

***The Reckoning* Discussion Questions**

The Reckoning by Beverly Lewis

1. Surely my leaving wasn't the only cause for Mamma's pain. The shunning decree...had to have been the more grievous. Do you think Katherine is right in her assessment, or do you think she underestimates how much she is responsible for her mother's state? Might Rebecca also share some of the blame for her present pain?
2. Dan allowed Katie to think he was dead "for our love." Do you agree this was a loving choice, given the circumstances? Why do you think he believes this?
3. When Katherine looks back on her childhood, she feels she was spoiled because Mamma loves me. Do you think spoiling a child is indeed an expression of love? Why does a soft heart toward another person, particularly a child, sometimes make it hard to do the right thing?
4. Do you think Mary would be interested in an older widower like Bishop John if she weren't pressured by the Amish urgency to marry?
5. Talk about Mary's first date with Bishop John. How does it compare to the way young Amishmen court?
6. What do you think of Katherine and Daniel's initial reunion? Does it play out as you had expected? Would you react in the same way as Katherine if you were in her place?
7. Was it cowardly for Katherine to call for her butler as a means of ending her difficult first conversation with Daniel? Why or why not?
8. When Ella Mae Zook says of Daniel that "The poor fella knows what it means to suffer," Maggie responds with, "He brought his pain on himself." Would you agree? Discuss.
9. When Bishop John compares his former feelings for Katie to those he now has for Mary, he concludes, It didn't matter so much if your heart was stirred up like a giddy schoolboy. Deep friendship was good enough to start things out--and the best thing about growing old together. Discuss the elements you think make for a healthy foundation for marriage.
10. Dan feels it is important not to forsake the assembling of believers, regardless of his state of mind. Are there times when you have reluctantly gone

to church, only to be thankful later you have gone? In what ways does belonging to a Christian community affect our overall state of being?

11. As much as Mary desires to broach the subject of Katie's shunning with Bishop John, she hesitates, anxious to take a careful, respectful approach, because women were expected to keep their noses out of church affairs. Compare this view to the role of women in your congregation.

12. Talk about how Samuel and Rebecca each deal with their daughter's shunning. How does having a shunned child affect their daily life? Do you think their situation is better or worse with Katie gone?

13. After Dan's sudden reappearance, Katherine feels unable to move forward in her fancy, new life, and she prays that God would make her past "die" and "go away." Have there been times in your life when you have felt similarly? What helped you to become unstuck?

14. Throughout the series, Katherine has pondered how she is "truly English" rather than Amish, despite her upbringing. Do you think the fancy life she was born to is indeed more important to her identity than the life she was raised to lead?

15. For Mennonites, a woman, no matter her age, was to abide under the protection of her father's roof--until such times as God brought along a life mate of His choosing. What do you think of this arrangement as a child? as a parent? What might your father think of it?

16. Bishop John apologizes to the People, asking for "forgiveness for the hasty and indignant way I dealt with Katie Lapp's shunning. It was an unjust thing I did, and I pray that none of you will follow my example in this." How would you rank this apology? Have you ever known someone in leadership to candidly humble himself or herself in this way? What was the result?

17. For many years, the Wise Woman chose to stay Amish and live as a silent believer, following the Lord by serving the People right in her own community. What do you think this decision has cost Ella Mae? What has she seemed to gain from living this way?

18. The Amish believe death is merely a part of life. As such, funerals are an occasion for rejoicing in the life of the deceased without weeping or wailing. Contrast this view of death and funerals with your view and the view of your church.

19. Katherine continues to date Justin even though she's quite certain he doesn't

share her growing interest in spiritual matters. Have you ever dated someone who was not a Christian? How did your relationship with that person affect your relationship with God?

20. Ella Mae is upset when she hears Katherine is considering marriage to an Englisher rather than the boy she was "meant" for. Would you agree with Ella Mae that God has only one perfect person in mind for our life mate? Discuss.

21. Laura's journal reveals she was curious about what it would be like to grow up Plain and wanted her daughter to have that experience. Do you think she romanticized the Amish life? Why or why not?

22. Katherine prays for forgiveness for coveting the world and its extravagance and walks away from the fancy life. Have you ever found yourself in a place where things--either the desire for them or having an abundance--have kept you from growing spiritually?

23. Talk about the significance of her name change in Katie/Katherine's life. In what ways does her narrative voice change throughout the course of the series?