1. Sarah writes about growing up in what’s been described as a “parallel universe,” with Christian TV and radio shows, music, books, and textbooks all designed to insulate children in an evangelical worldview. How do you think different people might respond to that kind of upbringing?

2. Many children who grow up in evangelical churches are raised with a belief that it’s their job to save other people by “winning them to Christ.” How did that compare to your spiritual or religious upbringing?

3. Many exvangelicals describe feeling uncomfortable with the pressure to try to convert non-Christians to Christianity, or even to convert people from different Christian sects to their specific theology. Do you think it’s possible to hold deep religious beliefs and not on some level want everyone to share them?

4. If you’re a religious person, how do you think about other faiths? If you’re not, how do you feel around religious people?

5. Sarah’s grandfather is an important character in this book, and her relationship with him leads her to question some of the preconceived ideas she was taught. Have you ever been moved to change or question your beliefs because of someone you knew?

6. Many former evangelicals experience a lot of pain in leaving behind a community that once felt like home, even if staying in it is also painful. Have you ever wrestled with something similar? How did you navigate those decisions?

7. Have you ever been close to someone who sees the world radically differently than you do? Have you been able to remain close despite your differences?

8. Have you ever changed or evolved in a way that was painful for someone close to you? How did you handle conversations about that?

9. Sarah writes that the best version of evangelical purity culture taught women to think of themselves as valuable and deserving of healthy, loving relationships— but very often, the takeaway message was that their value was tied up in their sexual “purity.” Many of the messages about sexuality were particularly alienating for queer people in the church. What messages did you receive about sexuality growing up? How did they shape your self-concept?
10. Many people of color who’ve grown up in spaces dominated by or adjacent to white evangelical culture describe feeling marginalized or excluded even as some leaders spoke about trying to be inclusive. Have you ever felt excluded in a religious community because of your identity?

11. What is lost by religious traditions when the voices of women, queer people, and people of color are marginalized in a religious community?

12. Many people who’ve grown up in unhealthy religious communities later struggle with religious trauma. Have you experienced this? How have you dealt with it?

13. For people who’ve grown up with a strict religious upbringing and left it behind, it can be difficult to decide how to raise their own children. If you’re a parent, how are you parenting similarly or differently from the way you were parented? Do those differences ever cause family friction?

14. Do you think it’s important for children to have some kind of religious upbringing? How do you talk to your children, or children you may be close to, about the big questions that religion tries to answer? How do you decide what to shelter your children from and what to expose them to?

15. Religion is often most meaningful and needed at difficult times, such as when facing illness or death. Is it necessary to move through those experiences?

16. Several exvangelicals described finding community in new and different religious spaces, or outside religion altogether—through education, art, activities like yoga, romantic relationships, and other outlets. How and where do you find community? What challenges have you faced and how have you overcome them?

17. What are the best and worst aspects of religion? What are the qualities that make for a healthy religious community? And for people who thrive outside of religious communities, how and why do they seem to do that?