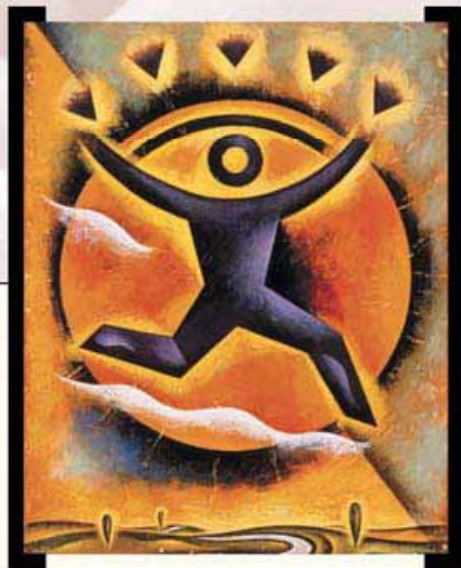


[A Devotional Study *on* God's Care and Deliverance]

LORD,
Heal
My Hurts



KAY ARTHUR

LORD,
HEAL MY
HURTS

A DEVOTIONAL STUDY
on GOD'S CARE *and* DELIVERANCE

K A Y
A R T H U R



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INTRODUCTION

We are reeling in pain. It's a hurt that runs deep, a hurt that doesn't ever seem to go away. The memory of the things done to us or by us stunts our growth, cripples our walk, infects our relationships. And we think this is the way it will always be. We'll never be whole, never be what we could have been if we hadn't been hurt the way we were.

Possibly you have gone from counselor to counselor, yet deep inside the wounds still fester, seeping their poison into the depths of your being. The venom affects your thinking, your reasoning. You live with "if onlys" and "what ifs," and you covet the lives of others who have not walked the dark corridors that you have walked.

Will relief never come? Will the scars continue to mar the beauty of what might have been? Will relationships with others always be skewed because of where you have been or what has been done to you?

It need not be, Beloved, for God's name is Jehovah-rapha—He is the Lord God who heals. And through this devotional study, He is able to send His Word and heal you from all your distresses. He has done it for thousands upon thousands who have learned these precepts and ordered their lives accordingly, and He will do it for you. That is why this devotional study was written. It has stood the test of time and brought healing in the worst of situations—and all because of what His Word says about our hurts.

I cannot wait to see and to hear what God does again as you cry, "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed...save me, O God, and I will be saved." His ear is open to our cry, His mighty arm ready to rescue, His potter's hands ready to reshape us and make our scars part of His exquisite design—one of beauty.

This is a study, Beloved, that you must *do*. This is not a book simply to be read. It won't work without the doing—the participating—the allowing of His healing Word to take hold in your heart and mind. So

study well. Study prayerfully. Study expectantly. And watch the healing that will come as you believe your God and do what He says.

It is a study you can do alone—in fact, *Lord, Heal My Hurts* is often assigned to individuals by Christian counselors as part of their counseling. But it is also a study that can be done in groups and even become a ministry for you, Beloved of God, as you desire to reach the hurting of this world and see them healed. If there is that possibility of your using this as a group study in which you would be a facilitator, then read “Guidelines for Group Use” in the “Study Resources” section at the back of this book, where you’ll find other valuable tools to enhance this study.

For many, the blessing of this study has been enhanced by the companion video and audio teaching tapes. For more information on these, simply call Precept Ministries International at our toll-free number (1-800-763-8280) and let one of our staff members help you. It would be their pleasure. We also provide training if you would like to develop your skills in handling the Word of God more accurately or in leading others in group studies designed to minister to people of all ages at any level of commitment while respecting the restraints on their time. We’re known as “The Inductive Study People: everybody, everywhere, any time, any place, any language, any age. One message: the Bible. One method: inductive.” Please don’t hesitate to call us.

Finally, let me share my vision—it’s the possibility of a new avenue of ministry for you, Beloved of God...

