



1. Charlotte's father left a lasting impression on her even as she continued to live life without him. His priorities for his own life became Charlotte's guiding priorities. What priorities and principles do you want your loved ones to remember you by? How are you exemplifying these in your life today? What can you do differently to further emphasize what is important to you?
2. Charlotte experiences resistance from those closest to her when she decides to become a nurse. How do you know who to listen to when making your own decisions? Have well-meaning people given you bad advice before? Have you ever been the well-meaning person who gave bad advice?
3. Ruby's crooked posture from outworker sewing, as well as her internal scars from the hardships in her life, become her identity. Have you ever known anyone personally whose scars became their identity? How did that affect their outlook on life?

4. Why does Charlotte spend so much time in a relationship with Phineas? What are some reasons that women stay in the wrong relationships today?
5. Fashionable women in Victorian America sought to achieve a fifteen-inch waist with tightly laced corsets that commonly caused women to faint. The skirts that covered their hoops were usually between four and six feet in diameter. One of Mary Lincoln's dresses was eighteen feet in circumference and used twenty-five yards of fabric. If you had to wear this type of wardrobe every day, how would it affect your view of yourself—your purpose and your capabilities? What role do you think the hoopless nursing uniforms helped reshape Charlotte's view of herself? How did Ruby's various dresses affect her? Does what you wear make a difference in how you feel?
6. At the ball near the beginning of the story, Caleb says to Charlotte, "What if your stepping out of formation was actually a step in the right direction? What a shame it would be if you were always confined to a prescribed number and pattern of steps." Have you ever stepped out of the expected pattern for your life? Did you feel like you were going in the wrong direction at first? How do you view those steps now?
7. Throughout the book, Ruby either has to make "a new start" for herself, or respond to a dramatic life change that has feels more like "the end" for her. Can you recall a point in your life which you initially thought was a turn for the worse, but which ended up growing into a new start for you?
8. What insecurities fuel Phineas's behavior throughout the novel? How do our own insecurities affect how we interact with people?
9. Shoddy uniforms fell apart even before the first battle, leaving soldiers exposed to the elements, and driving morale into the ground. In both North and South, many soldiers even went without suitable

weapons. Has there been a time when you thought you were prepared to meet a challenge, only to discover you weren't well equipped for the task, after all? Read Ephesians 6:10–17. Now think about your spiritual challenges. What happens when we try to meet these without being properly dressed in the full armor of God?

10. During the Civil War, amputations were considered necessary to prevent the damaged limbs from poisoning the rest of the body, claiming the life of the soldier. How does this relate to Jesus telling us to cut off the hand that causes us to sin? (See Matthew 18:7–9)
11. Edward Goodrich's crisis of faith comes when he focuses on the casualties of war and disease. Where did Dr. Gurley place the focus of his remarks during Willie Lincoln's funeral? (page xx)
12. Today, wars and injustices happen around the world every day. Does this affect your faith in a sovereign God? Why or why not? How does your faith change when you experience your own personal battles?
13. For much of the story, Ruby is held captive to shame and guilt. Is there any sin that you feel God cannot forgive? Is it harder for you to forgive someone else, or for you to forgive yourself? Why?
14. Between August of 1861 and the following summer, the North idolized Major General George B. McClellan, and believed he was the answer that would defeat the South and save the Union. What is the danger in placing too much faith in any one person or possible solution? When have you seen this happen in our own country? In your personal life? What happened?
15. Dr. Caleb Lansing hates how many amputations he must do, because it seems in direct contradiction to his innate desire to heal—which he always thought of as putting things back together. But sometimes we must experience pain or go through conflict before there can be peace and healing. When has this been true in your life?

16. As Charlotte flexes her newfound independence, she grows to disdain many men in authority over her. Her decision to circumvent the proper procedures and authorities costs Marty her life. Is she any better than the ambulance drivers who disobeyed orders and ran away from the battlefields without carrying any patients? Have you ever been placed under authority you didn't agree with? What happened? Under which circumstances is it necessary to go against authority?
17. Edward begins to lose his way when he cares more about Charlotte's approval than he cares about God's. Can you remember a time when you valued someone else's opinion of you as more important than God's? What happened?
18. Alice's priority is to serve her husband, while Charlotte's goals take her far from home. Just before the Seven Days' Battle, Alice says to Charlotte, "Sometimes the people who most need our help are the ones God has already placed in our lives." How do you balance ministering to your own family with serving the Lord outside your home?
19. When Charlotte returns to New York after nursing, she finds that she no longer fits the life she once lived. Have you experienced a similar "outgrowing" of a previous lifestyle or relationship? What caused the change in you, and how did you respond to the growth?
20. After Ruby has Aiden, she claims the verses in John 8:31, 32, 36: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." What kind of freedom is Jesus offering here?