

LOVE WINS

For
teens

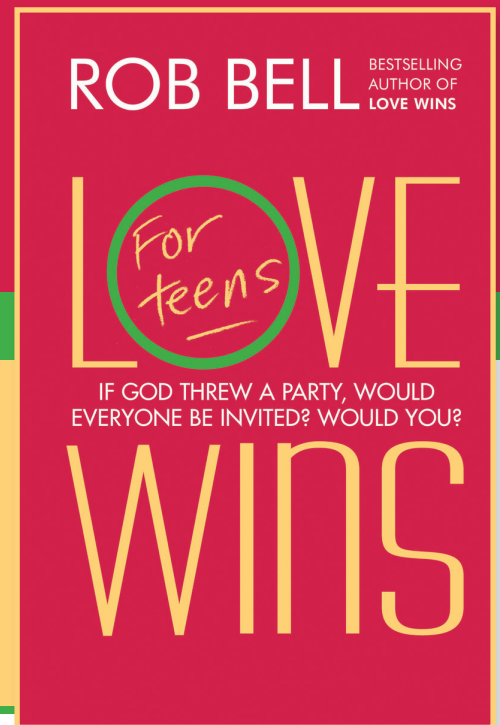
BY ROB BELL

DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the Book

The trade edition of *Love Wins* shot to the top of the bestsellers list and started conversations among Americans about heaven and hell and compassion and the very meaning of life. Author Rob Bell's ideas have stirred discussion, inspired hearts, and offered insight as well as understanding.

Now teens can delve into these issues in their very own edition of *Love Wins*. In this new book, Rob Bell focuses his attention on explaining in ways both understandable and approachable to teens how it is that "love wins"—and why that's such an important lesson to learn.



Discussion Questions

1. Rob Bell describes accepting God into your life as accepting an invitation to a party. What images come to mind when you think of a party? What images come to mind when you think of religion? Are there similar, different, or overlapping qualities? Why do you think the author chose the word *party* to describe the experience of accepting God?
2. When discussing his experiences as a young adult, Rob states, "I remember countless times as a teenager when I did things simply because I wanted to find out what it was like." Why is a careless, adventurous spirit attributed to teenagers? Do you think this urge belongs exclusively to teenagers?
3. As the author struggled to realize his ability and potential while growing up, he describes feeling like "the one thing I knew is that there was always somebody better than me." What does he mean by this? Would you describe his feelings as a human reaction or sinful jealousy, or something else?
4. The author discusses that many teenagers feel inadequate or "not good enough." What is his argument for how a relationship with God would change that? Do you think that it is applicable to teenagers today?
5. Rob Bell states that although God loves us unconditionally, he also has a plan for us, should we choose to accept a relationship with God. How does he reconcile an unconditional love with a condition of accepting God?
6. *Love Wins* addresses many stereotypes about traditional religion. What are some of the stereotypes mentioned? Why do these stereotypes exist?
7. Why can questioning a religion or religious figures be a controversial act? What is the author's perspective on questioning and religion?
8. The author stresses that questioning is an intrinsic part of discovering God's truth. What are questions about religion, general or specific, that you might have? Are there any questions that could apply to multiple religions?
9. Rob Bell states firmly that there is no way to truly know what happens when humans die and that we can only speculate about the possibility of an afterlife. How does this idea compare with afterlife predictions from religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam?
10. What is the difference between religious doctrines and dogmas, and religious speculation?
11. One question in the book is "What about people who don't say they're Christians but act more like Jesus than people who do say they're Christians?" How does the author explain this? How does this relate to the idea of questioning Christianity?
12. In *Love Wins*, the author presents the idea that hell exists to scare nonbelievers into believing or, essentially, obeying Christianity. Is this idea in accordance with Jesus' message? Why or why not?
13. Rob Bell discusses at length about the importance of religious questioning but does not directly address social issues that may conflict with religion. What are situations and experiences that are acceptable in society but not in religion, and vice versa? What questions would you ask a spiritual leader about society? What questions would you ask a leader in society about religion?
14. An integral part of the book is the parable of the prodigal son. Why is the obedient son so upset when his father forgives his disobedient brother? Why is the father so forgiving to his prodigal son?

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Discussion Questions *continued*

15. How is the image of the feast in the parable of the prodigal son similar to the party trope throughout *Love Wins*?
16. Explain the feelings that exist between the two brothers in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Are the brothers justified in their thoughts or emotions? Why or why not?
17. Rob Bell argues that even after we die, we could be persuaded by God's love, therefore gaining a Christian understanding and acceptance. Why is this speculation important to the author?
18. How does the author define hell? What are some of the examples or descriptions he gives?
19. How does personal agency play a role in someone's relationship with God?
20. How important are actions in one's current life when cultivating a relationship with God? Do they play a role in deciding an eternal life as well? Why or why not?
21. What is the role of justice in *Love Wins*? How does the author describe God's justice and also our own human justice?
22. The author states that love demands freedom. What does he mean by this? How does this relate to interpersonal and spiritual relationships? What are the consequences of freedom to choose our beliefs?
23. Why does the author bring up anecdotal stories? What is the significance of these experiences?
24. How does the author offer solutions to people who have muddled experiences with religion?
25. *Love Wins* is one person's interpretation of Christianity. What are other Christian interpretations? How are these interpretations supported?
26. In Western society, how are Christians portrayed? How does this reconcile with the beliefs discussed in *Love Wins*?
27. At the end of the book, the author states that we find what we are looking for. "If you want isolation, despair, and the right to be our own god, God will graciously grant you that option. If, however, you crave light, and you're drawn to truth, God will give you what you want." Does this way of thought allow for more or less change in a spiritual relationship with God? Why or why not?
28. What questions are not addressed or answered in *Love Wins*?
29. Why would a book like *Love Wins* be controversial? Are there other books that have stirred similar controversy?
30. Would you recommend *Love Wins* to another teen? Why or why not? Would you recommend it for younger or older readers as well?



Daley Hake Photography

About the Author

ROB BELL is the author of the bestselling *Velvet Elvis*, *Sex God*, *Jesus Wants to Save Christians*, and *Drops Like Stars*. A graduate of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, Bell is the founding pastor of the Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, appeared in a pioneering series of short films called NOOMA. He lives in Southern California with his wife, Kristen, and their three children. You can visit the author online at www.rob主bell.com.