

## Going Deeper with God Jeremiah 17

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I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

~ Eph 3:16–17 ~

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

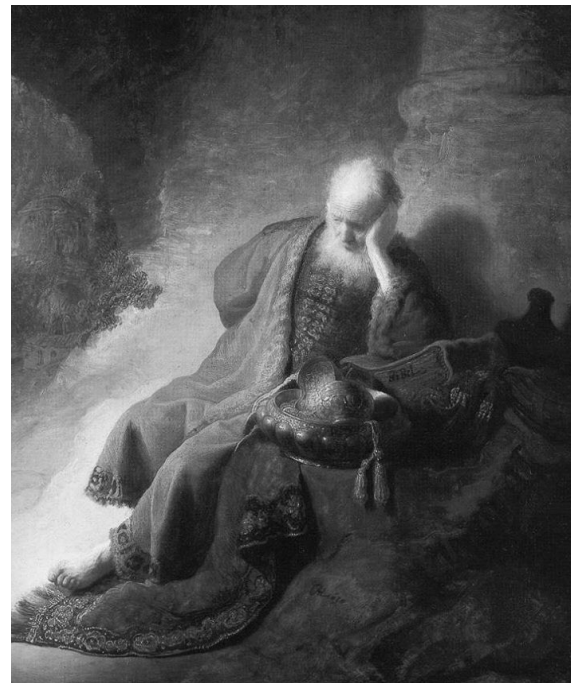
~ 1 John 4:16 ~

**Going deeper with God is a worthy pursuit, but how do we get there?** Read and study more? Commit to spend more time in prayer and meditation? DO MORE? Is that any guarantee that we will end up with a deeper understanding and experience of God's heart? Is that even the goal?

- **Israel's brokenness...** <sup>1</sup> "The sin of Judah is inscribed with an iron chisel— engraved with a diamond point on their stony hearts and on the corners of their altars. <sup>2</sup> Even their children go to worship at their pagan altars and Asherah poles, beneath every green tree and on every high hill. <sup>3</sup> So I will hand over my holy mountain— along with all your wealth and treasures and your pagan shrines— as plunder to your enemies, for sin runs rampant in your land. <sup>4</sup> The wonderful possession I have reserved for you will slip from your hands. I will tell your enemies to take you as captives to a foreign land. For my anger blazes like a fire that will burn forever." (Jer 17:1–4 NLT-SE)

- **The Prophet Jeremiah**

- Jeremiah served as a prophet of God **through the rule of five kings** of Judah (Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah). He continued to prophesy against Judah during the time of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- His prophetic ministry extended over **40 years**, during which he wrote both Jeremiah and Lamentations. Some of the other prophets of God during the time of Jeremiah included Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Daniel and Ezekiel.
- Jeremiah's generation saw the tearing down of the pagan high places of idol worship that dated back to King Solomon. At the start of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, Judah's **King Josiah was only 21 years old and had begun to make major reforms** to bring Judah back to proper religious observance.
- Five years later, **the long-missing Book of the Law was discovered** hidden in the temple in Jerusalem. Jeremiah devoted himself to preaching "the words of this covenant" to the people in Jerusalem and throughout Judah.
- Jeremiah had hoped for a permanent spiritual revival, but tragedy came when righteous **Josiah died** suddenly at the young age of 39.



