

# Reading Group Questions and Topics for Discussion

1. How did you react to Truman's character? Did you like him? Would you call him a good guy? Did your opinion of him change over the course of the story?
2. Have you ever known someone with an addiction? What similarities did you see between that person and Truman? Why do you think Truman gambles?
3. What did you think of the way Ellen dealt with Truman? Should she have divorced him like her parents wanted? How did she show genuine love to him?
4. The money for writing Terrelle's book came from someone other than Oleta. Do you think that was a good decision, even though it was clear what Truman would do with it? Why do you think that person provided the money?
5. Why is Truman closed to religion? Have you ever felt the same way or known someone who has? Oleta, Terrelle, and Ellen all share their faith with Truman in different ways. Which do you think had the most impact and why?
6. In chapter 17, Truman remarks, "Religion has always seemed an opiate to me, something to numb a person to reality." Discuss the irony of that statement in light of Truman's addiction. How do you see him changing throughout the story in regard to faith?
7. Why can't Truman bring himself to go see Aiden in the hospital? Read Romans 7:14-15. What parallels do you see between Truman and Paul?
8. If Abigail were your daughter, would you have let her investigate Curtis Tompkins? As a parent, how would you balance protecting your adult children with allowing them to learn from the consequences of their decisions?
9. Do you think it should be legal for death row inmates to donate their organs, as Terrelle wanted to? Would you want one of your family members to receive an organ that was donated this way?
10. In chapter 24, Ellen tells Truman that "there are things you learn about life and yourself in the valley that you can't learn anywhere else." What does she mean? Have you ever experienced this in your own life?

11. Truman says in chapter 31, "I've heard that the opposite of love is not hate but indifference."  
Do you agree?

12. Do you think Terrelle should have signed the confession? Why or why not?