

Reading Group Guide for
Love Amid the Ashes
By Mesu Andrews

1. Was Isaac kind or cruel when he issued the command that Dinah marry a man in Esau's clan? Why?
2. When do you think Sitis's rebellion against El Shaddai began—as a child, when her parents died; when Bildad forced her to marry a disciple of the House of Shem; when she experienced multiple miscarriages; or when Job destroyed the Chaldean temple? And what do you believe prompted her rebellion?
3. After encountering Zophar at Elath, Job challenges Dinah to treasure God's forgiveness like a gift, protecting it when others try to steal it away or replace it with shame. In what ways have you seen this truth lived out?
4. What character traits and spiritual qualities enable Job to respond to the tragedies with both sorrow and praise?
5. What character traits and spiritual qualities enable Dinah to respond to the circumstances that face her and Nogahla in Uz?
6. Why is it so difficult for Sitis to see Sayyid's true character and evil intentions?
7. Nogahla shares two theories on forgiveness: 1) once an olive tree begins growing, it's hard to kill, just as a person who has forgiven once can more readily do so again, and 2) just as a person needs a bath repeatedly, so we also need to forgive repeatedly. Which of her examples have you found to be more accurate in your own life?

8. When Sitis comes to Dinah, revealing Sayyid's plan to withhold bread from both her and Job, Dinah uses several forms of effective ministry: listening and letting Sitis cry uninterrupted, praying silently rather than giving advice, and asking well-conceived questions at the proper moment. Which of these strategies is most difficult for you when a hurting friend needs your help?
9. What kind of lies does Sitis believe in order to succumb to Sayyid's control? What truths set her free to receive God's forgiveness?
10. How are Job's friends and relatives so easily deceived by Sayyid?
11. Eliphaz's speeches are bent toward spiritualizing every situation. Bildad believes tradition is the answer to every woe. Zophar values the power of the intellect. However, all three seem equally uncomfortable when Job speaks directly to God with unrestrained honesty. Whose personality do you most resemble, and what is positive and negative about each?
12. Job vows to his relatives that he is innocent of wrongdoing and that God has wronged him. Is that true? Is it possible for God to act unjustly? Who was the only sinless man on earth?
13. Job teaches Dinah that if God has forgiven her, she never needs to be ashamed before men; however, in his anger and resentment, Job uses this golden truth against his friends. Can you think of instances in which God's truth (Scripture) might have been misinterpreted? How can we safeguard against that?
14. Has it ever occurred to you that God may have allowed your pain in order to build a deeper, more intimate relationship with you? How does that make you feel? Does that change your concept of suffering? Of God?
15. When we realize the totality of God's immeasurable power, is it hard to believe there is *no* evil in such absolute power? Why or why not?
16. Job's deliverance came when his focus changed from his own righteousness to what?

17. Do you think Job struggled with the decision to pray for his friends? Why or why not?
18. In the story, both Job and Dinah imagine their self-perceived failings make them unlovable, and they build a wall of self-protection around their hearts. Job later identifies his fear of rejection as pride. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
19. Has God ever used a recurring theme in your life—like the hoopoe bird—to remind you of His faithfulness?
20. As you look back at some of the painful periods in your life, can you see some good things God might have brought to bear through it, as He did through Joseph’s slavery, Dinah’s broken heart, and Job’s tragedies?



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