**LifeGroup Study**

**2023-10-22**

**YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE**

***What Do You Want?***

**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome to our LifeGroup study, You Are What You Love. In our quest to grow our walk with Jesus we tend to emphasize collecting knowledge as the way to change our lives. But you can’t just think your way into holiness or transformation. Discipleship is a re-habituation (habit focused practice) of what we love. Over the next seven weeks we’ll explore how God wants to shape our heart to love Him above all else. For the first week of our study, we’ll focus in on the question, “what do you want?” This is a question that Jesus asked those who came to Him and it’s a question He asks you and me today. Thinking about this question gives us insight into what it means to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus. So, what do you want? Let’s explore that question as we dive into the study!

**ICEBREAKER:** I Really Wanted It!

When I was a kid remote control cars burst on the scene. One of my favourite commercials on TV at that time was about Mr. Max, a remote control van. I remember watching in excitement as Mr. Max wheeled around the corners and through rooms on my TV screen. I really wanted a Mr. Max! I never got a Mr. Max van, but I still remember that feeling I had – I really want it! What is something you really wanted as a kid? What was it about that thing that drew you to it? **Share your story with the group!**

**STUDY:**

To begin our study we’ll read about a day when Jesus asked two men who began to follow Him, “What do you want?” As you read this account, put yourself in the sandals of these men. How would you respond to Jesus’ question?

READ John 1:35-39

1. At the beginning of this account we read, “The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.” John 1:35 NIV. **What is a disciple?**

LEADER NOTES: The Greek word for ‘disciple” in the New Testament is *mathetes* which basically means “student” or “learner”. But a disciple is also a “follower”, someone who completely adheres to the teaching of another, making them his rule of life and conduct. In Jesus’ day and context, a disciple would learn from, spend time with and follow their Rabbi, a respected teacher of the law and religion of Judaism. Source: Got Questions – What is a Disciple?

1. In vs. 36 we read, “When he [John] saw Jesus passing by, he said, ‘Look! The Lamb of God!’” In this verse we see how John recognized Jesus as someone of ultimate significance. **What is the significance of this title, “The Lamb of God”?**

LEADER NOTES: To appreciate the significance of this title, The Lamb of God, we need to know a bit about the sacrificial system of the Jews in Jesus’ day. The sacrificial system was established by God through Moses as a temporary way of being the people of God. The sacrificial system was carried out in several festivals as well as a daily system. Every year the Jews celebrated Passover, a remembrance of how God saved them from their Egyptian slave masters. At the original Passover, God told the Israelites to put the blood of lambs on their doorposts so the death angel would pass over their homes. The Passover lamb was sacrificed in remembrance of God’s saving work. In addition to this, every morning and evening in the temple, lambs were sacrificed for the sins of the people. This daily sacrifice, however, could never cover the cost of our sin. The lamb sacrificed each day pointed ahead to the One True Lamb who would take away the sins of the world. (see Isaiah 53:7 and 1 Peter 1:18-21)

1. In verse 37 we read, “When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.” **What is the significance of their decision to follow Jesus?**

LEADER NOTES: When these two men followed Jesus, they were making a commitment to have Jesus as their Rabbi. These men desired to learn from Jesus, to spend time with Him, to become like Him. This was significant decision that meant they were choosing ultimately to love what Jesus loved, to make Him first in their lives.

1. In verse 38 we read, “Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, ‘What do you want?’” **Why would Jesus ask this question?**

LEADER NOTES: In asking this question, Jesus was probing their motive and desire. What was it they really wanted from following Him? Why had they made this decision? Were they sure they wanted to follow Him? Jesus asked this question so they could be honest and open with themselves about their desires and direction in life.

1. The disciples responded to Jesus’ question by asking a question, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” **What is the significance of this question?**

LEADER NOTES: In asking this question, these disciples were stating their commitment to follow Jesus. Essentially they were saying, “We want to spend time with you. We want to get to know you. We want you to be our Rabbi.”

1. In response to their question, Jesus replies, “Come, and you will see.” **What is the significance of this invitation?**

LEADER NOTES: In giving the disciples this invitation, Jesus was saying to them, “Yes, I invite you to come and spend time with me. I invite you to follow me.” This invitation is the same one Jesus gives you and me today. “Come and see.” “Come and get to know me. Come spend time with me and learn my ways. Grow to love me first and you’ll find the true desire of your heart.”

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

This question, “What do you want?” is key for us to ask ourselves because it helps us see the importance of the desires of our heart, how they shape our life’s direction and our walk with God. Here are some areas related to this question that we’ll be thinking about in the coming weeks.

1. DISCIPLESHIP: **What is your understanding of what discipleship is? Do you see yourself as a disciple? Why or why not?**

“Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart,

to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.”

Smith, James K.A.

LEADER NOTES: Your group members will likely have varied understandings of what a disciple is. As Pete talked about on Sunday, often our understanding of discipleship is skewed in the direction of an intellectual quest. In other words, a disciple of Jesus is primarily a *learner* which means that growing as a disciple of Jesus is primarily about learning more. In this series we’ll be challenged to re-think discipleship as being primarily about what we love and the desires of our heart. Some of your group members may see themselves as a disciple of Jesus. Others may not. One of our goals in this series is that all of your group members would have a clear understanding of what a disciple of Jesus is and that they would want to be His disciples.

1. THE HEART: **What role does our heart play in discipleship? How might paying attention to the desires of our heart help us grow as followers of Jesus?**

READ Proverbs 4:23 – “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.

Saint Augustine

LEADER NOTES: Our heart plays a key role in our discipleship. God has created us to find our heart’s rest in Him. To move in this direction, we need to be aware of our loves and intentional about cultivating a heart that loves God. Emphasizing the heart does not downplay the role of our mind in discipleship. Rather, it is ordering ourself around how we are created. Discipleship is a re-habituation (habit-forced process) of what we love. “We love because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:9 NIV.

1. HABIT: Learning to love God takes practice. It starts with a vision of what the good life is and then we decide to orient our lives toward that vision. **Would you say that the habits in your life are moving you toward who you want to be or away from who you want to be? What habits have you practiced that have helped grow your walk with God?**

LEADER NOTES: All of us are a mix of good and bad habits. The good habits move us toward who we want to be. The bad habits can be a barrier to who we want to become. Our habits can also reveal our loves. In other words, we spend time doing what our heart wants us to do. Part of the goal of this series is that your LifeGroup members would form habits in their life that grow their walk with God. Over the next six weeks we’ll continue this conversation about habits and we’ll also introduce your group members to some spiritual habits they can use to grow deeper in their walk with Jesus.

1. **What is a key takeaway for you from today’s study? What are you hoping to gain from this series?**

**PRAY:**

Thank God today for His work in your life to grow you as His follower. Ask Him to use this series to teach you more about who He is and to grow you closer to Him.