



# DEADLY TIES

A Novel

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## READERS GUIDE

1. Annie asks God to let her go back twenty-four hours. Have you ever wished you could go back, regretted a decision you made, felt guilty because if you had chosen differently, perhaps another could have been spared a tragic event or being hurt?<sup>1</sup>
  2. Mark feels he let Jane down.<sup>2</sup> Have you ever been in a situation where you disappointed another who mattered a great deal to you? How did you cope, survive, and recover?
  3. Though Mark's teammates were as close to him as brothers, Mark said that one day he hoped to belong to a family of his own, one where he was wanted, not just needed. What are your thoughts on that?
  4. Annie stayed with Dutch out of obedience to God, even though she was in an abusive relationship. Have you ever known someone in this situation? How would you counsel her?
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1. To see what the Bible says about these things, you can begin by reading the following Scriptures from the New International Version: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12–14).
  2. "We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed" (2 Corinthians 13:7).

5. Dutch believes the key to respect is money.<sup>3</sup> What do you think?
6. Annie wonders why she hadn't trusted God to provide for her. Have you ever felt this way?<sup>4</sup>
7. Lisa is frustrated feeling some Christians get favor, blessings, and peace while she is living on "fumes of faith."<sup>5</sup> Have you ever felt this way? Mark tells her she doesn't see the big picture.<sup>6</sup> What would you have told her?<sup>7</sup>
8. Lisa feels like she has been sacrificed for her mother. Describe a time when you have suffered hardship or trials for the sake of another.<sup>8</sup>
9. At one point Lisa feels she has been "forgotten in a dark tunnel."<sup>9</sup> Have

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3. "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Timothy 6:9–10).
  4. "Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders" (Deuteronomy 33:12).
  5. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6–7).
  6. "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).
  7. "'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8–9). "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5–6).
  8. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).
  9. "Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:3–5).

you ever felt God has forgotten you?<sup>10</sup> Have you ever felt you have forgotten God?<sup>11</sup>

10. Mark said he believes Christ has redeemed him.<sup>12</sup> He knows this logically, but knowing it and feeling it are two different things. Because of his childhood, he grew up feeling that he had to earn love—Lisa’s and God’s.<sup>13</sup> Have you ever felt this way? How would you advise a friend who is feeling this?
11. Mark believes that everything Lisa has been through had a purpose.<sup>14</sup> What do you think?
12. At one point Lisa struggles with not asking God to kill certain people. She asks for forgiveness instead.<sup>15</sup> Have you ever felt this way?

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10. “I say to God my Rock, ‘Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?’” (Psalm 42:9).

11. “Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number” (Jeremiah 2:32).

12. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

13. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9).

14. “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21). “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

15. “And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, ye shall offer it at your own will” (Leviticus 19:5, KJV).