*A new beginning—
An avenue of ministry—
A sense of doing something that has eternal value*

These are three things I think are so important for you and for me. There’s so much to learn, to know, to experience, to do—and we never want to lose sight of that. To do so would be to miss what God has for us. To fall short of the tremendous potential of our lives—a potential that is ours because we are His, because we are children of the Creator of the

Universe, indwelt by His divine Spirit and given the mind of Christ. You and I, Beloved, are God's workmanship gifted by the Spirit of God and created in Christ Jesus unto good works that would absolutely stagger our minds if we were to see them before they ever happened.

And what has God put into your hands? What are you holding and reading right now? Is it an accident? A coincidence? No! You are holding a devotional study that first and foremost will be the beginning of a new depth of understanding about God's deep healing that is available for every hurt we have ever known.

God is going to speak to you because through this book you are going to come face to face with the living Word of God—the Word that not only discerns the thoughts and intentions of your heart, but becomes the means of throwing His light on the direction your life is taking so you can know with absolute confidence where you are headed. If you listen to what He says—and by that I mean ordering your life accordingly—then there is, in a sense, a new beginning...of understanding, of purpose. A new level of Christlikeness is attained. You will be, as Paul would say, pressing on and attaining that for which Jesus Christ laid hold of you.

Which brings me to my next point—an avenue of ministry. What you have learned, God intends for you to share. I have a vision, and you, Beloved, are part of that vision. Our Lord's commission in Matthew 28 was that we make disciples of all men—that we teach them to observe all that He has commanded us. Acts 1 tells us that when we are saved and receive the Holy Spirit we become His witnesses—yet the question is often, “How?”

Here is the how. This “Lord” book contains truths every human being needs to know and to apply to his or her life. These are precepts for life; through them we will gain understanding and, as the psalmist says, “hate every false way” (Psalm 119:104). We hate it because it is false rather than true, and it is truth that sets us apart, sets us free.

So what is my vision for you, my friend? It is that you go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to direct you to at least one other person—but preferably at least ten—and that you, along with them, study this book

together. You may not be a teacher, but you can be the group's facilitator. You can take the questions you'll find at the end of each chapter and use them to stimulate a discussion among those whom the Lord has brought together in answer to your prayer. These are those who will be part of your crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you watch them learn and grow in the knowledge of God and of His Word, you will experience the humbling joy of knowing that you have been used of God. That what you have done has eternal value. That your life and God-given gifts have not been wasted. That your work will live on—that the grace of God poured out on you was not poured out in vain, for you have labored in the strength of His grace.

So as you facilitate a group using this book, you need to watch for and encourage others in your group to do as you have done—to take what they have learned and impart it to another as you did with them. Think of the multiplication that will happen! Do you realize, Beloved, that this is the way we can reach our neighborhoods, our communities, our nation, and beyond? Think of the transformation that will take place among all those people today who are so interested in “the spiritual” but won't step inside a church. Think—just think!—what is going to happen!

The time is now. The hour is short. Stop and pray right now and ask God what He would have you to do. He will show you, because He is God and because such prayers are in accordance with His will. As you step out and begin, just know that if you will step out in faith, God will give you an avenue of ministry, person by person or group by group, that will not only stagger your mind but absolutely delight your soul.

I cannot wait to hear what God does in and through you, my friend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kay". The signature is written in black ink and features elegant, flowing loops and flourishes, particularly in the 'K' and 'y'.

WHY AM I HURTING?

— D A Y O N E —

My platinum wedding band rolled round and round on the rec room floor, making a mockery of what was taking place. Tom was on the floor, groping, looking for my diamond engagement ring in the shadows of the table lamps. As I stood in the corner of the room, looking on the scene like a detached spectator, my lips were taut. No crying. No more hysterical sobbing. I was beyond that. As far as I was concerned, it was over.

