

## ***Word Gets Around Discussion Questions***

In the beginning of the story, Lauren ponders whether it's possible to ever really leave behind your roots. What do you think? Where are your roots and how have they shaped the way you live today?

Daily is struggling to retain its identity in the face of sudden fame. Lauren observes some changes when she arrives in her hometown. In what ways do fame or sudden prosperity change a community? Are these changes positive, negative, or both?

As Nate's story begins, he is struggling with the choice of continuing his destructive friendship with Justin or calling it quits. When we are involved in painful relationships, how should we make the decision between self-preservation and self-sacrifice? Is there ever a time to let go? If so, when? Why do you think Nate goes to Daily with Justin, even though he's told himself he won't?

Justin's friendship with Amber has changed his behavior in ways that are not typical for him. Have you ever experienced a friendship or chance encounter with someone who changed your way of thinking?

Amber and Justin have both experienced the mega-fame American culture seems to crave, yet they have responded to it very differently. Why? What things determine the choices we make in using the resources we're given?

Themes of guilt and forgiveness run throughout the novel. How can a failure to accept forgiveness trap us? Do you see applications for the sermon of the Good Horseman in your own life or the lives of people you know? In what ways?

Many characters in the story are in the position of Lucky Strike, struggling between a new option and an old habit. Have you or someone you've known ever experienced something similar? What was the result? What made the difference?

The nanny goat is integral to Lucky Strike's healing. Have you ever been given a "nanny goat" when you needed one? Who or what was it?

Lauren realizes that in pulling away from her family and friends and trying to control her own healing, she has weakened her ability to recover from her grief. How are our families, friends, communities, and church families integral to surviving difficult times? In view of this, why do we sometimes choose to keep our struggles to ourselves?

Nate begins to consider that the secret to life might not be in getting past

previous traumas but in looking at how those traumas have shaped us for a specific purpose. Do you see ways in which your past experiences, good or bad, have prepared you for a specific purpose?

Late in the story, Donetta tells Nate that sometimes God puts a new path under our feet because He knows we're ready, even if we don't know it yet. Have you ever been pushed toward something you didn't think you were ready for? How did you react? What happened in the end?