

## **Discussion Questions For *Pascal's Wager***

I offer these questions for you to ponder after reading *Pascal's Wager* only if you promise not to turn the answering of them into an academic pursuit. In other words, don't approach them the way Jill would in the first chapter! Since this book is so very character-driven, why not simply consider the people you've met in it and how – if at all – they are like you.

### **You and Jill**

1. What do you think has made Jill McGavock the sarcastic, atheistic cynic she is as the book opens?
2. Would that have anything to do with her relationship with her mother? (Ya think?) Has your mother's influence on you come to close to Liz's over Jill in intensity?
3. Do you know anyone like Jill? Do you like that person? Could understanding why he/she seems so cold and unfeeling make a difference?
4. What's with Jill's attitude toward men? Any idea where that came from?
5. What kept you reading until you were first able to see Jill's soul, rather than just her self?
6. How do you compartmentalize your life – or are you more of an integrator?
7. What do you think would happen if you sat for one hour and did absolutely nothing? (see the first paragraph on p. 171)
8. Have you ever had a moment like Jill does on p. 168 where you realized something about yourself that you weren't so crazy about? What prompted that for Jill? For you?
9. Have you ever had to “act as if” when it came to God? Or anything else? (I had to act as if I were a novelist when I wrote this, my first fiction for adults.)
10. When did you see the wager working for Jill?

### **You and Sam**

1. Do you think he comes on too strong with Jill at first? Does he ever come across as preachy in your view?
2. What about as a professor? How was your experience with him in the classroom chapter?
3. Sam's approach to bringing someone to Christ is unusual to say the least. How would you have reacted to that if you were a seeker – or if you are now?
4. What do you think is Sam's basic flaw?
5. I've received criticism of Sam from readers – that he turned out to be an arrogant jerk and they hated that Jill “caved.” Any takers on that one?

## **You and Pascal**

I read six books on Pascal, including his *Pensees*, and found him to be at once bizarre and yet so skilled at making sense of what doesn't seem to make sense at all. It was Sam's job to sort all of that out and make it work for Jill. There are a couple of instances of that which I thought you might like to ponder together.

1. "A happy atheist is either a liar, a fool, or a nut case." Is "happy atheist" an oxymoron?
2. "*Only* those who seek God find him. And *all* those who seek God find him." Do you believe that?
3. "Overcoming fear with indifference" – does that work?
4. "I had always been enough for me." Ever come to that crossroad?
5. What is the "shape of God" in your mind?

If you have any questions of your own about *Pascal's Wager*, or your book club would like to arrange a call and put me on speaker phone so we can all discuss the above, please contact me at [nnrue@hughes.net](mailto:nnrue@hughes.net).