

When You Feel Inadequate



"7 The Lord replied, 'Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!'" Jer. 1:7-8 NLT

Do you ever feel reluctant to serve God, get involved in a church ministry, or start a gospel conversation with someone because you feel inadequate? Do people ever make you feel like you do not measure up or are not good enough? In Jeremiah chapter one, God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet, but Jeremiah feels inadequate. He thinks he is too young and not bold enough. Jeremiah chapter one can help us when we feel inadequate, inferior, incapable, or not good enough.

Central Lesson:
God makes people who feel inadequate to be adequate!

1. God made you for a **PURPOSE** (1:5).

"4 The Lord gave me this message: 5 'I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations'" (61:1-2 NLT).

The Hebrew word for *"formed"* means—to form (as a potter shaping something from clay), fashion, or create. Also, Jeremiah was *"appointed"* to be a prophet. All of us have a purpose in life from God. However, we can miss living out our purpose by living in sin, rejecting Christ as our Savior, and avoiding God's purpose for our lives. *Are you missing out on God's plan for your life?*

The Life Application Study Bible explains: **"God knew you, as he knew Jeremiah, long before you were born or even conceived. He thought about you and planned for you. When you feel discouraged or in adequate, remember that God has always thought of you as valuable and that he has a purpose in mind for you"** (1:5).

Furthermore, every Christian has a *common* purpose and a *unique* purpose. (1) Every Christian has the **common** purpose of winning the lost and making disciples (see Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20). (2) Also, every Christian has a **unique** purpose that is for them individually and different from other believers. God gives every Christian at least one spiritual gift (see 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:4-8) to accomplish the unique purpose for the believer's life. Study and discover your spiritual gifts, and you will have an indication of God's unique purpose for your life.

2. God makes the inadequate to be **ADEQUATE** (1:6-10).

"6 'O Sovereign Lord,' I said, 'I can't speak for you! I'm too young!' 7 The Lord replied, 'Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!' 9 Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, 'Look, I have put my words in your mouth! 10 Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow. Others you must build up and plant.'"

The Life Application Study Bible explains: **"Often people struggle with new challenges because they lack self-confidence, feeling that they have inadequate ability, training, or experience. Jeremiah thought he was 'to Young' and inexperience to be God's spokesman to the world. But God promise to be with him. We should not allow feelings of inadequacy to keep us from obeying God. He will always be with us. If God gives you a job to do, he will provide all you need to do it."**

We must make an important clarification. Even though God promised to *protect* and *be with* Jeremiah, God did *not* insulate him from experiencing troubles and hardships. The story of Jeremiah shows that he was put in jail, insulted, accused of being a traitor, and many other hardships. However, God was with Jeremiah, strengthened him, and enabled him to persevere and finish his calling. In the same way, God does not keep us from life's storms, but he will take us through them.

3. God works **THROUGH** his submissive people (1:11-16).

God uses two object lessons, visual aids, to speak to Jeremiah. Notice that God indicates what *he will do* through Jeremiah's preaching and confrontation of Judah's leaders and people. Notice the pronoun *"I"*.

- (1) First, the **branch** from an **almond tree**—the **first** tree to bud in **spring**—symbolizes the **nearness** and **certainty** of God's judgment upon Judah's sins (1:11-12). *"11 Then the Lord said to me, 'Look, Jeremiah! What do you see?' And I replied, 'I see a branch from an almond tree.' 12 And the Lord said, 'That's right, and it means that I am watching, and I will certainly carry out all my plans.'"*
- (2) The **boiling pot** spilling from the **North** referring to the coming conquest of Babylon because of Judah's idolatry (1:13-16). *"13 Then the Lord spoke to me again and asked, 'What do you see now?' And I replied, 'I see a pot of boiling water, spilling from the North.' 14 'Yes,' the Lord said, 'for terror from the North will boil out on the people of this land. 15 Listen! I am calling the armies of the kingdoms of the North to come to Jerusalem. I, the Lord, have spoken!'"*

God will work through us if we surrender ourselves to him. Someone has said that God is not looking for ability but availability. *Are you available?*

4. God calls us to **RESPOND** to his calling on our lives (1:17-19).

"17 'Get up and prepare for action. Go out and tell them everything I tell you to say... 18 For see, today I have made you strong like a fortified city that cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall. You will stand against the whole land"

God called Jeremiah to respond to the challenge and God's call upon his life. God promised to make Jeremiah strong as a **fortified city**, an **iron pillar**, and a **bronze wall** (v.18). Jeremiah would need God's strength to endure the people's hostile response to his message. But God would give Jeremiah the **victory** and he would **fulfill God's calling** upon his life. *Are you responding to God's call upon your life?*

Central Lesson: God makes people who feel inadequate to be adequate!

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.