

## Discussion Questions

*for*

### Household Puzzles

These questions are designed to enhance your group's discussion of *Household Puzzles* by Isabella Alden.

1. Throughout the book, the Randolph daughters, particularly Helen, are concerned by what “they” will think in matters related to dress, fashion and behavior. Do you see similarities between society’s influence in 1875 (when the book was written) and society’s influence today? When do you think it’s acceptable to allow friends or fashion trends to influence your actions and decisions?
2. When it comes to Christian beliefs, Tom Randolph thinks that “theory and practice don’t agree in this life.” What do you think Tom meant by that remark? Do you agree with Tom’s statement?
3. Which of the Randolph children did you find most interesting: Helen, Tom, Ermina, Grace or Maria? What particular character traits caught your attention? Is the character someone you would like as a friend in your own life? Why do you think so?
4. Peter Armstrong reasons that if students study arithmetic because arithmetic is true and can be used in daily life, the same principle should apply to the Bible; if the Bible is true, it should be studied so its lessons can be used in daily life. What do you think of Peter’s reasoning?
5. Tom’s great hobby is hiding behind a great beam “while he pointed his finger at the motes in other people’s eyes.” Have you ever known someone like Tom, who watched Christians’ behavior in order to find fault? What do you think is the best way to deal with a person like Tom?
6. Helen decides to marry Horace Munroe, even though she knows he is not a Christian and does not share her values. What do you think of Helen’s decision? Do you believe it’s possible for a marriage between a Christian and non-Christian to be successful? Why do you think so?
7. The Randolph family gathers daily for family prayers. Do you know a family that gets together privately for worship or prayers? What difference or influence do you think regular and consistent family prayer time can have on a family?

8. Tom thinks only his father and Peter Armstrong benefit from the family gathering for daily prayers. What could the family have done differently to make the daily gathering more effective and meaningful for Tom, Maria and Helen?
9. Horace Munroe's family blames Helen for his death, believing that she must have driven him to drink alcohol to excess. Do you think the family was fair to blame Helen? What, if anything, do you think their accusation tells you about Helen's relationship with her in-laws?
10. Faith watched her beloved Baby Pearly die because of Tom's actions, yet she forgave Tom. If you were in Faith's position, how would you have behaved toward Tom? Would you have been able to forgive the man who caused your child's death?
11. What words would you use to describe Helen Randolph Munroe? What lessons do you think she must learn in order to live a life of peace and happiness?
12. If you could write a sequel to this book, which character's story would you tell?

Add your own questions here:

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