

**Discussion Questions for  
*A Passion Denied*  
by Julie Lessman**

1. While Lizzie and Brady are the central couple in this story, there are several other romantic and familial relationships experiencing stress and discord: Patrick and Marcy, Collin and Faith, Mitch and Charity, Brady and Michael—even Cluny and Katie Rose. Do you recognize one of these relational issues in your own life? What was that like and how was the situation resolved?
2. Brady spends a lot of time and energy running away from his past. He knows that God has forgiven him and will continue to forgive no matter what, but he cannot forgive himself. He feels unworthy and continually denies himself the very precious gift God is offering him in Lizzie. Have you ever experienced God's grace and forgiveness at a time when you could not or would not accept it?
3. Patrick and Lizzie both become disillusioned when the perfect image they had of a loved one was shattered. How did Patrick and Lizzie make idols of Marcy and Brady? How did God use the loss of this idolatry to teach and strengthen all four of them?
4. God and family are arguably the two most important things in the O'Connor family. This commitment enables them to weather storms, mend very broken relationships, and ultimately accept God's forgiveness and grace. What instance of this stands out most clearly for you in the book?
5. Julie Lessman draws real, vivid, and complex characters full of humor and passion. What character most stuck with you from the book? Did you feel a personal connection with this character? Why or why not?
6. Prayer is an ever-present and continual source of strength and comfort for the O'Connors. Even when one family member seems unable or unwilling to give him- or herself over to God there is a bedrock of assurance that the rest of the family is praying. Is prayer a lifeline for you, or is it difficult and uncomfortable? Do you have people in your life who pray for you with this kind of urgency and commitment?
7. Sisters. Faith, Charity, and Lizzie share a bond that is different from any other relationship in the story. What is special about their relationship? How do they encourage and support one another in a way no one else can?

8. Several times the characters share very difficult truths with one another. They confront sinful and self-destructive behavior, truly speaking the truth in love. Have you experienced this with a friend or loved one? Were you on the giving or receiving end of this wake-up call? What was that experience like for you?
9. Lizzie is described quite clearly in the beginning of the story as a woman and not a little girl, but throughout the book she continues to grow and mature. What for you was the most significant moment or indication of her metamorphosis? Do you have a specific memory of the realization that you were no longer a child but an adult—with all of the attendant pain and uncertainty?
10. Brady uses his faith, his relationship with God, and his commitment to prayer and study as a shield, hiding behind his piety and the image of the man he wished to be to avoid dealing with some difficult realities. How does this work for him? How does God bring him into the light and into a stronger, more truly humble and honest relationship?



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