



# DIGGING DEEPER – WEEK 4

## *Somewhere Along the Road*

Jeremiah's journey with God looked more like a marathon than a sprint. It required endurance, training, and other people cheering him on for him to make it to the finish line. Jeremiah felt alone at times, just as we all do, but he looked to those who had run before him as examples. In addition, he had spiritual running partners along the road. The legacy of his race also left a model for those who came behind him. Let's consider each of these aspects of Jeremiah's journey.


First, Jeremiah studied the writings of the prophets who went before him. His writings reveal the particular influence of the prophet Hosea. One source observes, "Most commentators remark at length on the influence of Hosea on Jeremiah. Because of the sorrows of their lives, they have been called the martyr prophets."<sup>1</sup> Though Hosea prophesied one hundred years before Jeremiah's ministry, Jeremiah could identify with him greatly because they both spoke God's harsh messages for an unrepentant people just before they were taken into exile. Hosea's words chastised the nation of Israel, which was then taken captive by Assyria. Jeremiah mirrored Hosea as God's mouthpiece to Judah just before Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. Though Jeremiah felt alone and isolated in his ministry, he looked to one who had gone before him and faithfully carried out God's work in his life.

We, too, need to consider those who have trod the path we walk on now. Others who had similar experiences can challenge and encourage us. The great reformer Martin Luther struggled with depression. Joni Erickson Tada has pursued God with physical challenges. Gladys Aylward trusted God through cultural barriers. Many others have walked with God while being involved in politics, working through childhood abuse, or just living through the everyday blahs. Find a woman with circumstances or experiences similar to yours who has gone before you, whether she is still living or has left a legacy you can read about. Others have traveled our road; God wants us to seek out encouragement and wisdom just as Jeremiah did.

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Second, along the path Jeremiah looked around to see who was running beside him. Was there anyone else who was disgusted with the greed, adultery, and rampant sin of the people of Judah? He found a friend in his scribe, Baruch. Baruch worked closely with Jeremiah, which sometimes put him in danger. They had to hide together while facing arrest for going against the king to get God's messages to the people (Jeremiah 36:26). When Baruch whined about all their troubles, Jeremiah reminded him to seek God's glory and not his own (Jeremiah 45:1-5).

We, too, need to find others who are following God at a similar pace. When life gets tough, a godly friend can stand with us through difficult times. A good friend also helps pull us along when we start slowing our pace or going the wrong way. In *Tender Mercy for a Mother's Soul*, Angela Thomas Guffey reminds us to find someone to run beside. She writes, "Are you being held back in the pack of 'slow runners' when your soul longs to pull away from the herd and quicken the pace?"<sup>2</sup> We need to fix our eyes on Christ and run toward Him with all our might. Then, once we are at a steady pace, we must look to the right and the left and see what women in our lives are running beside us. Everyone needs a "Baruch running buddy" to finish the race.

Finally, Jeremiah left a model for those who would follow. After the majority of his race was over, others took him against his will to Egypt where he ultimately died; yet his legacy lived on for those who would read his words. Daniel read Jeremiah's words to help him understand God's timeline of captivity (Daniel 9:2). Jesus saw the fulfillment of some of Jeremiah's specific prophecies lived out in regard to Herod and Judas (Matthew 2:17; 27:9). We also are part of that legacy. As we study and read about Jeremiah's life, we can learn from his failures and faith.

God may not be using you as His instrument to speak prophetic messages and pen His Word, but He has plans for you (Jeremiah 29:11). Remember that your choices, depth of faith, and obedience affect others. What will those who follow you on the path find? Will they be encouraged by your faithfulness? What legacy are you leaving? Will your shoeprints show your hot pursuit of God or your aimless wandering?

Jeremiah considered the impact of his life (Jeremiah 5:31). We would do well to do the same.

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1. Frank Gaebelin, *The Expositors Bible Commentary Volume 6* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 368.
  2. Angela Thomas Guffey, *Tender Mercy for a Mother's Soul* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 192.

