

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION



FANNY CROSBY

1) Even as a child, Fanny Crosby refused to be limited by what she could not do—see. What are the things you have been unable to do in life? Do you think they have limited your ability to live a full life? Why or why not?

2) Fanny took a big risk when she left the comfort of her home and traveled to the New York Institution for the Blind. What is the biggest risk you have taken in life? Did it pay off? Was leaving your comfort zone worthwhile in the end?

3) Fanny fell in love and married, but was disappointed in her relationship with Van. Why do you think her marriage was not successful? Is happiness in love a guarantee for believers? How does it influence our work for God?

EMMA DRYER

1) Women of Emma Dryer’s day were expected to marry and devote their life to household work. What are the social expectations for women today? Are they different for Christian women? How has your life conformed to or gone against the expectations of society or the church?

2) Emma had a “mercurial” temper. She was known for being overly critical. In many ways, it was the flipside of her strengths, such as her attention to detail and her unflinching commitment. What are your weaknesses? Are your weaknesses connected to your strengths?

3) Women, both single and married, often struggle with loneliness. Why do you think this is so common? What can we do when we are struck by periods of depression or loneliness?

NETTIE MCCORMICK

1) Nettie was married to a wealthy, powerful man. Yet, this marriage also came with the cost of loneliness. If you are married, what have been the “costs” of that decision? On the positive side, what has been one of the rewards?

2) Mental illness is prevalent in today’s society. Two of Nettie’s children were afflicted with this heavy burden. How do we help those who are struggling with mental illness? How can our faith help us navigate issues like these when they strike our family and loved ones?

3) Nettie McCormick and Emma Dryer were close friends—but very different in their background and personalities. Do you have a friend like that? Are you more different or alike? How do your differences benefit your friendship?

SARAH DUNN CLARKE

1) Sarah was struck by God speaking to her, asking, “What are you doing to decorate your heavenly home?” In our culture, it is not uncommon for women to become obsessed with home décor and cooking. We exchange recipes and crafting ideas on Pinterest and other social media sites. How might our domestic obsessions limit our impact for God? Or can we use them for Him?

2) The Clarkes experienced a miraculous answer to their prayers for funding. Have you ever prayed for something and experienced God’s answer? If not, why do you think we often hesitate to pray for our personal needs?

3) Sarah was at the mission day after day—never missing a session. How did that extreme level of faithfulness contribute to her service? Think of a woman you know who serves quietly and faithfully. Why is it difficult to serve in that way?

AMANDA SMITH

1) Amanda Smith felt completely alone following the death of her baby, Will. At that very moment, God sent a friend to give her needed money. Why are women's friendships so crucial? How have friends ministered to you in times of need?

2) Slavery left a deep wound upon the African Americans in our country and segregation prolonged that pain. How can women in the church work toward reconciliation between the races? What can we learn from Amanda Smith's story and her positive attitude toward faith and life?

3) Amanda was asked, at one point, to write her life story. This was a difficult task for her, but she did it to inspire others. Have you ever attempted to write the story of your faith? Have you been inspired by the biographies or stories of other Christian women?

VIRGINIA ASHER

1) Virginia lost her first child. Many women today have suffered miscarriages or lost a baby shortly after birth. Others, who deeply desire children, find they are infertile. Why is our ability to have children so closely linked to our personal identity? What is particularly painful about this type of loss for women? Can God use this common point in our lives?

2) For Virginia, ministry meant going into places considered "unsavory" at the time: brothels and saloons. Yet, she went anyway, risking her personal reputation to share God's love. What sorts of places are considered

off-limits in our society? Have you tried to cross those boundaries? What was the response?

3) Through her business councils, Virginia tried to pass on the “torch” to a younger generation. She inspired many younger women to serve God. How can women today influence younger women to follow God?

EVANGELINE BOOTH

1) At a young age, Evangeline decided to remain single to better serve God. Many could not understand her decision, and she continued to receive proposals from men wanting her to consider marriage. Do you think singleness is a good option for women in ministry? What are the rewards of this choice? Is it still controversial?

2) Evangeline’s hymn “The World for God” speaks of the vast needs in our world today. What world events have broken your heart in recent days? What part of the world have you been burdened to reach for God?

3) Evangeline was known for her Quaker style “uniform”—a bonnet and dark dress. What is the Christian woman’s “uniform” today? How does our choice of clothing influence our ability to minister? Should it?

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE

1) Mary was born into slavery and limited in her ability to gain an education. For her, achievement meant someday having a home with glass windows. What object or event represents achieving your goals and dreams? Why?

2) Mary had one door shut firmly in her face. She had trained to go to Africa as a missionary and then was rejected because of her race. Instead of becoming bitter at this unjustly closed door, she moved to Florida and began

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a school. How have shut doors in your own life opened up other opportunities? Do you believe God works in this way?

3) Mary bravely faced off against prejudice—in the forms of the Ku Klux Klan and in the quieter avoidance of the Washington cab driver. Have you experienced prejudice? How did you react? How can we combat prejudice in a godly way?

4) Miss Chrissman, through her donations, paid for Mary's schooling. Years later, Mary went to find her and thank her for her gift. Who has contributed to your life and faith? How might you express your thanks for those gifts?

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