

Speaker: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor **Pt. 1: You Become What You Love September 13, 2026**

Head Knowledge ≠ Transformation

What are you delighting in? What is it that you truly want? Jesus? Beauty? Success? Power? Sex?

How you answer this question will be the greatest “tell” as to what you are becoming!

Whatever we deem to be “the GOOD LIFE,” that which we desire and love above all else, we put our TRUST in, and it will determine our priorities, daily habits, direction, and ultimately... what we become...

Psalm 115:4–8 (ESV) ⁴ *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.* ⁵ *They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.* ⁶ *They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.* ⁷ *They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.* ⁸ *Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.*

Telos – our end - Romans 8:29 (NLT) ²⁹ *For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

A. Knowledge INFORMS Us

Romans 7:4–25 (ESV) ⁷ *What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”*

- **PAUSE:** You go to the beach on the tip of South Africa; there are signs everywhere warning you of unusual amounts of GREAT WHITE SHARKS in the water. You ignore the signs, enter the water, and are mauled by a shark... finally getting free after poking it in the eye... You slowly make your way back to the shore. When you get back, you say. “IT WAS THE SIGN'S FAULT FOR TELLING ME THERE WERE SHARKS” or “THE SIGN NEVER SAVED ME FROM THE SHARKS.”
- **The sign was never meant to save. The sign can't make you obey.**
- The sign merely points to LIFE and DEATH. You choose! Paul's point – the LAW COULD NEVER SAVE. Its job was to point out the path to LIFE and DEATH.
- **NOTICE:** knowledge cannot SAVE you or PREVENT you from making bad choices or sinning!

¹³ *Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, ...* ¹⁵ *For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*

- **The problem is NOT the information – the knowledge is GOOD.**

Romans 8:1–17 (ESV) ¹ *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...* ⁴ *in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

- **WALKING requires action – steps!**

Luke 6:46–47 (NIV) ⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.

- **COME → LISTEN → PRACTICE**

Luke 6:48–49 (NIV) ⁴⁸ *They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.* ⁴⁹ *But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. ."*

- **PAUSE:** What foundation are you building on? Not sure? → what are you **PRACTICING**?

This brings us back to the START → we know what we OUGHT TO DO – but do not DO IT! WHY?

IMPORTANT: Knowledge IS important – it is meant to INFORM us, not TRANSFORM us.

- Weekend Services are KNOWLEDGE heavy and PRACTICE LIGHT. This is intentional! We are trying to help people set the GPS of their lives in the correct direction!

Knowledge INFORMS the mind... but something else DIRECTS our path...

REFLECT: Have you ever noticed the Great Command is **LOVE** God – not **BELIEVE** He exists, or even **OBEY** God?

B. Our Hearts DIRECT Us

Matthew 6:21 (ESV) ²¹ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

In his book, **You Are What You Love**, James Smith asks, “What do you WANT?” and says it is the fundamental question for discipleship and formation.

Why? What we WANT reflects what we LOVE (treasure). We will ALWAYS orient our lives around what we LOVE.

Descartes said, “*I think; therefore, I am.*” The Bible says, “*I am loved; therefore, I love.*”

1 John 4:19 (NIV) ¹⁹ *We love because he first loved us.*

The problem is our LOVES – wants & desires – are distorted or deformed! (SIN NATURE)

Made to WORSHIP – Made to LOVE – what are YOU worshipping? What do you LOVE?

Smith’s question, “What do you want?” is helpful here! Our wants reflect our HEART.

PROBLEM → Our hearts have competing visions for the “Good Life”:

- **Individual Autonomy & Self-Expression (Expressive Individualism):** “define your own identity” and “live free from external expectations.”
- **Comfort, Safety, & Convenience:** Eliminate all forms of suffering and risk, prioritize comfort above self-sacrifice or higher purpose.
- **Control & Certainty:** Peace comes through controlling your schedule, health, and outcomes
- **Validation & Approval (self-image):** Pursuing worth through being liked, followed, or admired by the crowd, making reputation the core measure of value.
- **Consumerism & Experience (Hedonism):** Defining life by novelty, pleasure, and the accumulation of curated memories or possessions.

Each of these visions promises rest, but as David Foster Wallace famously noted, worshipping any of them eventually "eats you alive" because they demand endless effort without offering ultimate peace.

Augustine said, "You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You."

Little wonder we are told to DELIGHT IN THE LORD!

Psalm 37:4 (ESV) ⁴ *Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

How many of you feel restless in life? Could it be that the focus of your heart and your affections has been placed on the wrong thing?

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) ²³ *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

Matthew 15:19 (NIV) ¹⁹ *For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*

Psalm 119:2–11 (ESV) ² *Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart,* ⁹ *How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.* ¹⁰ *With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!* ¹¹ *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

When discipleship stays trapped in believing FACTS, it produces dry orthodoxy. When it tries to leap straight to OBEDIENCE, it produces dead works, or legalism.

Knowledge INFORM us → Our Hearts (loves, wants, desires) DIRECT us → How do we change our LOVES?

C. Practice FORMS or DEFORMS Us

Luke 6:47 (NIV) ⁴⁷ *As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.*

Philippians 4:9 (NIV) ⁹ *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

PRACTICE – our DAILY HABITS → are the best indicators of our LOVES & WANTS!

IMPORTANT: Your daily practices are either FORMING you into the image of Christ OR they are DEFORMING you into the image of something else!

Smith says, "Your daily habits are either pointing you to VIRTUE or VICE"!

Isaiah 55:1–2 (ESV) ¹ *"Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.* ² *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.*

- **Addictions** → learned behaviours that promise us peace. Often the result of trauma or rejection, where we were left broken and hurt... then found something or someone that made us *feel* better momentarily.

Our PRACTICES shape our LOVES, which DIRECT our TELOS (what we are becoming):

1. **Conscious Practices:** the values we choose to practice & implement in our lives.
2. **Subconscious Practices:** the values planted in us through the culture's ethos, which capture our hearts and direct our practices (daily habits).

➤ **This is where we are most often & easily DECEIVED.**

The Great Deception: That all we need to worry about is KNOWING the right FACTS and the rest does not matter! While we sit in the cultural milieu (social, cultural, intellectual environment) and are FORMED in its IMAGE rather than being BECOMING LIKE CHRIST.

- It is with great cause that Scripture admonishes us not to be “friends of the world.” This was meant for our PROTECTION, not HARM.

Joshua 24:14–15 (NIV) ¹⁴ “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

You have heard, “Belonging comes before believing”; a better term: “Belonging enables us to believe.”

NEXT WEEK we are going to unpack this in much greater detail!

LANDING: Practical Step → Your COMMUNITY is shaping you MORE than your intellectual BELIEFS.

We exist to BECOME a community of fully devoted followers of Jesus who join His mission, strengthen His church, and renew our region and beyond...

CHURCH COMMUNITY: Weekend Services (knowledge-heavy, practice-light) → Weekday Small Groups (knowledge-light, practice-heavy)

Monday – Young Adults – The Collective – led by Austin Duerksen

Tuesday – Adults – The Connection – led by Stefan & Louise and Ken & Eunice