

## ***Head in the Clouds Discussion Questions***

When Adelaide discovers that the man she thought she was to marry already had a wife and son, she becomes angry with God for his silence and lack of guidance in the matter. Has there ever been a time in your life when the Lord was silent or when he felt distant? How did this impact your faith?

Later, Adelaide comes to realize that God had not been as silent as she thought. He still spoke to her, but in a way that differed from her previous experience. Share with the group a time when God spoke to you in a completely unexpected way. How did you recognize his voice? Did this bring you comfort or confusion?

Gideon came to Texas to prove that he could make something of his life. He had plans and strategies. But God interrupted his plans by sending him a young girl to care for. The theme verse for the story is from Proverbs 16:9—"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Has God ever interrupted your plans to direct your steps onto a new course? How did you adjust to that?

Adelaide wears only the color yellow. It is her way of honoring her departed father. Do you engage in certain traditions or keep special mementos to honor a lost loved one? How does this bring you comfort?

In an effort to pull Isabella out of her melancholia, Adelaide encouraged her to pretend and play imaginary games. Do you think this was appropriate? How can imaginative play be therapeutic? Can there be situations when a child spends too much time in imaginary worlds (books, video games, movies, games of pretend)? How should we as more grounded adults help them find a healthy balance?

Critics of romance novels often say that such stories give young girls unrealistic expectations of what to expect from their relationships with men. In the beginning, Adelaide's desperation to create her own happily-ever-after got her into trouble. How do you think romance novels influence the women who read them? What are some of the positive and negative ways such books can impact us?

Both Gideon Westcott and Reginald Petchey were ambitious men. However, Petchey's ambition twisted into greed which led to all manner of evil deeds. What precautions can we take in our own lives to prevent our ambition from turning into greed?

When Gideon is shot and believes he is going to die, he bargains with God to

allow him to live long enough to provide for Adelaide and Bella's future protection. Why do you think it is that making divine bargains is such a natural human inclination in hopeless times? Have you ever found yourself bargaining with God? When the stressful time passed, did you hold up your end?

The imagery of clouds is used throughout this story. How did this image speak to you? When the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, they did not move until the cloud over the tabernacle moved. If it stayed, they stayed (Numbers 9:15-23). How difficult is it to wait on the Lord when you are eager to get moving? How does your faith in your own wisdom interfere with your trust in God's leadership?

What were some of your favorite scenes in this book? What was it about those scenes that drew you in? Did you learn anything about yourself by sharing Adelaide and Gideon's journey? If so, what?