



TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Print the pages of this guide front to back.
2. Fold the pages in half.
3. Assemble the pages and then staple them together in the middle.

the GREAT RECKONING

Surviving a Christianity That
Looks Nothing like Christ

STEPHEN MATTSON

Study Guide by Suzanne L. Yonker



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Chapter 5

Why the Image of God Matters

1. Mattson ponders what his life would be like if he had been born in Somalia rather than the United States (p. 98). What advantages or disadvantages have you experienced because of your family and country of origin?
2. How do you refer to the unbelievers in your life? How do these thoughts affect how you treat them? Do you befriend unbelieving neighbors because it's the right thing to do or because you view them as "projects"? How did Christ approach unbelievers?
3. What experiences in your life have caused you to question your faith? How did you handle it?
4. Do you believe that you chose God or that God chose you? What experiences and Scriptures can you cite to back up this belief?
5. Mattson tells us to "humbly recognize the validity of others' spiritual journeys" (p. 101). Do you agree or disagree with this assertion? Can we trust that God can work in their lives even if their spiritual experiences differ from ours?
6. What spiritual traditions or streams of influence have influenced you? What practical steps can you take today to take into consideration other spiritual worldviews? Do you feel threatened by this idea? Why or why not?
7. Picture a person or people group you define as an enemy. Ask God to help you see this person or group as made in God's image and with unsurpassable worth.
8. Do you feel loved by God? How often do you reflect on the fact that you are created in God's image? How does your view of God's impression of you affect how you live your life?
9. How can you begin to reach out of your comfort zone to embrace people who differ from you in worldview, beliefs, or practices?

notes:

Chapter 6

How to Avoid Following Jesus

1. In what ways has our culture influenced the church rather than the other way around?
2. Did you have to give up anything to follow Christ? If so, what was it? How has following Christ been challenging for you?
3. Do you agree or disagree with Mattson's assertion that Christians who carry guns "don't trust that God is able to protect them" (p. 121)? What is your stance on gun use and gun control, especially for Christians?
4. Have you cultivated a "culture of death" in your life? (See pp.119–24.) How can you keep Christ central with regard to your response to guns, war, and the death penalty?
5. In what ways have you or others in your life followed Jesus by caring for the "least of these"? (See Matthew 25.) What practical steps can you take toward caring for people in need?
6. Mattson cites Hebrews 1:3, which says that Jesus is the "exact imprint of [God's] nature." Reflect on what this passages tells us about the character of God. What are the implications of this passage for we who claim to follow Jesus?
7. Where have you witnessed members of Christendom sabotaged by a loveless theology? In contrast, how have you seen the beauty of God's love expressed by members of the Christian faith in practical ways?

notes:
