

Dream Again

OVERVIEW OF THE SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

A note to the facilitator:

Thank you for leading a small group through this six-week experience of our “Dream Again” sermons series. There will be 4 weekly sermons, beginning with September 12 - October 3. Our small group experiences, that are related to this series will be 6 weekly sessions, beginning with September 12 - October 17. This is a brief introduction to help you use this resource to stimulate your group’s learning.

Four of the six small group sessions are tied to that week’s sermon—both its Scripture text and its key points. The final two group sessions aren’t tied to a specific sermon.

Each session has **three stages**:

- 1. Scripture text.** This is a passage from the Book of Jeremiah for your group to read together. Read it aloud yourself, have someone else read it, or take turns each reading a few verses at a time.
- 2. “See It.”** These are five groups of questions for discussion. Each question grouping has a starter question with one or two follow-up questions. You don’t have to ask every question; use your judgment as to which ones to hit on. However, be sure to do the fifth question group before you move on, because those questions focus on personal application.
- 3. “Be It.”** This is a tool (a personal exercise) that enables a person to put the lesson into practice in their own life. It requires a few minutes for people to work on their own followed by group discussion. The tool is critical for turning the discussion into a true learning experience.

Each session’s materials can be printed on a single sheet of paper (front and back) and shared with every member of your group. (Aside from these instructions, there is not a separate “leader version” of the questions and tools.)



Dream Again

Session #1: Discover Your Divine Design

Text: Jeremiah 1:1-10

1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. 2 The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3 and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

The Call of Jeremiah

4 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." 6 "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." 7 But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. 9 Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

Big Thought: You are more unique than you think.

Small Group Session

See It Small Group Questions:

- 1** What do you think it means to be unique?
 - Do you think most people believe that they are unique? Why do you think that?
- 2** How does God tell Jeremiah in this passage that Jeremiah is unique?
 - How does Jeremiah object to God's thoughts about his uniqueness?
- 3** What does Jeremiah's unique design have to do with his unique destiny?
 - On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy is it to believe that you have a unique destiny, as Jeremiah did?
- 4** If your life was an utterly unique creation of God, how would you know?
 - If somebody was looking at your life from the outside, would they say you are living it uniquely? Why do you think that?
- 5** Knowing your divine design is like experiencing the totality of a solar eclipse. How do you think your life would be different if you experienced the "totality" of knowing the true you?
 - What barriers might be keeping you from experiencing "totality"?
 - What might you have to do differently to take a step toward totality over the next few weeks?

What's your biggest takeaway from this passage?

Dream Again

Session #1: Discover Your Divine Design

Big Thought: You are more unique than you think.

Text: Jeremiah 1:1-10

Be It - Small Group Exercise: Divine Design and Divine Destiny

Take a few minutes to write your answers to the following, then share with each other.

What are five things about you that display your unique design? (These might include abilities, personality traits, experiences, and passions.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are five features of the unique destiny you hope God has for you? (These might be contributions to the world, legacies you leave, goals, and dreams.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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Session #2: Recover Your Kingdom Calling

Text: Jeremiah 20:7-11

⁷ You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. ⁸ Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long. ⁹ But if I say, "I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot. ¹⁰ I hear many whispering, "Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let's denounce him!" All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying "Perhaps he will be deceived; then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him." ¹¹ But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced; their dishonor will never be forgotten.

Big Thought: Embrace the place of God's calling grace

Small Group Session

See It Small Group Questions:

- 1** How is Jeremiah struggling with his calling in **Jeremiah 20:7-11**?
 - What part of Jeremiah's words do you resonate with most? Why?
- 2** What are some of the things that you can do with your life that you're doing right now?
 - What are the things you can do that might be in the near future for you?
 - What do you think you must do?
- 3** What core convictions do you see in Jeremiah?
 - How does Jeremiah respond when his convictions are violated by the world around him?
- 4** What are a few of your core convictions?
 - Talk about a time that sticking to one of your convictions paid off.
- 5** Who have you known personally who lives out their calling and convictions well?
 - What about that person's life do you want to make part of your own life?
 - How would you go about doing that?

What's your biggest takeaway from this passage?

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Session #2: Recover Your Kingdom Calling

Big Thought: Embrace the place of God’s calling grace

Text: Jeremiah 20:7-11

Be It - Small Group Exercise: Calling and Convictions

Take 15 minutes to brainstorm ideas that might fill in the blanks below, then fill in your best ones. Discuss them together.

1. Complete the following sentence: “I exist to honor God and help others by _____ing _____.”

2. Name the four deepest convictions in your life.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

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Session #3: Live Out God's Dream

Text: Jeremiah 29:4-14

⁴ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." ⁸ Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹ They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord.

