

1. Maggie lives with the sense that people don't find her credible. Although her life experiences are probably different than most of ours, have you ever struggled with not being taken seriously about a personal experience?
2. Andy feels overshadowed by Payton, and his relationship with his brother impacts his personality and behavior. Have you ever felt overshadowed by someone? How did you handle it?
3. Andy and Payton have a complex relationship: they've lost some of their affection for one another, yet Andy wants to be closer. Do you have siblings? Are you similar to them or different? Do you feel close to them? Why or why not? How is the sibling relationship different than other relationships?
4. Part of the inspiration behind the writing of *Fifty Days* was the fleshing out of what the resurrection story might look like if Jesus came today, instead of 2,000 years ago. How did you feel about seeing the Jesus character in contemporary United States? Does Jesus's teaching stand up to the change in time and place?
5. Have you struggled with feeling that the gospel account of Jesus's life and world feels disconnected from your own? Have people told you, or have you felt, that it is all "ancient history"? Do you believe that Jesus's words and actions have a bearing on your life today?
6. What does the Jarrett character say about his role in furthering man's relationship with HaShem? Do you believe that Jesus altered man's relationship with God?
7. When traveling with Stephen, Maggie ponders the fact that she is tied to someone who doesn't believe the way she does, who doesn't see Jarrett as the son of HaShem. If you are a Christian, do you find that you spend most of your time with other Christians? Is that your "comfort zone"? Do you feel a sense of being apart from non-Christians? If you are not a believer, do you feel a divide? Why might that be? Is that something that should exist, or should it be overcome?
8. The author peppered the story with people who spent time with Jesus. Did you recognize Bethany, Beatrice, and Lassen? How about Zack? Do you suspect what is in store for Stephen?
9. Maggie overhears Jarrett ask Stephen "Of the two questions—*how* and *why*—which do you think is the most important?" but she doesn't hear any of the rest of the conversation between them. What do you think they were talking about? What do you think Jarrett meant?
10. Ze'ev is devout in his Jewish observances, and his faith is central in his life. What did his faithfulness to Jewish religious law and traditions mean to you? Did you learn anything about Jewish practices that interests you? What is the balance between faith and religious practices? Is there a tension between them, or a symbiosis?
11. Maggie repeatedly states that she and Jarrett and his followers are Jews. During Jesus's ministry and shortly thereafter there was no "Christianity" or call to spread his message to the gentiles (non-Jews). Did it surprise you that his early followers considered themselves part of Judaism rather than a separate religion?

12. Did reading *Fifty Days* prompt you to look up or research “what really happened” as recorded in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and the book of Acts in the New Testament of the Bible? Did you discover anything surprising, confusing, or intriguing there?
13. Maggie has a deep, abiding feeling of love for, trust in, and faith about Jarrett, who he is, and what he is capable of. Did her affection for him encourage you to reflect on how you see Jesus and how you feel about him?
14. The author portrays Jarrett playing soccer and hacky-sack. Does this seem somehow sacrilegious or disrespectful to you? How so, or why not? Does it make Jesus seem approachable? What is a proper balance between familiarity and acknowledging the holy character of the divine?
15. The New Testament says that Jesus appeared to various people after his resurrection: “Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen,” Mark 16:14 (NIV). “After his death, he showed himself to them and proved in many ways that he was alive. The apostles saw Jesus during the forty days after he was raised from the dead, and he spoke to them about the kingdom of God,” Acts 1:3 (NCV). And, “[Jesus] was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say; and ... he was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, Jesus was seen by more than five hundred of the believers at the same time... Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles,” 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 (NCV). Eleven of the remaining disciples were tortured to death, affirming to their last breath that they had seen the risen Jesus. Do you find this eye-witness testimony to be credible 2,000 years later? Do you think that you would believe eye-witness accounts of Jesus’s resurrection today, in the era of Photoshop and CGI? In the tug of war of faith versus proof, where do you fall?
16. The final scene of *Fifty Days* is an exploration of Pentecost (which means “fiftieth”). Is this a fitting end to this story? Why or why not? What did the events mean for Maggie and the others? What did Pentecost mean for the early church? Do you believe the Holy Spirit is still at work today?