



## Reflection for October 8

### Wagamama - Part 3

By Kate Croskery Jones



*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the Lord’s will is. Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)*

我儘 Wagamama -translated “indulgence “by the Japanese style ramen shop with the name Wagamama but is also translated “selfishness.” Wagamama may be applied to the (ab)use of social media. Facebook and other media platforms were created to connect us- and they do that well. However, today such media platforms have as their primary purpose to MAKE MONEY. There is nothing wrong with making money in and of itself. Our founder John Wesley spoke often of this. How should followers of Jesus use social media?

Every time we click on an ad or “Like” something, our preference is recorded, and powerful algorithms go to work to create new ads just aimed

at us. Psychologists may tell us that the purpose of advertising is to make us unhappy. Discontent motivates us to buy. More than that, the more closely the ads match our needs the more “addicted” we are likely to become to the media offering us everything tailored to our own exquisite preferences. To that add the practice of skipping the posts, or more likely blocking people with whom we disagree, and we are suddenly hours a day living in a little bubble of our own desires. It is a seductive world, indeed. If ever there were a definition of wagamama, it is spending hours each day of the precious life God has given us absorbed in a virtual world made exclusively for us. Social media is not all bad. To the contrary, I love connecting with friends on Facebook, posting pictures of my dog and seeing photos of your pets. I love being able to attend a dozen worship services on a single Sunday, tuning in on Facebook. To the extent that using social media causes us to turn inward, focused on our needs and not on building God’s kingdom by reaching out to others our use of social media is sinful. How will you use what is at your disposal?

*Gracious God: Forgive us when we waste the gift of life on trifling matters that turn us in toward ourselves and away from all that you would have us do. Help us to use well the tools within our reach so that we may reach others for the sake of your kingdom and not for our selfish needs. Help us to live wisely so that we may bear the light of Christ with our use of time and resources. May we be generous in sharing the Love you have offered us when online or in person. Amen.*

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*May this devotion provide you with a moment of faithful reflection and care. You are involved in ministries of justice and witness, in ministries of standing up and standing with people working to create better systems and communities, in ministries of learning and searching and researching to become more aware and awakened, more technologically savvy and proficient, more virtually and personally present in your churches and communities and world. Each of us who serve as members of your Wisconsin Cabinet write these devotions in grateful prayer for you – for sustenance and buoyancy, for strength and courage, for safety and just actions, and for faith and love to be full and fulfilled in your daily lives. God’s grace and blessings, God’s challenge and healthy discomfort, God’s Spirit and energy be with you, in the hope Christ offers us all.*

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