The wedding band had finally stopped spinning in circles. It lay dormant—just like our marriage. Tom was still looking for the engagement ring. I had thrown it at him along with my wedding band. He was murmuring something about how expensive the ring was. That made me sick!

I thought, *You care more about that stupid, expensive diamond ring than you do about me! Don't you know what has happened? I have taken off my wedding band! The one you had engraved with the words 'Our Love Is Eternal.' Don't you realize—hasn't it occurred to you, Tom Goetz—that it has never been off my hand since the day of our wedding?*

The quarrel had begun in our bedroom. I didn't want to go back, so I stayed downstairs. For the first time in our six years of marriage, Tom had slapped me. I'd cut him down with my tongue. It was too much for him. He just couldn't handle it. He lost control. As the warm, salty

blood from my nose touched my lips, I told Tom it was over—finished. He had followed me downstairs, pleading. Now he went to bed, alone.

Whether Tom slept or not, I don't know. I only know that the next day we called our priest. It was cut and dried. He thought we ought to separate. I would take our young sons, Tom and Mark, and move back to Arlington, Virginia, where I had friends. It was that simple—on the outside. Inside an unseen but very real wound began to fester. Its poison slowly began seeping into my soul. If the wound had been mine alone, it wouldn't have been nearly as bad. I didn't know how badly the boys were hurting...they never cried in front of me.

My friend, have you ever contemplated divorce?

Have you ever wanted to walk away from a relationship? To say, "Forget it; it's not worth it"?

Have you ever hurt so badly that you thought the pain would never go away? That it would be easier to die?

Or have you ever been so horribly hurt that you wished, or even prayed, that the person who had hurt you would just die?

Are you hurting...emotionally, spiritually, psychologically? Or do you have a mate, a child, a relative, or a friend who hurts?

What's the answer, the solution? Is there one? Are some condemned to hurt forever? Are there some who have wounds so great that they can never be healed? Or *is* there healing for what hurts...no matter how bad the hurt?

There is. Whether you believe it or not, you are beloved of God. He desires your wholeness, your healing. About twenty-five hundred years ago, God had the prophet Jeremiah record His burden for His people who were hurting.

Listen to the anguish of Jeremiah's heart: "For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me" (Jeremiah 8:21).

Why the anguish? Was it because of the greatness of their wound? No, Beloved, it was because there was a cure for their hurts, and they were unaware of it. Or perhaps it was because they knew where to turn but refused for some reason or the other.

Listen to Jeremiah's cry of dismay: "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?" (Jeremiah 8:22).

A balm in Gilead...a physician there...and healing for every wound of your soul! This, my friend, is what this devotional study is all about.

I cannot wait to see, and hopefully to hear, what God does through this study in relation to healing what hurts you. Study diligently. You will be awed by what God will do as you believe His Word and live accordingly. I know. I have been healed, and so have many, many others.

May I make a suggestion? Find the book of Jeremiah in your Bible. If you don't know where it is, there is a table of contents in the front of the Bible. Look under the Old Testament books until you see Jeremiah and the page number on which it begins. Now, why don't you read a chapter or two? As you do, ask God to give you understanding regarding His people whom He refers to as Judah and what they were experiencing and why. If you are new to the Bible, don't let reading it overwhelm you. You will find yourself learning more and more about the Bible as we progress through our quest for healing.

— D A Y T W O —

I never thought I would go through a divorce. There had always been only one thing I ever wanted in life, and that was to be happily married for ever and ever...just like my mom and dad.

I wanted to be wildly in love...just like in the movies. I wanted an all-American husband who loved his wife and children. I wanted us all to live happily ever after. I would have been content to stay at home, to be the

wife of a successful businessman. To raise my all-American boys, to dance away the weekends in the arms of my husband, laughing and enjoying the company of our friends.

Now after six years of marriage, the dream was over. My dream had become a nightmare. And it hurt. I had failed. The one and only thing I had ever wanted—to be happily married to one man until death parted us at an old age—was over. It had come and gone. I was only twenty-six years old.