¹⁰ This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place." ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Big Thought: Dream to live if you want to live the dream

Small Group Session

See It Small Group Questions:

- 1** What is one bad result that can come from fantasizing about the future?
 - When have you seen this play out in someone's life (or even your own)?
- 2** What are the features of God's dream for his people in **Jeremiah 29:10-14**?
 - If you were in the exiles' shoes, do you think God's dream would sound realistic or more like fantasy? Why do you think that?
- 3** What are the features of God's plan for his people in verses 4-7?
 - In 1 Peter 1:1, the Apostle Peter calls ordinary Christians "exiles" wherever they live. What are three ways we can practice God's plan for the exiles of Jeremiah's day in our own lives today?
- 4** In your own words, what is the difference between dreaming and planning?
 - Are you better at dreaming or better at planning? Why do you say so?
- 5** Have you ever tried to get better at dreaming or at planning, but it didn't go well? If so, what went wrong?
 - If there was someone in your life to help you become a better dreamer or a better planner, what is the best thing they could do to help you?
 - Who would you ask to help you that way?

What's your biggest takeaway from this passage?

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Session #3: Live Out God's Dream

Big Thought: Dream to live if you want to live the dream

Text: Jeremiah 29:4-14

Be It - Small Group Exercise: Confess and Dream

Take 15 minutes to complete the table below. In each cell, jot down a list of one to three brief notes. In the end, you'll have what's good, what's not so good, and what you dream for each area of your life.

| Area of Life | What's Good Now | What's Not So Good Now | My Dream Three Years from Now |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Personal Wellness | | | |
| Relationships | | | |
| Work | | | |
| Recreation | | | |

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Session #5: Uncover The True You

Text: Jeremiah 4:1-4

¹“If you, Israel, will return, then return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, ² and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ then the nations will invoke blessings by him and in him they will boast.” ³ This is what the Lord says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem: “Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. ⁴Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire because of the evil you have done— burn with no one to quench it.”

Big Thought: Breakdown is the pathway to breakthrough

Small Group Session

See It Small Group Questions:

- 1** Where have you seen people become a lesser version of themselves?
 - What did their journey to a lesser self-look like?
- 2** How is Israel becoming a lesser version of itself in this passage?
 - How has Israel's lesser version of itself damaged its people and derailed their destiny?
- 3** Why does sin involve seeing God as less than he is?
 - Is it a sin to be a lesser version of ourselves? Why do you think that?
- 4** Jeremiah extends an offer of God's grace and at the same time warns of God's wrath. Which makes more sense to you—his grace or his wrath? Why is that?
 - What lesson could you learn from the side of God that makes you less comfortable?
- 5** What do you think it means to return to God?
 - What might it look like for a person who has settled for a lesser version of themselves to
 - Do you sense a nudge to return to God yourself? What has to change for you to do that?

What's your biggest takeaway from this passage?

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Session #5: Uncover The True You

Big Thought: Breakdown is the pathway to breakthrough

Text: Jeremiah 4:1-4

Be It - Small Group Exercise: Return to the True You

Take a few minutes to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very little temptation, 5 being very great temptation) which false version of yourself is most likely to influence you. Write down reasons for the especially tempting ones. Then discuss as a group.

| Versions of Me | Rating | Reasons |
|---|--------|---------|
| The Expectations of others (The me others expect me to be) | | |
| The Imitation of Success (The me I think I want to be) | | |
| The Infatuation with Money (The me they pay me to be) | | |
| The Preoccupation of Life (The me time makes of me) | | |
| The Projection of Self (The me I want to be) | | |

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Session #6: Invest for God's Best

Text: Jeremiah 32:6-15

⁶A Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me: 7 Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.'

⁸ "Then, just as the Lord had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.' "I knew that this was the word of the Lord; ⁹ so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. ¹¹ I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy— ¹² and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard. ¹³ "In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: ¹⁴ 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. ¹⁵ For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.'

Big Thought: Stop asking God to change your environment, and start allowing God to change your investment

Small Group Session

See It Small Group Questions:

1

Where have you seen people make the best of a bad environment?

- Why do some people overcome when faced with difficult circumstances while others give up?

2

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah to tell him to buy his cousin's field. Do you believe God gives people instructions like that today? Why or why not?

- Where or how does a person learn to hear God like that?

3

When have you sensed God requiring you to do something that in the circumstances didn't seem to make sense?

- What happened next?

4

When you're faced with a difficult situation, which is a bigger temptation for you—changing what you're doing when you shouldn't or not changing when you should?

- When have you seen this play out in your life (a specific example)?

5

Imagine you could talk to yourself ten years ago. You can't tell yourself what choices to make or anything about your future, but you can give yourself advice about how to make good choices. What would you say?

- In what area of your life do you need to take your own advice today?

What's your biggest takeaway from this passage?

Session #6: Invest for God's Best

Big Thought: Stop asking God to change your environment, and start allowing God to change your investment

Text: Jeremiah 32:16-15

Be It - Small Group Exercise: Investment Matrix

Put one X in each column of the table (at most two if there's a tie). Then answer the questions that follow. After that, discuss with your group.

| | Where do I seem to have the most going for me right now? | Where am I investing the most effort and attention right now? | Where do I need to see the most improvement three years from now? |
|----------------|--|---|---|
| Spiritually | | | |
| Relationally | | | |
| Physically | | | |
| Intellectually | | | |

- 1 Do you see a need to shift where you are investing the most effort and attention?
- 2 How can you leverage the area that is going best for you to boost the area that needs the most improvement?