



Discussion Guide

Tools of the Trade

1 John 2:15-17 | Pastor Dave Bennett | September 20, 2026

Session Overview

We have been talking the past few weeks about the role that technology has in our lives. Today, we're going deeper into understanding how the tool is not the issue but the heart behind it. Our phones and technology are inherently bad; it's what controls them that can cause issues. In a world where advertisers and leaders are always pushing a consumerist culture, we will be focusing on how we can find fulfillment in Jesus rather than partake in an endless search through scrolling.

Session Flow (60-75 minutes)

Welcome and Icebreaker (10 minutes)

If your phone could give you a weekly "spiritual screen time report," what app, habit, or distraction would probably show up at the top?

Purpose: This will get individuals to put into perspective how much time they are spending on their phones with fruitless results.

Scripture Reading

Read 1 John 2:15-17 aloud together.

Leader Coaching Sidebar

- This conversation can bring up tensions and hidden struggles or guilt in habits. Lead with grace and remind the group that the sermon is not rejecting technology, but pushing us to examine our hearts.
- Keep the focus on the heart. If the group is only focusing on apps, screen time, or boundaries, ask, "What desire or need might be under this habit?"
- Before the closing, invite each person to name one achievable way they can let the tool become the servant again this week.

Discussion (40-50 minutes)

- 1. The sermon says, “A tool in your hand is a servant. A tool in your heart is a master.” Where do you see that tension in your own life?**

Leader Note: Let the group answer honestly and personally. The goal is to name the tension without rushing to fix it.

- 2. After reading the scripture, what do you think it means to “love the world” rather than simply use things in the world? Do you utilize technology or do you love it?**

Leader Note: Help the group distinguish between using created things with gratitude and giving them the affection, trust, or allegiance that belongs to God.

- 3. Why might it be easier to blame technology rather than examine the heart that is using it?**

Leader Note: This question may bring out defensiveness. Gently redirect the conversation from blame toward self-examination and grace.

- 4. The sermon says technology does not change our character; it publishes it. What do your digital habits tend to reveal about your attention, desires, or priorities?**

Leader Note: Encourage specific examples, but keep the tone free from shame. The point is awareness that leads to surrender.

- 5. Which of John’s three categories feels most connected to your screen life: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life? Why?**

Leader Note: Help the group distinguish between using created things with gratitude and giving them the affection, trust, or allegiance that belongs to God.

- 6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:12. How can you implement this truth in your life in terms of technology?**

Leader Note: Invite the group to move beyond permission-based thinking and consider what is shaping their habits, desires, and attention.

- 7. What is one way technology has genuinely helped you grow, connect, worship, learn, or serve?**

Leader Note: Make space for positive stories here. This helps the group avoid treating technology as only a problem and reinforces the sermon’s tool framework.

- 8. What is one way technology has made you more distracted, discontent, anxious, isolated, or spiritually dull?**

Leader Note: Listen for patterns like comparison, exhaustion, avoidance, or isolation. Ask gentle follow-ups if someone wants to go deeper.

- 9. The sermon encouraged us to “give the tool a job description.” What is one specific boundary or purpose you could assign to your phone this week?**

Leader Note: Push for one concrete step rather than vague intentions. Examples could include location, timing, app limits, accountability, or a new discipleship use.

- 10. Read Proverbs 4:23. What would it look like for you to guard your heart in your digital life without becoming legalistic or fear-driven?**

Leader Note: Help the group see that guarding the heart is not fear-based avoidance but loving stewardship of what shapes us.