



LOVE STILL STANDS

by Kelly Irvin

1. Bethel Graber believes she needs to be healed of her back injury in order to be a proper wife and mother, so she prays to God that her affliction be healed. She prays, she goes to physical therapy, she does everything she can to get better...and yet her disability remains. Have you ever prayed for a healing you didn't receive? How did you feel about it? Why do you think God sometimes gives us an answer that is different from the one we wanted?
2. Elijah Christner spent years helping his parents through illnesses late in their lives. Most people would see that as admirable. Bethel doesn't want Elijah's help. She sees it as pity and her disability as a weakness. Is her attitude fair? How do we as a society see people with disabilities? What does God's decision not to heal her disability teach her about her attitude toward herself, marriage, and Elijah?
3. How is Bethel's attitude toward Shawn and his disability different from her attitude toward her own disability? Why do you think that is?
4. If you were in Bethel's shoes, would you have made the same choice when it came to Elijah and Shawn? What qualities did you admire in each man? Did they have any qualities that would make them undesirable as life mates? Do you agree with Bethel's decision to make the choice based on her faith and community rather than her feelings about Shawn?
5. Leah's family and friends chalk up her behavior to her personality. Do you ever judge people's actions without delving deeper to see what might be going on in their lives to cause that behavior? How might Leah's situation have been different if family members or friends had spoken to her sooner?
6. Leah is caught between postpartum depression, which prevents her from being a happy mother and wife, and the expectations of her husband, family, and faith. Have you ever experienced a situation where what you feel is different from what you believe your faith demands? How did you react?
7. What role do you think Luke played in Leah's predicament? How could he have handled the situation differently within the confines of his faith and upbringing?
8. Leah doesn't tell Luke how she is feeling or even that she is expecting a child again. Luke doesn't ask her if something is wrong. He doesn't tell her how he's feeling about her behavior. What are the consequences of their lack of communication? What steps should a husband and wife take to ensure they are communicating about important events in their lives and the feelings that go with those events?
9. In Romans 12:12 Paul says God told him to be "joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." How difficult is it for you to be patient when you have an illness or other problem that needs healing? What can you do to become more joyful in this process of learning to trust God's plan for you? Do you sometimes pray and expect God to take care of things ASAP? How do you feel when he doesn't?
10. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul reports that God told him his grace is sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness. Do you find it difficult to accept weakness in yourself? What can we do to see ourselves through God's eyes and not the world's?