you see evidence that he regrets this course of action later in his life?
8. What do you think motivates Dr. Peterson to manipulate Herr Sommer and his family? How does Herr Sommer, in turn, manipulate Dr. Peterson?
9. Hannah hesitates to accept what she learns about her grandfather’s role during the war and struggles to know how to interact with him once she knows the truth. If you discovered that a relative had committed a heinous crime, how would that information change your relationship?
10. When Lieselotte says she wants to assist the Kirchmanns in their work to help Jewish people in hiding, Lukas challenges her, asking if she feels the Lord has called her to this. She thinks, “If I said yes, I would be lying. If I said no, would they let me help? I could not lie to Lukas or his parents . . . nor could I tell him—explain to him—that if I did nothing, I would die inside. I would burst and die of loneliness, of anger, of frustration, of helplessness.” Finally she tells Lukas, “I only know I must do something that helps someone. Everything I see frightens me nearly to death. If I am caught, I would rather die for something than live for nothing.” Have you ever felt this way? What did it propel you to do?
11. Our regrets often come from mistakes we’ve made, but Carl is haunted more by the family’s inaction—as are his parents, to some degree. Have you ever regretted your own failure to take action?
12. Have you read Corrie ten Boom’s *The Hiding Place* or seen the film? If so, how did her story impact you? Do you think you would help others as the Ten Boom family did? What do you think of her forgiveness of the guard from Ravensbrück? How would you have responded in the same situation?



Secrets She Kept

Cathy Gohlke

13. Hannah learns that it is one thing to believe in the forgiveness, redemption, and saving power of Jesus Christ and another thing to fully surrender and walk in newness of life. Discuss the difference and how each one is achieved. Why is it so difficult to surrender our rights in order to forgive or be forgiven?