Oh it hurt! But not as badly as it was going to! I was so self-centered, so bent on my own happiness that I never really comprehended how badly it had hurt Tom. He didn't want a divorce. We just followed bad advice given by someone in a clerical collar. Once we were separated, the divorce seemed to follow naturally.

Tom hated living alone. He would call me and tell me that he was going to a psychiatrist. When I asked why, he said that he couldn't forget the awful things I had said to him.

From time to time when we talked, he would tell me that he was going to commit suicide. Thinking I would bluff him out of it, I would say, "Go ahead. But do a good job so I get your money!" His hurt became a wound—a wound that would go deeper with every phone call, every letter. Deeper until he put a rope around his neck. He died, his hurt never healed. Never able to hear my cry of "I'm sorry! If only I had known..."

For me, it would be different. One day I would cry out, "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed! Save me, O Lord, and I will be saved!" I would discover that there was a balm in Gilead that could heal the sin-sick soul. How I wish I could have shared what I learned with Tom!

All of my hurt—living with Tom's suicide, coping with the memories of failing my two sons by divorcing their father and exposing them to my ensuing immorality—would be healed by this same balm and by my Great Physician whom I would come to know as Abba, Father.

I have a message for you, beloved reader. One of hope, of life, of peace. Not my message, not psychology's, but God's! Whatever your wound, your

hurt—whether it is mostly a self-inflicted wound like mine or whether it is a wound inflicted by others—God’s Word says that there is a balm in Gilead, that there is a Great Physician there. And because that is true, you can cry out, “Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for Thou art my praise” (Jeremiah 17:14).

I believe any child of God can be healed of the deepest, most horrendous wounds if he will learn three things: how to apply the balm of Gilead, how to follow the Great Physician’s instructions, and how to give His medicine time to work. And that is what our study will be all about. In the days to come, the term the *balm of Gilead* will take on meaning and deep significance as you learn how this phrase was used in Old Testament days.

May I suggest, my friend, that today you shut yourself up with the Lord for a little while and ask Him to show you if there are any hurts in your life, past or present, for which you need healing. As God shows them to you, write them down.

If you feel fine—no hurts, past or present—then write out your mate’s hurts or your friends’ hurts.

As you write, please don’t worry about what anyone would think. This is your workbook. Seeing your thoughts in black and white will help you define them. When you are instructed to write something out, you will find it very helpful to do exactly that. There will always be a reason for what I will ask you to do, and I believe it will all be helpful.

When you finish writing out your thoughts, look up Jeremiah 17:14, and write it out below. Then memorize it. I have found that the easiest way to memorize something is to read it aloud three times in succession morning, afternoon, and evening. Try it!

— D A Y T H R E E —

“My sorrow is beyond healing, my heart is faint within me!” (Jeremiah 8:18). Did Jeremiah pen these words to describe only his anguish as he mourned over the awful ravages of sin in the lives of his people? No, as it says in Roman 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

My friend, after having taken a look at the hurts in your life or in the life of your mate or a friend, do you feel a sorrow that you believe may be beyond healing? Do you feel that wholeness is an impossibility? That healing is a miracle that could never happen?

Are the words from Jeremiah 8:18 your words? Could you have written them yourself? Do you sometimes wonder how you can go on? If life will ever be more than mere existence and day-by-day survival? Or are there times when you wish you wouldn't survive? When death would be welcome if you didn't have to do it yourself or if you could be sure that death would really be sweeter, more bearable than life?

I understand. For the most part, I caused my wounds. And yet whether I inflicted them on myself through my selfish and willful disobedience to the precepts of God or whether another inflicted them upon me, my wounds hurt.

Although the cause of our pain may not be the same, I have held countless numbers of hurting, bruised, wounded people in my arms. I have wept with and prayed with people who were so emotionally and physically abused that, if I had not known the healing power of the Word of God, I would have said, “There is no hope!” I have read their letters, and their pain was so great that at times I thought my heart would break.

