



Discussion Guide
Race Against the Horses – Part 2
LEADER GUIDE

.....

Hey leaders! In our current series, “*Race Against the Horses*”, we’re discovering how even when Jeremiah did not live up to his potential, God offered a generous and gracious invitation to live for more. We receive this same invitation ... to live with a bold, expectant, dependent faith in God to experience our best life!

SPECIAL NOTE As the new year continues, we want to invite your small group to seek the Lord in a more intentional and dedicated way! As part of this, *SACRED ASSEMBLY* kicked off last week! Some of the ways we will continue to encourage our church family are through Daily Devotionals & Prayer Texts, a Day of Prayer & Fasting, and Celebration Services. Check out all the details at rockbridge.cc/sacred-assembly

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

.....

**“Beware of harking back to what you once were
when God wants you to be something you have never been.”**

[Oswald Chambers]

LEADER RESOURCES || [Leader Note](#) We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **[Passage Summary](#)**
 - This passage contains the basic gist of Jeremiah’s preaching and prophetic ministry. Judah had embraced Josiah’s temple reforms, but they neglected inner transformation. In other words, they looked spiritual, whole, and religious. However, their lives lacked any evidence of the authentic presence of God. They put their confidence in the “temple” but failed to truly worship God, seek Him, and live for Him.
- **[Guide to Jeremiah & Idolatry, Injustice, & the Coming Judgment](#)**
 - Use this Bible Project overview and Ch. 7 article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **[Paul's Curriculum For Christlikeness](#)**
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || [Leader Note](#) The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

Describe a time when you got lost and needed help to find where you were going.

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || [Leader Note](#) Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*“Instead, his delight is in the Lord’s instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.
He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams that bears its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”*

[Psalm 1:2-3]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today’s reading and discussion.

Religious observance without inner transformation is worthless and dangerous. The best life of “racing against the horses” starts WITHIN!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage multiple people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they’re for guidance!

Have someone read aloud Jeremiah 6:16. Have a couple people read aloud portions of Jeremiah 7:1-15.

1. In the sermon we heard, *“God does not steamroll our will.”* How does this conflict or align with your view of God?
2. What was the primary issue Jeremiah addressed in v. 1-4? *Jeremiah confronted Judah for putting false confidence in the temple and religious practices while neglecting inner transformation and true worship. Their outward religiosity masked a lack of genuine relationship with God.*
3. How do v. 9-10 reveal the hypocrisy of the people’s actions? Why is this significant? *The people violated God’s commandments, yet they claimed safety by trusting in the temple. This shows their misunderstanding of true worship and their attempt to manipulate God’s favor through empty rituals.*
4. How can valuing a religious appearance over inner transformation be a challenge for us today? *Christians may rely on attending church, participating in rituals, or maintaining a religious image without pursuing a deep, personal relationship with God. This disconnect leads to spiritual stagnation.*
5. What does “new beginnings without follow through” reveal about true repentance? *Answers will vary: true repentance involves not only turning away from sin, but also sustained transformation and obedience. Without follow-through, repentance becomes a hollow gesture rather than genuine change.*
6. How does the invitation in Jeremiah 6:16 (“ask about the ancient paths”) apply to us seeking to live faithfully today? *Answers will vary: this call encourages believers to return to foundational truths of Scripture and godly living. It challenges Christians to align their lives with God’s enduring standards rather than cultural trends.*
7. What area(s) in your life have you been relying on religious rituals or appearances instead of genuine faith and obedience? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
8. In this passage, Jeremiah warns against trusting external symbols of faith. How can you cultivate a faith that remains strong even without visible signs of God’s presence? *Answers will vary: building faith through prayer, Scripture, and reliance on God’s promises fosters resilience; trusting His character rather than circumstances ensures a steadfast relationship.*
9. What practical step(s) can you take towards your faith being marked by inner transformation? *Answers will vary: steps might include daily prayer for personal growth, accountability relationships, and intentionally applying biblical principles in decisions and interactions.*

10. How can we, as a small group, encourage one another to move beyond surface-level religiosity and pursue genuine transformation? *Answers will vary: we can share personal growth stories; pray for each other; study Scriptures that emphasize heart change; and foster deeper discipleship through accountability and mutual encouragement.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Galatians 4:19 declares this about our lives: *“My children, I am again suffering labor pains for you until Christ is formed in you.”* One of the implications is that we must reject superficial spirituality! Based on what we’ve discussed today, what is a step of obedience you can take this week? Here are a few additional questions to consider ...

- Are you willing to be deeply transformed?
- What limit or boundary do you need to push past?
- What false images of God and yourself do you need to replace with truth?

Jesus is creating a forever family that shares similar characteristics, attitudes, and ambitions! *How important is it to you to FULLY BE PART OF THIS FAMILY?*

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || **Leader Note** *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5-10 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompts below!*

True Transformation Begins Within

- Let’s take a moment to reflect on this: religious observance without inner transformation is not only empty, but it’s dangerous! God doesn’t call us to outward actions alone ... He desires our hearts to be transformed by His Spirit. The “race against the horses”—the abundant and purposeful life we’re called to live—starts within, as God changes us from the inside out.
- As we pray, let’s ask God to examine our hearts, renew our minds, and transform us by His grace. Let’s surrender any tendency to focus on outward appearances and invite Him to do the deep, inward work that leads to true life and strength for the journey!