



Discussion Guide
Race Against the Horses – Part 3
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!

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

"Whatever God is using to mold your character, do not resist, but rest in His loving presence."

[Boyd Bailey]

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
Jeremiah observes clay being shaped, but when the clay is spoiled, the potter reshapes it as he deems best. God uses this imagery to illustrate His sovereign authority over nations and individuals. God declares that He can reshape them based on their response to His warnings— destroying those that persist in evil and blessing those that repent. Despite this warning, Judah refuses to turn from their wicked ways. Instead, they follow their own plans, revealing hardened hearts and rebellion against God's will.
Guide to Jeremiah & Ch. 18 Commentary
Use this overview and commentary for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
A Spiritual Lesson at the Potter's House & God's Love Letter to You
These would be good resources 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.

What is something you are celebrating in this season of life? OR What do you hope to be celebrating in the near future?

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!

"But me? I will see your face in righteousness; when I awake, I will be filled full by seeing your image."

[Psalm 17:15]

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

God, the sovereign potter, has the authority to shape and reshape our lives, which flows from His loving-kindness!

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 18:1-12. Consider having someone else read it again, possibly in a different translation.

1. What is the significance of God sending Jeremiah to the potter's house? What does the potter and clay imagery teach about God's relationship with His people? *The potter represents God's sovereignty and control, while the clay represents humanity's dependence and malleability. This imagery highlights God's authority to shape and reshape His people for His purposes.*
2. How does the potter's ability to reshape a marred pot reflect God's willingness to work with His people, despite their flaws? How does this encourage you today? *The potter's action symbolizes God's patience and grace. Even when His people fail or resist Him, He is willing to rework and restore them if they are willing to submit to His hands.*
3. What does v. 7-10 reveal about God's responsiveness to repentance and disobedience? *Answers will vary: God's conditional dealings with nations and individuals; he offers blessings for obedience, but reserves judgment for disobedience; reflects His justice and mercy.*
4. In v. 12, the people respond: "*We will continue to follow our plans.*" How does this contrast with God's desire for them? When in your life recently have you had a similar response to God? *Their defiance demonstrates a hardened heart and rejection of God's authority. It contrasts with God's desire for humility and submission, revealing their spiritual stubbornness.*
5. God has the right to shape us as He pleases. How can this both challenge and encourage us today? *This is a good opportunity to go first!*
6. Why do you at times resist God's shaping? How can we help one another overcome this resistance? *Answers will vary: resistance often stems from fear, pride, or a desire for control. We can foster surrender in one another by teaching about God's faithfulness, sharing testimonies, and creating spaces for prayer and reflection.*
7. The people of Judah trusted their own plans instead of God's. How can you guard against a similar tendency in your personal and our collective faith journeys? *Regular prayer, studying Scripture, and seeking wise counsel help align plans with God's will. Practicing humility and openness to God's direction fosters dependence on Him rather than self.*
8. The clay must remain pliable in the potter's hands. What area(s) of your life might you need to surrender to become more moldable to God's will? *This is another good opportunity to go first!*
9. God's response to repentance demonstrates His mercy. How has repentance brought restoration in your life? How can you allow this to encourage others?

10. Judah displayed a stubborn refusal to submit to God. How can you cultivate a heart that is responsive to God's voice and willing to change? *Answers will vary: regular prayer for a teachable spirit, engagement with Scripture, and accountability from trusted believers help nurture a responsive and humble heart.*

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.*

God, as the potter, has a RIGHT to do with us as His pleases; we are His, not our own. Based on what we've discussed today, what is a step of obedience you can take this week? Here are a few additional areas of our lives and questions to consider ...

- **PERMISSION** → Will you ask God to give you a heart willing to be molded by Him?
- **RELINQUISHMENT** → Will you surrender yourself fully to God, saying "Have your way?"
- **APPRENTICESHIP** → Will you live daily as a disciple to Jesus, a clay pot in the Potter's hand?

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!*

Trusting the Sovereign Potter

- Let's reflect on this beautiful truth: God is the sovereign potter, shaping and reshaping our lives with perfect authority and infinite loving-kindness. Even when we don't understand His work, we can trust that His hands are gentle, His purposes are good, and His love never fails.
- As we pray, let's surrender ourselves to God's skillful shaping. Let's ask Him to mold us into vessels that reflect His glory and to give us hearts that trust His process, knowing that His plans are always for our ultimate good and His greater purpose.