



**LifeGroup Study**  
**2023-11-12**  
**YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE**  
***The Kingdom of ME***  
**Participant Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, You Are What You Love. The Kingdom of ME is a rival kingdom that competes for our love. This rival kingdom is seen in the worldview of Individualism - a me first, me focused priority. One of the subtle ways we can be drawn into this kingdom is through technology. To explore this topic we'll look at how technology, particularly our phones, social media and the internet, can influence us in a Me focused direction. In John 15, Jesus offers a powerful counter-invitation to individualism - wooing us to move from the kingdom of ME to the kingdom of WE (life with God and others).

**ICEBREAKER:** What's Your Tech Story?

On Sunday, Jeff shared a bit about his tech story, the history of his experience with digital technology in the 1980s all the way through having a smart phone today. What about you? What is your story when it comes to digital technology? Would you consider yourself an early adaptor when it comes to tech, or are you less inclined to get in on the latest tech upgrade right away? How do you see tech shaping your life today? **Share your story with the group.**

## STUDY:

“Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.”

James K.A. Smith You Are What You Love

### YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE

1. Throughout this series, we have been saying the phrase, “You are what you love.” **What do we mean by this? Why is this idea so important when we think about discipleship (following Jesus)?**
2. READ: Mark 12:28-31

<sup>28</sup> One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

<sup>29</sup> “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>30</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>31</sup> The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[c]</sup> There is no commandment greater than these.” NIV

- Read back through these verses and note every time the word “love” is used. **What does it look like to love God in these ways? How can Jesus ask us to do this even though he knows we won’t love perfectly?**

### RIVAL KINGDOMS

Jesus’ call on our lives is that we would make our heart his home. When this happens, the kingdom of God is alive and well in us. But, there are rival kingdoms that want to rule our heart. These rival kingdoms compete for our love and devotion. The rival kingdom we looked at on Sunday we called The Kingdom of ME.

#### The Kingdom of ME:

The kingdom of ME is a “me first”, “me focused” priority. In this kingdom, SELF is on the throne.

3. READ: Matthew 16:24-26

<sup>24</sup>Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For whoever wants to save their life<sup>[a]</sup> will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup>What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? NIV

- **In these verses, how does Jesus warn us about building the Kingdom of Me?**

4. READ: John 12:25

<sup>25</sup>Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. NIV

- Jesus said, “Anyone who loves their life will lose it ...”. **What does He mean by this?**
- Jesus went on to say, “... anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it ...” **What does it mean to “hate” our life?**

#### Technology and the Kingdom of ME.

On Sunday, we considered the potential of digital technology, particularly our phones, social media and the internet, to orient us toward the Kingdom of ME.

In his article, “We Become *Like* What We *Like*” – Tony Reinke shares how digital technology has a powerful shaping influence in our lives. We can become, he says, like the Greek folklore character, Narcissus.

5. READ the following quote:

It’s awkward to say it this way, but like Narcissus staring down into the water, enchanted with himself, we bend over our phones—and what most quickly captures our attention is our own reflection: our replicated images, our tabulations of approval, and our accumulated “likes.” **Social media has become the new PR firm of the brand Self**, and we check our feeds compulsively and find it nearly impossible to turn away from looking at—and loving—our “second self.”<sup>1</sup>So when we talk about “smartphone addiction,” often what we are talking about is the addiction of looking at ourselves. Tony Reinke – We Become Like What We *Like*

- “Social media has become the new PR firm of the brand Self.” **What do you think about Tony Reinke’s observation? How have you seen this in your own life or the lives of your family?**

6. READ the following quote:

“When we look deeply into digital technology, we see habits, beliefs, and desires that are constantly forming us. These habits, beliefs, and desires constitute digital liturgies – ways of living that are centered on the good life.” Samuel D. James Digital Liturgies

- **What digital habits do you think are helpful in your quest to love God and people? What habits may be harming this quest?**

Book Recommends:

My Tech-Wise Life: Growing Up and Making Choices in a World of Devices. Amy and Andy Crouch  
Digital Liturgies: Rediscovering Christian Wisdom in an Online Age. Samuel D. James

The Kingdom of WE:

The kingdom of WE is The Kingdom of God that Jesus taught about. This kingdom is based on a rich and thriving relationship with God and with others. Frederick Dale Bruner, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, give some wonderful insights from Jesus’ teaching in John 15 about how we can live of citizens of God’s kingdom, the Kingdom of WE. Note, particularly, the invitation Jesus gives to make our *Home* with him and the *fruit bearing* that will result.

7. READ: John 15:1-7 Jesus Invites His Disciples to Make Their Home With Him.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” vs. 1 NIV

“I, I am the real Root of the Matter, and my Father is the Orchardist.” (Fredrick Dale Bruner rendering)

- **What does Jesus mean by this statement, “I am the true vine”. “I, I am the Root of the Matter”?**

“and my Father is the gardener.” vs. 1 NIV

“and my Father is the Orchardist.” (Fredrick Dale Bruner rendering)

- **How does this truth impact our lives as followers of Jesus?**

8. READ: John 15:4 Homemaking

<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. NIV

“Make your home with me as I am with you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it makes its home with the root (and trunk), so more can you bear fruit unless you make your home with me.” (Fredrick Dale Bruner rendering)

- **“Remain (make your home with) me as I also remain with you.” What does this invitation from Jesus “make your home with me” mean to you?**

9. READ: John 15:5 Fruitfulness Promised

<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” vs. 5 NIV

“I, I Am the Root of the Matter; you disciples are the branches. The individual making a home with me (as I am with him or her) – there is a person bearing much fruit! Because the fact of the matter is this: apart from me you can do absolutely nothing.” (Fredrick Dale Bruner rendering)

- **What does it mean to “bear fruit”? How do these words encourage you about fruitfulness in your life as you follow Jesus?**

10. Moving from the Kingdom of ME to the Kingdom of WE involves making our home with (remaining, abiding, sticking with) Jesus. As we do this, we will be fruitful as we love others and serve others in Jesus’ Name.

- **What is a key takeaway from this study for you? What next step do you sense Jesus prompting you to take?**