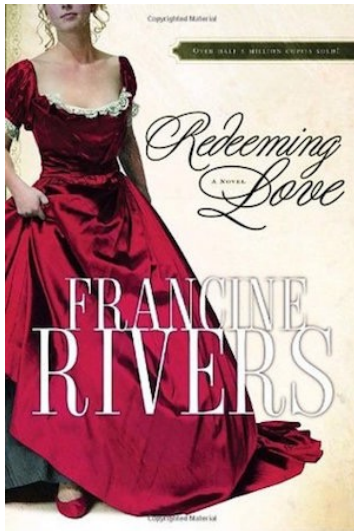


DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR REDEEMING LOVE



Dear Reader,

We hope you have enjoyed Francine Rivers's novel *Redeeming Love*. This timeless story of love between God and man reminds us of the deep well within us that cries out to be filled with unconditional, redeeming love. As always, it is Francine's desire for you, the reader, to find the answers to life's incredible circumstances from God's Word through a personal relationship with Him. The following study guide is intended to whet your appetite and encourage you on your journey. There are three sections in each lesson:

- DISCUSSION—the story and the characters
- DISCOVERIES—God's principles and character
- DECISIONS—reflection on the characters and self

In Romans 8:28 we read, "God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them" (NLT). Angel eventually realized God's call in her life and discovered the good He had for her. Sarah and Michael learned to deal with all that life dealt them through their belief in God's faithfulness and His unfailing love. May you realize God's call in your life and find the joy and goodness He has for you. May He bless you as you seek the answers for life from His Word.

Peggy Lynch

REJECTED

He [Jesus] was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

— ISAIAH 53 : 3

DISCUSSION

1. How was Sarah/Angel rejected and betrayed?
2. What were her earliest experiences with God and/or the church? What experience did Michael have with rejection or betrayal? Contrast Michael's and Angel's examples in coping with life's circumstances.
3. Who else in the story suffered from rejection or betrayal, and how did they cope?
4. Which character do you identify with the most and why?
5. Describe a time when you were rejected or betrayed. To whom did you turn and why?

DISCOVERIES

You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God!

— PSALM 139 : 15 – 17

1. Where was God when you were born? How does that make you feel? What else do you learn about God from these verses?
2. How would you relate these verses to Angel? Relate these same verses to yourself.

DECISIONS

God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

— ROMANS 8 : 28

1. List any ways in which God was calling Angel at this juncture in her life.
2. Can you see the good He was working around her? List it.
3. What about your life? How has God rescued you? How has He called you and worked good through that?

REDEEMED

He [Jesus] gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right.

— TITUS 2 : 14

DISCUSSION

1. Angel was bought and sold on numerous occasions. What was different about Michael's redeeming her? Discuss the role of trust (or lack of trust) in Angel.
2. When Michael and Angel helped the Altman family, what did Angel learn about Michael? Herself? God?
3. Describe the changes in actions and thinking that took place after Angel was rescued a second time by Michael. What do you think caused the changes?
4. What trust issues do you have? Who has God placed in your life as positive examples?

DISCOVERIES

God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

— EPHESIANS 2 : 8 – 10

1. List everything you learn about salvation from these verses.
2. What is God's part? What is your part?
3. Apply this passage to Angel.
4. How is God creating you anew?

DECISIONS

God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

— ROMANS 8 : 28

1. How do you see God's call in Angel's life by this point? What specifically does she discover for herself?
2. List some of the good that is happening in her life.
3. What specific discoveries have you made for yourself regarding God's call?
4. List some of the good that is happening in your life.

RECONCILED

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.

— ROMANS 12 : 1 – 2

DISCUSSION

1. What caused Angel to leave yet again?
2. How is this different from before?
3. Why was it necessary for Paul to be the one to find Angel?
4. What did he learn about himself? How did this help him?
5. What did Angel learn through this experience?
6. What was Michael learning through this difficult time?
7. Is there someone who needs to be reconciled with you? Or, do you need to be the one who does the reconciling, like Paul did? Explain.

DISCOVERIES

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

— 1 PETER 4 : 8

So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.

— 1 PETER 5 : 6 – 7

1. What covers sin? To what extent?
2. What does God do for those who humble themselves before him? Why?
3. How would you apply these verses to the characters—which characters, and why?
4. How does pride hold you back from experiencing peace and forgiveness?

DECISIONS

God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

— ROMANS 8 : 28

1. How has God's call affected Angel's life now?
2. Describe the good that now flows from her life.
3. Is God's calling having its full effect on your life? Why or why not?
4. What good are you sharing with others?

RESTORATION

In his kindness God called you to his eternal glory by means of Jesus Christ. After you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.

— 1 PETER 5 : 10

DISCUSSION

1. What steps had Angel taken to restore her spirit?
2. What were the lasting effects of Angel's soul search?
3. What steps did Angel take to restore her marriage? How did Michael respond?
4. In what ways did God reward Sarah and Michael?
5. What have you learned about the love of a man for a woman?
6. What have you learned about the love of God for all mankind—including you?

DISCOVERIES

And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it.... By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.

— EPHESIANS 3 : 17 – 20

1. How would you describe God's love from these verses? What does He offer us?
2. How did Sarah and Michael discover this to be true for their lives?
3. What does God want to do for you? What does He want from you?

DECISIONS

God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

— ROMANS 8 : 28

1. How would you sum up God's call in the life of Angel/Sarah? Describe the progress made in her life that was good from God's hand.
2. Go back and look at your own progress. How would you sum up God's call in your life?
3. What progress has been made that you can attribute to God working good in you?

May God continue to work good in your life as you continue to respond to His call.