

01/25

HOME GROUP GUIDE

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

LISTEN

Listen to the sermon and read through the main passage(s)

REFLECT

Prayerfully answer the questions below

DISCUSS

Meet with your group to discuss

RESPOND

Apply the truth of God's word to your life

BACKGROUND:

Jeremiah 17:5-10 confronts the modern assumption that we can trust our own hearts by exposing the heart as "deceitful above all things and desperately sick." While our intuitions and desires sometimes lead us toward good, they just as often lead us toward selfishness, error, and sin. In both Jeremiah's day and ours, the core problem is misplaced trust in self.

This idea shows up today in the concept of expressive individualism. It holds that we are fundamentally good (though corrupted by society and experience) and that true happiness comes from expressing our inner desires. But this framework asks the heart to provide what only God can give, elevating the self to the throne while sidelining the Creator. For many, the challenge is not that we reject God outright but that we subtly replace his voice with our own. We might be tempted to believe that the meaning of life is self-discovery. But the gospel does not exist to help us discover who we already are, but to remake us into the image of Christ.

OPEN:

1. When you hear the phrase "be true to yourself," what does it usually mean?

REFLECT:

2. Read Jeremiah 17:5-8. What does it mean to "trust in man and make flesh (your) strength"? Why is this way of life "cursed"?

3. How does a desert shrub symbolize a life that doesn't rely on God? Conversely, how does a tree planted beside water represent a blessed and resilient life?

4. Read Jeremiah 17:9-10. How does the text portray the human heart? How does this depiction differ from the way most people think of "the heart"?

APPLY:

5. Our culture emphasizes looking inward to find strength before looking upward to God. Why do many people today find conforming to God's standards to be oppressive? How can surrendering to God's design bring a sense of freedom?

6. How can external authorities like Scripture and the church help us thrive "like a tree planted by water?" What are some ways we can help others do the same?

7. Where do you tend to look for security in yourself instead of trusting God? What is one practical thing you can do this week to shift from looking to self to trusting him?

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