- Ultimately, Josiah's reforms would not be enough to preserve Judah and Jerusalem from God's punishment because of the sins of Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh. **Judgment would now come** upon the Israel for the sins of the people. Jeremiah would announce that judgement.
- Very soon after Josiah died—within the 11 years of King Jehoiakim's short reign—Babylon attacked Judah's cities repeatedly until the **total destruction of Jerusalem and the collapse of the Jewish nation**.
- **The condition of God's People**
  - **What was the condition of their hearts?** *They had turned their backs on God and His Word to worship idols.*
  - **What were they doing that was so detestable to the Lord?** *Erecting idols for public worship, sacrificing to those idols, even sacrificing their children!*
  - **What was the “wonderful possession” God said was slipping through their hands?** *Their inheritance; the land, the relationship with God, favor over their enemies, etc.*
  - **How would Jeremiah's prophecy prepare them for their exile to Babylon?** *His prophecy would prepare them for captivity, but would also **give them hope for the future**:*
    - God would bring a remnant back to Judah to **rebuild Jerusalem and the temple**.
    - God would **raise up a descendant of David** to serve God and guide His people—a reference to Jesus Christ's coming.
    - God would bring a remnant back to Israel a second time and would **reunite the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel together as a unified people** in the Kingdom of God.
    - God would **heal** the spiritual wounds of His people, **restore** His covenant with them and **build up** and **plant** His people Israel again.
      - <sup>6</sup> I will watch over and care for them, and I will bring them back here again. I will build them up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not uproot them. <sup>7</sup> I will give them hearts that recognize me as the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly. (Jer 24:6–7 NLT-SE)
- **Trusting in humans...** <sup>5</sup> This is what the LORD says: “Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts away from the LORD. <sup>6</sup> They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with no hope for the future. They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty land. (Jer 17:5–6 NLT-SE)
  - Two words stand out in this whole section of scripture...**trust** and **heart**...in whom were they putting their trust and were their hearts turned toward God or away from Him?
  - **Trust** (196)... Hebrew, **batach**: to trust, put confidence in, to rely on; to be confident.
    - **Trust in the LORD and do good**. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. (Psa 37:3 NLT-SE)
    - <sup>5</sup> **Trust in the LORD with all your heart**; do not depend on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup> Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Prov 3:5–6 NLT-SE)
    - Because you have trusted in your wealth and skill, **you will be taken captive**. (Jer 48:7 NLT-SE)

- I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that **all who put their trust in me** will no longer remain in the dark. (John 12:46 NLT-SE)
- Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you **if you continue to trust in his kindness**. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. (Rom 11:22 NLT-SE)
- **Heart** (558)... Hebrew, **lēb**: heart; the inner person, self, the seat of thought and emotion; conscience, courage, mind, understanding.
  - Be careful. **Don't let your heart be deceived** so that you **turn away from the LORD** and **serve and worship other gods**. (Deut 11:16 NLT-SE)
  - <sup>3</sup> Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? <sup>4</sup> **Only those whose hands and hearts are pure**, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. (Psa 24:3–4 NLT-SE)
  - **Guard your heart** above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (Prov 4:23 NLT-SE)
  - You are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This “letter” is **written** not with pen and ink, but **with the Spirit of the living God**. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but **on human hearts**. (2 Cor 3:3 NLT-SE)
- The very thing you trust in is what usually has your heart! **Who has your heart?**
- **Trusting in God...** <sup>7</sup> “But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence. <sup>8</sup> They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit. (Jer 17:7–8 NLT-SE)
  - Here we go again, **trust** and **heart**.
  - It's not difficult to tell where you have placed your trust; it's the very thing you've made your source of **hope** and **confidence**.
- **The heart of the matter...** <sup>9</sup> “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? <sup>10</sup> But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.” (Jer 17:9–10 NLT-SE)
  - God created our **hearts** to be bigger than our **heads**
    - **Making God me-sized...** We can get to the place in our lives where our knowledge and understanding about “the Christian life” is actually sufficient. We have just reduced God to our size!
    - **Opportunities to trust God...** We will always need areas in our lives that are unexplainable or out of our control. We need them because they give us an opportunity to trust God. Application: “As you're understanding increases, take more risks. Keep the mystery in your life!” **Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart...** “Let everything about you be anchored into who He is.” ~ Bill Johnson

- **How many times is God's presence in the room...** and instead of giving into Him, letting Him have His way with us, we hesitate to trust Him with our hearts and miss an opportunity to go deeper?
- **Healing the sick vs. praying for the sick...** <sup>5</sup> Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: "Don't go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but only to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. <sup>7</sup> Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! (Matt 10:5–8 NLT-SE)
- **Calling vs. Commissioning...** It is usually much easier to receive an assignment from the Lord than a calling. We can fit a new assignment into our lives with a little adjustment, but receiving a calling from the Lord can really mess up your plans!
- **Heidi Baker...** Poured her life out for 17 years, birthed 3 churches, 2 on life-support. She walks into the Toronto Airport Vineyard with double pneumonia, a word of knowledge is given, she has a divine encounter with the presence of God, and is **instantly healed**. In the next 10 years, 10,000 churches are planted where the dead are raised, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk. How is it that after that one encounter with the Lord, everything changes? **The truth is, we need ongoing, deeper, encounters with God where we have to trust Him at deeper and deeper levels!**