



Discussion Guide
Race Against the Horses – Part 5
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

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“There is a difference between a fleshly stubbornness and a godly perseverance. The former insists on getting one’s will done in heaven, and the latter determines to get God’s will done on earth.”

[William Thrasher]

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 a passage that addresses the lack of repentance within Israel, Jeremiah’s life becomes a lesson in contrasts. He is faithful to God and vibrant and zealous in his service. For 23 years, he has gotten up early, daily fulfilled his calling, offered his gift to the world, and proclaimed what God told him to an unresponsive Israel.
- **Ch. 25 Commentary & Seventy Years of Exile**
 - Use the commentary and short article for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **4 Steps to Your Breakthrough**
 - 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 that you did not give up on something and the outcome was pleasantly surprising. How did that make you feel?

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!

*“Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.
Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.”*

[Proverbs 4:25-26]

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

We can learn from and emulate Jeremiah's persistence, which leads to our God-ordained purpose!

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 25:1-7. Consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation.

1. In the sermon we heard, "*Persistence in our God-appointed purpose.*" How have you seen that play out in your faith journey? *This is a good opportunity to go FIRST!*
2. How long had Jeremiah been calling Israel to repentance? How did they respond? *Jeremiah had persistently preached for 23 years, but the people refused to listen or turn from their sinful ways. This highlights their spiritual stubbornness and rejection of God's message.*
3. How does Jeremiah's persistence in proclaiming God's message contrast with Israel's refusal to change? *Jeremiah demonstrated faithfulness and grit, consistently calling people to repentance despite rejection. In contrast, Israel remained stubborn and complacent, showing no willingness to change.*
4. In the sermon, we heard that we should "*quickly recognize and say no to 'less than' living.*" How are you currently pursuing something that is "less than" what God has for you?
5. Jeremiah's commitment was to God's mission, not his personal success. How can we guard against measuring success by numbers, popularity, or ease rather than faithfulness? *Answers will vary: we should focus on discipleship, spiritual growth, and obedience rather than worldly measures like attendance and influence. True success is faithfulness to God's calling, even if the results are unseen.*
6. Jeremiah remained faithful for 23 years, even when people ignored him. Where in your life is God inviting you to be more persistent and faithful? *Answers will vary; areas might include prayer, evangelism, personal holiness, relationships, or serving in ministry. Faithfulness means trusting that God is working, even when results aren't immediate.*
7. In the sermon, there was an emphasis on "rising early" to spend time with God. How are you currently making it a daily priority to seek Him? How could you begin doing that more regularly? Let's encourage and challenge one another!
8. The people of Israel ignored God's repeated warnings. How can you have a more receptive attitude to listening for and hearing His voice? *Answers will vary: we ignore God by rationalizing sin, avoiding conviction, or prioritizing comfort over obedience. Steps might include regular reflection, accountability, and active obedience to what God is already revealing.*
9. Perseverance means moving toward need rather than comfort. What difficult or uncomfortable step might God be calling you to take in this? *This could involve forgiving someone, stepping into a new role, sharing the gospel, or letting go of a harmful habit. True faithfulness often requires sacrifice.*
10. What practical step(s) can we take together to embody Jeremiah's persistence in serving God faithfully? *Possible steps include starting a prayer challenge, committing to daily Bible reading, serving the community regularly together, or choosing a long-term mission or outreach focus to stay engaged in God's work.*

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.*

One of the most vital ways we can remain persistent and live out God's purpose is to stay intimately connected to God! As we seek the Lord and get "filled" up on a daily basis, we will discover what Paul hopes for in Ephesians 3:19 ... *"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."* Here are a few additional questions to consider in taking your next step this week:

- Where in my life am I living stuck?
- How am I neglecting God's means of grace?
- What am I filling my mind with? Does "this" help me run my race?

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!*

Persevering in Our God-Ordained Purpose

- Reflect on how Jeremiah's life was marked by faithfully following God's call despite opposition, discouragement, and suffering. Fulfilling our God-ordained purpose requires steadfast trust and perseverance. Remember, God strengthens those who remain faithful!
- As we pray, let's ask God for the perseverance to keep going, even when challenges arise. Let's seek His guidance to stay true to His calling on our lives, trusting that He is working through our faithfulness to accomplish His perfect will.