



Discussion Guide  
Race Against the Horses – Part 4  
LEADER GUIDE

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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](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible  
than to be alive without breathing.”**

[Martin Luther]

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**
  - In chapter 20, Jeremiah is whipped and put in the stocks by Pashur, thus becoming a laughingstock. Yet, he remained unfazed and faithful to his calling and commission to preach the truth. Jeremiah had a remarkable ability to examine everything that happened to him in relation to God’s will. How did he get this ability? Chapter 15 gives the answer – through prayer! There are 7 “confessional” passages in Jeremiah, and chapter 15 is one of those. Here we see how Jeremiah prayed and learned the secret of how he remained faithful and unfazed, even when he was being whipped.
- **Ch. 15 & Ch. 20 Commentary**
  - Use these commentaries for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **Extend Your Prayer Time**
  - 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.

We have recently made it through the longest days of darkness in our year. What are you looking forward to as we gain more daylight?

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!

*“Listen, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Protect my life, for I am faithful. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you.”*

[Psalm 86:1-2]

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

Our ability to live by the truth and God’s revealed will, not our feelings or the world’s opinions, comes from ruthless and radical honesty in prayer.

**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 20:1-10.

1. What opposition does Jeremiah face in v. 1-3? Why is this significant? *Jeremiah is beaten and put in stocks by Pashhur, the temple priest, showing how religious leaders opposed God’s true message. This highlights how faithfulness to God often brings resistance, even from those in power.*
2. In the sermon we heard, *“For every invitation from God, there will be opposition.”* How has that shown up in your life recently? *This is a good opportunity to go FIRST!*
3. How does Jeremiah express his frustration with God in Jeremiah v. 7-9? What does this reveal about his internal struggle? *Jeremiah accuses God of deceiving him and laments his suffering, but he also acknowledges that God’s word is like a fire in his heart, making it impossible to remain silent. This shows his deep struggle between discouragement and a calling he cannot ignore.*

Have someone else read aloud Jeremiah 15:15-21.

4. In Jeremiah v. 15-18, Jeremiah describes his suffering and brings a complaint before God. How do you identify with Jeremiah in what he honestly shares?
5. According to v. 19-21, how does God respond to Jeremiah’s lament? What does He require of him? *God calls Jeremiah to return to Him with unreserved trust and to speak noble words rather than worthless ones. He promises to make Jeremiah strong like a bronze wall, ensuring that although opposition will come, it will not overcome him.*
6. Jeremiah felt that God’s word was “a fire burning in my heart” (20:9). How can we develop (and help one another develop) a similar passion for God’s word? *Answers will vary: a passion for God’s word grows through consistent study, prayer, and obedience. Seeking God’s presence, meditating on Scripture, and sharing faith with others keeps the fire alive.*
7. Jeremiah was tempted to quit (20:10). As you reflect on your own faith journey, what caused you to be tempted to give up? What helped you to remain strong in the Lord?
8. Jeremiah was honest with God in his prayers. What prevents you from doing that? How can you cultivate a deeper, more honest prayer life? *Answers will vary: being vulnerable with God about doubts, frustrations, and desires helps cultivate intimacy. Journaling prayers, meditating on Psalms, and setting aside regular prayer time can deepen authenticity.*

9. In Jeremiah 15:19, God tells Jeremiah to “return” to Him with trust. What area(s) in your life do you need to return to trusting God fully? Let's be honest with one another! *This is another good opportunity to go FIRST!*
10. Jeremiah was given a renewed mission after his lament. What practical steps can we take to strengthen and encourage one another in our God-given callings?

**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.*

With God through prayer, we do not and cannot remain the same. Jeremiah 15:19b says *“If you return, I will take you back; you will stand in My presence.”* The question remains: Will we accept His invitation? Based on what we’ve discussed today, what is a step of obedience you can take? Here are a few additional questions to consider ...

- How can you **return** to God in unreserved trust?
- How can you **re-establish** your priorities of being with God in prayer?
- How is God inviting you to **renewal** ... being revived to race against the horses?

*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!*

### **Radical Honesty In Prayer**

- Living by God’s truth and will—not our feelings or the world’s opinions—requires our hearts to be anchored in Him. This kind of faithfulness starts with prayer that is honest and radically open before God. When we bring our fears, doubts, and struggles without pretense, He meets us with grace, aligns our hearts with truth, and strengthens us to walk in His ways.
- As we pray, let’s ask God to help us be completely honest with Him—laying down our worries, temptations, and weaknesses. Let’s invite Him to shape us by His truth so that we stand firm in His will, no matter what the world says.