There is nothing new under the sun. Some wounds may be deeper, more extensive, but pain is pain, hurt is hurt—it all throbs.

The wounds others have shared with me have run the gamut of hurt—from thoughts of worthlessness and hopelessness to feeling dirty,

used, and cast off. Some have been so abused sexually, physically, and emotionally that they are tormented by the memories—plagued by anything that recalls the incidents to the screens of their thoughts. The horrors of the incidents of the past, the inability to cope, the feelings of never being good enough overwhelm and incapacitate them. They live with “if onlys”—“if only I had never married him or her...if only I hadn’t allowed myself...if only I had responded differently...if only...”

And I understand. Don’t you? Haven’t you, too, allowed your mind to rehash the past, wondering what could have been “if only”? It’s hell, isn’t it? There is constant torment as you go over and over it all in your mind. I know. I have been there, but I have also found God’s healing.

Although sharing what happened with Tom reawakens pain and brings tears to my eyes, I can go on. I can live as more than a conqueror. And so can you, my friend. God has a way of escape, and we are going to find it.

Today, go to the Lord in prayer and let Him know exactly how you feel at this point about His ability to heal you. Again, I believe writing out your thoughts will help. Don’t be embarrassed. God already knows your thoughts. However, as you address God directly with your thoughts and feelings, it becomes open communication which then can be dealt with in a way God designed. That way is prayer.

— D A Y F O U R —

In the days of Jeremiah, the people of the southern kingdom of Judah found themselves in a distressing state. They were broken by the ravages of sin. Much like our day, sin had taken its devastating toll, touching every level of society from commoner to priest to prophet to king. Judah was a broken nation of wounded people because of their sin and because of the effects of their sin upon society.

Some went about proclaiming, “Peace, peace,” but there was no peace. They looked for healing, but it eluded them. What was the problem? Let’s look at it today because as we do, we will eventually see God’s answer. The solution offered in Jeremiah’s day is the same solution God offers for every age.

Before you begin reading Jeremiah, let me give you the historical context of the book. Until the death of Solomon, David’s son, the nation of Israel had been one kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital. Then when Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, came to power, the kingdom divided into the northern and southern kingdoms. Under Jeroboam, ten tribes formed the northern kingdom, eventually making Samaria their capital. This northern kingdom, which went under the name Israel, no longer had access to the temple at Jerusalem. Thus they made themselves two golden calves, built an altar, and set up their own system of worship. Their idolatry continued until about 722 B.C. when God sent the Assyrians down to take them captive.

The southern kingdom of Judah was comprised of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Although Judah saw God’s judgment upon her sister, Israel, she didn’t learn from Israel’s mistakes. In the final days of Jeremiah, God allowed the Babylonians (Chaldeans) to take Judah captive in 586 B.C. The book of Jeremiah describes the awful brokenness of this nation, the call of God to repentance through Jeremiah, and the ultimate destruction of Judah because they would not listen and be healed.

In light of that brief history, read the first two chapters of Jeremiah.

Watch how God talks to Judah, reminding her of the days when He became her God (which, of course, was when Israel became a kingdom and before the kingdom split).

After you read these two chapters, look up the following verses from Jeremiah and summarize what you learn about the situation in Judah during Jeremiah's time. As you record your observations, see if there are any parallels to our day. You might want to write the parallel in a second color of ink so that you can easily recognize it.

1. Jeremiah 2:1-8

2. Jeremiah 2:13 (Note the comparisons or contrasts in this verse.)

3. Jeremiah 2:17-19

4. Jeremiah 2:20-25

— D A Y F I V E —

Before we look at the solution to Judah's hurt, I want you to read more in Jeremiah. If ever there were a book Christians need to study at this time in history, it is Jeremiah. If you will read it from the perspective of how the situation in Judah parallels the state of affairs in your nation today, you will find yourself awed at the similarities. I hope you will also become determined not to respond to the Word of God in the same way.

