



## LifeGroup Study

2023-11-19

### YOU ARE WHAT YOU LOVE

*The Practice of Meeting Together*

#### Participant Notes

#### **OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, You Are What You Love. Our hearts are like magnets that pull us toward a desired end or outcome. God has designed our hearts to be fully satisfied in him. A key way that God orients our hearts toward him (or back toward him) is in our practice of meeting together to worship him. Corporate worship (Sunday church gatherings for example) are a place where God can recalibrate our hearts away from a love of things in this world and back to him. We have a role to play in this as well. When we come to worship on a Sunday morning we should come expectant and looking to offer worship to God. The goal of today's study is to grow our understanding of the purpose of corporate worship and to intentionally prepare our hearts to participate fully in what God wants to do in us as we gather.

#### **ICEBREAKER:** My Church Experience Growing Up

My family attended church together regularly when I was a kid. My early memories of church are of sitting and standing with my family in a church pew, listening to a sermon and singing from a hymnal. While some of these experiences seemed a little boring to me as a young boy, I have many good memories of church in those early days, and several of the hymns we regularly sang are still embedded deep in my heart today. What about you? What was your church experience like growing up? Maybe your family rarely or never attended church. If that is your story, what was your impression of church? **Share your story with the group.**

## **STUDY:**

Worship is the arena in which God recalibrates our hearts, reforms our desires, and rehabilitates our loves. Worship isn't just something we do; it is where God does something *to* us. Worship is the heart of discipleship because it is the gymnasium in which God retrains our hearts.

James K.A. Smith [You Are What You Love](#)

### WHY CHURCH?

Each of us has a unique story when it comes to church. Our story often informs why we attend church. God has a wonderful plan for us in the experience of church. He wants to form our heart and retrain our heart. His plan should inform why we would make a commitment to prioritize gathering together for worship.

1. Imagine you are having dinner with friends who are not church attenders. One of them asks you, "So, why do you go to church?" **What would you tell them?**
2. "Worship is the arena in which God recalibrates our hearts, reforms our desires, and rehabilitates our loves." **What do you think of this idea? How might this definition help inform *why* you go to church?**

### WORSHIP AS COUNTER FORMATION

Often our hearts are formed in ways that orient us off course from God's plan for lives. There are cultural liturgies that call for our devotion and love. These cultural liturgies have a powerful shaping influence in our lives because they orient our heart often in ways move us off course from God. God uses worship as a counter formation to re-orient our hearts toward Him.

3. "Cultural/secular liturgies" is a unique phrase we've been using in this series. What does this phrase mean?
4. READ: Romans 6:11

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." NIV

- **How might God use worship to help us count ourselves as "dead" to the liturgies of our culture, and "alive" to God?**

5. READ: Daniel 1

The story of Daniel and his friends is an example of resisting cultural pressures through devotion to God.

In verse 8, we read, “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.”

- **How is Daniel’s life an example of counter-formation?**

### WORSHIP AS REORIENTATION

Regularly gathering together for worship is a practice God can use in our lives to reorient our hearts to him and help us agree with his way and will for our lives.

6. READ: Psalm 95:6

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." NIV

- **How does this Psalm invite us to be reoriented in our worship?**

7. When we gather for worship, we are to come with expectant hearts, waiting for God to meet us as we open our hearts to him. Think back to your times of gathering with others to worship.  
**What obstacles to God’s reorienting work have you experienced in those times?**

### THE POWER OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

8. READ: John 4:21-24

<sup>21</sup> “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” NIV

- In this passage we read a conversation Jesus has with a Samaritan woman about the essence of worship. What does Jesus tell us about true worship? **How might this inform our worship gatherings today?**

9. READ: Mark 12:30

<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.’ NIV

- **Why is loving God central to the power of corporate worship?**

## PREPARING YOUR HEART FOR WORSHIP

10. When we gather with others for worship, our heart attitude and posture matters. Here are four heart postures that can help us experience God in worship. As a group, think together about what you might do to prepare your heart in each of these areas.

- Come with an *expectant heart*
- Come with a *humble heart*
- Come with an *open heart*
- Come with a *thankful heart*

## PRAYER:

Read Psalm 100 out loud together as a group, then spend some time thanking God for this practice he has given us of meeting together. Ask him to give you a heart ready to worship well!

### **A psalm of thanksgiving.**

<sup>1</sup> Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledge that the LORD is God!

He made us, and we are his.<sup>[a]</sup>

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

and his faithfulness continues to each generation.