

04

JEREMIAH 12:1-13

IN GOD'S TIMING

THIS WEEK'S focus

As we read the book of Jeremiah, we get to see a lot of his emotional highs and lows. In a moment of blunt honesty, Jeremiah told God how frustrated he was about the wicked people who seemed to be thriving and living their best lives. Day after day, the same slimeballs were getting fat and happy taking advantage of others. Jeremiah wondered, “Where’s the judgment God keeps promising?” His openness with God is a fantastic example of how God can handle our honesty and our feelings. God replied to Jeremiah and told him that his trust in God’s justice and his endurance for service were too small. Not one wicked deed will go unpunished by God—but the punishment will be in God’s timing and in God’s way.



CENTRAL truth

We must trust God to bring justice in His timing and His way.



EXPLORE

scripture

JEREMIAH 12:1-13

JEREMIAH 12:1-4

1 You will be righteous, LORD, even if I bring a case against you. Yet, I wish to contend with you: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the treacherous live at ease? 2 You planted them, and they have taken root. They have grown and produced fruit. You are ever on their lips, but far from their conscience. 3 As for you, LORD, you

know me; you see me. You test whether my heart is with you. Drag the wicked away like sheep to slaughter and set them apart for the day of killing. 4 How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field wither? Because of the evil of its residents, animals and birds have been swept away, for the people have said, "He cannot see what our end will be."

JEREMIAH 12:5-6

5 If you have raced with runners and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in a peaceful land, what will you do in the thickets of the Jordan? 6 Even your brothers — your own

father's family — even they were treacherous to you; even they have cried out loudly after you. Do not have confidence in them, though they speak well of you.

JEREMIAH 12:7-13

7 I have abandoned my house; I have deserted my inheritance. I have handed the love of my life over to her enemies. 8 My inheritance has behaved toward me like a lion in the forest. She has roared against me. Therefore, I hate her. 9 Is my inheritance like a hyena to me? Are birds of prey circling her? Go, gather all the wild animals; bring them to devour her. 10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled my plot of land. They have turned my desirable plot into a

desolate wasteland. 11 They have made it a desolation. It mourns, desolate, before me. All the land is desolate, but no one takes it to heart. 12 Over all the barren heights in the wilderness the destroyers have come, for the Lord has a sword that devours from one end of the earth to the other. No one has peace. 13 They have sown wheat but harvested thorns. They have exhausted themselves but have no profit. Be put to shame by your harvests because of the LORD's burning anger.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JEREMIAH 17:9-10

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JEREMIAH 12:1-4

DWELL

Jeremiah used a type of prayer we all need to learn: lament. Simply put, *lament* is honesty *with* God and honesty *about* God in our darkest times. Lament tells God how we feel, and it tells God who we know He is and our trust in Him. God made us to be emotional beings, but we need to take our honesty with God and about God to Him in prayer. We also need to process our honesty with trusted, mature, godly leaders. Lament opens the door for deep comfort, gentle correction, and strengthening encouragement.

↑ What do we learn about God from His openness to Jeremiah's honesty?

→ Are there any emotions or feelings you need to get out before God, a trusted leader, or both? If so, what are they?

MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 17:9-10 in a journal each day this week and read it aloud 2-3 times. If you'd like, you can decorate the margins with doodles related to the verse.

PRAY

Take some time to tell God how you're feeling. Then, tell God some of the good things You know to be true about Him. Ask Him to comfort and strengthen you for today.

day 2

JEREMIAH 12:5-6

DWELL

Jeremiah experienced what all servants of God will experience many times in life: coming to the end of his own strength. Many times, the need will seem too great, the evil and obstacles too abundant, and your own capacity and resources too small. You can tell God all about it through lament. But there's more to the story: the need is never too great for God. Like Jeremiah, we're called to run with horses and navigate thickets. But it's only possible through the greatness of our God working in us.



Why does God sometimes give us loving correction when we think we need encouragement?



What is one way you could grow in your endurance for serving God and serving others?

MEMORIZE

Write Jeremiah 17:9-10 on a note card and post it somewhere you'll see it regularly, or save it as the lock screen on your phone. Say it aloud 2-3 times whenever you see it.

PRAY

Ask the Lord to give the strength He knows you need to serve Him and serve others. Ask Him to reveal anything to you that needs to be corrected. Thank Him for His love for you.

day 3

JEREMIAH 12:7-13

DWELL

Jeremiah was honest *with* God and *about* God, and he received the correction and clarity he needed to move forward. We, too, can pour out our hearts before God, and He will speak to us and give us what we need to continue faithfully serving Him and the people in our lives. God knows the pain we and others are going through at a much deeper level than we ever could. He has correction, comfort, and encouragement for us. And He has wisdom and strength to use us to bring His love and goodness to the hurting people around us.



Since God knows what the pain people are going through, how can He use us to serve others in their difficulties?



How does Jeremiah's example challenge us to pray when we're going through difficult times?

MEMORIZE

Every time you wash your hands today, say as much of Jeremiah 17:9-10 aloud as you can remember.

PRAY

Tell God about your trust in His goodness and justice. Pray that He would use you to bring His goodness and love into the lives of those around you.

day 4

PSALM 43:1-5

DWELL

Psalm 43 is an excellent example of lament. The psalmist's soul was dejected—deeply troubled. Instead of keeping his feelings bottled up, he wrote them down and made them a song to God. By the end of the song, he called on himself to give praise to God, his Savior. God knows all things, including what we feel. He can handle our honest emotions. When we pour out our hearts to Him and declare who He is and our trust in Him, we are comforted and strengthened in the struggle.

↑ What do we learn about God from this psalm?

↻ What does this psalm teach you about lament?

MEMORIZE

Ask 2–3 people today if you can practice reciting Jeremiah 17:9-10 for them.

PRAY

Be honest with God about anything you're going through that's difficult. Praise Him for His goodness and faithfulness to you. Ask Him for His grace and strength to serve Him today.

day 5

ROMANS 7:14–8:4

DWELL

The apostle Paul gives us a remarkable example of emotional honesty. As a believer, he wanted to serve the Lord, yet he felt desires for things that were sinful. He got super frustrated about it and called himself a wretched man! He was honest about his struggles, but he didn't find his identity in them. He acknowledged desires for sinful things but also acknowledged that Jesus had transformed his life. He declared in faith his forgiveness in Jesus and that the Holy Spirit in his life could lead him to make righteous choices. He didn't deny the struggle, but declared God's strength to overcome.

↻ What does this passage teach us about the spiritual struggles of believers?

↻ What struggles do you need to be honest with God about in prayer?

MEMORIZE

Write out each of the words of Jeremiah 17:9-10 on note cards or scraps of paper, and mix them up. See if you can put them in the correct order from memory.

PRAY

Tell God about any spiritual struggles you're experiencing. If you've sinned, confess the sin to God and receive His forgiveness. Ask God's Holy Spirit to lead your life today.