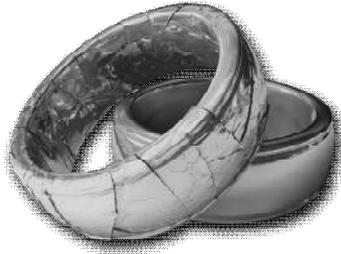


# Contingency



## Discussion Guide

1. Is *Contingency*, Bobbi's story or Chuck's? (In other words, which character grows and changes most significantly?) Discuss how their stories parallel even though Bobbi is the victim and Chuck is the transgressor.
2. Bobbi struggles throughout the book with the idea of divorce. Is divorce called for in her situation? Why or why not? What circumstances warrant divorce for a believer?
3. Rita presents a stark contrast to Bobbi in temperament. Did you ever find yourself agreeing with Rita? Are there times when her tough approach is appropriate? How is she good for Bobbi? Do you ever seek counsel from those who might challenge your course of action? Is it wise to do so?
4. Phil explains, "There's an irresolvable tension that exists between God's sovereignty and man's free will. He never forces man to act or prevents him from acting. God is never caught off guard by our choices, and His purposes are always fulfilled in spite of our interference." Do you agree? How could this offer hope to Bobbi?
5. During counseling, Phil says, "Each of you brings a past and a personality into your marriage. Those determine where the trouble spots in your marriage will be." Is he right?
6. What made Tracy so dangerous to Chuck, and why was he so blinded to the threat? What might he and Bobbi have done to protect their marriage from infidelity? Are the trouble spots Phil mentioned also blind spots?
7. Chuck and Bobbi were each deeply affected by their relationships with their fathers. How did those relationships factor into the affair and their responses to it? Several characters stepped in to become surrogate fathers for Chuck and Bobbi. How did they contribute, helping get the couple back on track? Consider the role your own father plays in the issues you face. Do you have surrogates to turn to if necessary?
8. In chapter 4, Gavin challenges Chuck's idea of grace, saying he can't condone infidelity or let it slide. What is grace? What examples of grace are displayed in the story? Read Hosea 1:2, 2:14 and 3:1-2. What elements in the Biblical story of Hosea might have led Phil to recommend it for Bobbi to study?

9. Phil is unwavering in his belief that confession is critical for Chuck's restoration. Do you agree with Phil? Although hers are private, what confessions does Bobbi make that clear the way for reconciliation? Have you experienced a restored relationship through making or hearing a confession?
10. Psalm 37 and Psalm 142 become emotional and spiritual refuges for Chuck and Bobbi. Read through each psalm and discuss how they fit the character's situation. What psalms do you turn to in times of crisis?
11. Bobbi and Chuck each experienced a critical moment of surrender. What were they and how did those moments set up the final resolution between them? Think back to a time when God brought you to a point of surrender. What was the result? Is He challenging you now to let go of something?
12. In a coffee shop meeting with Bobbi, Donna Shannon explains, "God asks us to love the way He does, unconditionally with grace and forgiveness." How do events work together to help Bobbi risk taking that step? Has God ever challenged you to love and forgive unconditionally? Did you wrestle with that challenge like Bobbi did? Have you, like Chuck, ever needed unconditional love and forgiveness? Was it difficult to be patient and wait for God to work in another's heart?