



**LifeGroup Study**  
**2023-11-05**  
**YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE**  
***You Might Not Love What You Think***  
**Participant Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our LifeGroup study, You Are What You Love. Today's study is called "You Might Not Love What You Think". We are constantly being shaped by cultural liturgies (rhythms, practices, rituals). Everything from how we order stuff on Amazon to the design and experience of the mall are shaping us. Rather than being shaped by our culture, Jesus invites us to be shaped and formed by Him. In our LifeGroup study we'll look at a warning from Jesus about the shaping influences of our culture. We'll also look at his invitation to devote ourselves to his shaping influence in our lives, the kingdom of heaven.

**ICEBREAKER:** If I Could Save Just One Thing

You've heard of the scenario (hopefully you'll never experience it) of your house ablaze with fire. Everyone (people and pets) is safely out of the house and now you have opportunity to grab just one thing to rescue from the flames. What would you take with you? Why would it be the one thing you would prioritize to save? **Share your story with the group.**

## **STUDY:**

How do we learn to be consumerists? Not because someone comes along and offers an argument for why stuff will make me happy. I don't think my way into consumerism. Rather, I'm covertly conscripted into a way of life because I have been formed by cultural practices that are nothing less than secular liturgies. My loves have been automated by rituals I didn't even realize were liturgies. These tangible, visceral, repeated practices carry a story about human flourishing that we learn in unconscious ways. These practices are loaded with their own teleological orientation toward a particular vision of the good life, a rival version of the kingdom, and by our immersion in them we are—albeit unwittingly—being taught what and how to love. - Smith, James K.

1. Using James Smith's insight in the above quote, or drawing from Pete's teaching this past Sunday, **how would you define "cultural liturgies"?**
2. One of the key questions we are wrestling with this week is, "What are the things that I'm doing, doing to me?" This week Pete drew our focus to consumerism and the habits we develop around acquisition and consumption of things.  
**How do you see these habits at work in shaping who we are in our western society?**
3. A common "telos" (life direction/end point) for us is "the good life". We might also define this as human flourishing. Imagine you were to go to Conestoga Mall Saturday afternoon and ask people, "How would you define 'the good life'?" **How do you think people would define it?**

### **JESUS' TEACHING ON THE GOOD LIFE (HUMAN FLOURISHING)**

In His teaching, Jesus gives us a clear and compelling picture of "the good life" (human flourishing). For the rest of this study, we'll look at two parables Jesus taught to point us to his kingdom as the place where we will truly flourish.

#### **A Warning - The Parable of the Rich Fool**

4. READ: Luke 12:13-21

What is the context of this parable? What happens to lead Jesus to teach this parable?

5. In verse 15 Jesus says to the crowd, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." NIV  
**What does it look like to "be on guard against all kinds of greed"?**

Jesus says, “ ... life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”

**What is the principle for here for us today?**

6. Jesus ends the parable by saying - <sup>21</sup> “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

**What does it mean to be rich toward God?**

### An Invitation – The Parables of Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

READ: Matthew 13:44-46

<sup>44</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

<sup>45</sup> “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

7. Many of Jesus’ teachings begin with these words, “The kingdom of heaven is like ...”. **Why do you think Jesus focused so much of his teaching on the kingdom of heaven?**
8. In both parables, the one who finds the treasure sells all their possessions to acquire what they had found. **Why would Jesus frame the parables in this way?**
9. **How do these parables speak to us about our “telos” – that vision of the good life that we strive toward?**
10. One way we can cultivate our heart’s orientation toward God’s kingdom is through growing our gratitude for what He has given us. This in turn fosters contentment. 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 says, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” NIV. **How might the habit of gratitude grow our heart for God’s kingdom?**
11. **What practical steps might you take to push back against the pull of consumerism in your life?**

LEADER NOTES: Pay attention to where your stuff comes from. Are there more ethical options? Pay attention to how you think about buying/shopping. What thoughts are going through your head at the mall? Do you subtly believe that you’re one purchase away from happiness?

12. **What is a key takeaway for you from this week’s study?**

**PRAY:**

Thank God for his kingdom! He is King of your heart, and his kingdom will endure forever. Thank him for providing all you need because he is your loving heavenly Father.