Read through Jeremiah 3–5, and then we'll walk through it together. Please don't let this overwhelm you. Believe me, I don't want you to

become discouraged in any way. I don't want you to miss the healing that will be yours if you will only persevere through these thirteen weeks.

Our study will be a process. You will not find instant relief in a "one-two-three steps and you're healed" type of teaching. I'm convinced there are some crucial, fundamental truths which must be the basis of your healing, if your healing is going to be more than superficial. So hangeth thou in there!

Now then, let's walk together through Jeremiah, taking it one point at a time.

1. In Jeremiah 3 God shows how His wife, "faithless Israel," has played the harlot.
 - a. Read Jeremiah 3:1-13.
 - b. List what you learned about Israel's behavior in the following verses:
 - (1) 3:1

 - (2) 3:6,13 (The heathen practices of worship in those days often involved giving homage to trees which were cut in phallic [sexual] symbols.)

2. In Jeremiah 4:19-22 you can almost hear Jeremiah wail in anguish as he sees God's judgment approaching through war and captivity. Read these verses and note what you observe about the people.

3. In Jeremiah 5:7 God asks a very valid question: "Why should I pardon you?" There are many reasons why He shouldn't. These are given in chapter 5. Read the chapter and list those reasons and the verses in which you found them. Then in the second column, list the parallels to today.

REASONS FOR GOD'S JUDGMENT

PARALLELS TO TODAY

God didn't want to judge Israel, even though He had just reasons for doing so. Throughout the book of Jeremiah, God calls the people to listen and to return to Him: "'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD; 'I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,' declares the LORD; 'I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God and have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,' declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 3:12-13).

As you study Jeremiah, you may relate to faithless Israel because you have not loved God as you should or because you have not lived for Him as you should have lived. If you haven't already, acknowledge your sin. My friend, know that God is still standing there in mercy, waiting for you to cry in faith, "Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved" (Jeremiah 17:14).

Turn and run into those outstretched arms of Calvary's love. He will heal you.

— D A Y S I X —

Have you ever wondered how some individuals can get so messed up? How can fathers and mothers give birth to children and then misuse or abuse them? How can they abuse them verbally? How can a parent reject a child? Be mean to him? Abandon him?

How can fathers sexually assault their infant daughters? It is hard to comprehend. We don't even want to think about it because it is so abhorrent. Yet, it goes on far more often than most people realize.

Why do parents lash out at their children and abuse them emotionally? Why do they knock them around, taking out their anger and frustration on someone who is weaker, smaller than they are? What causes a father to become so emotionally sick that he would do something like this to any child, let alone his own? Have you ever wondered, ever thought about it?

Why do people become dropouts on life? Why do they walk out on relationships? Why do they become drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes, homosexuals, lesbians? Why do people get lured into occult practices?

Why do people ruin their lives and the lives of others? Is that what they wanted to do with their lives when they grew up?

I realize that the answer goes back to the problem of inherent sin. And I know that Jesus is the only person ever born who wasn't born in sin (Romans 5:12). However, people long for some semblance of heaven, not hell, in their lives.

When people do not listen to the Word of the Lord, it affects families, which in turn affect societies, which in turn affect nations, which in turn can affect the world. Throughout Jeremiah you read the phrase "yet they did not listen to Me." The source of our problems can be traced back to someone's failure to listen to God, listening so as to believe and obey Him.

Now that may seem simplistic to you, but if you will carefully read the Word of God, you will see that it is true. Sin originally entered into the world because Adam and Eve did not listen to God. Eve listened, instead, to Satan and believed a lie. And what they did affected all future generations.

When I think of my first marriage, I know I went through our divorce and Tom's suicide because I didn't listen to God. I didn't do what He told me to do as a wife and a mother. I did it my way. But you may say to me, "Well, Tom wasn't perfect either! If he had met your needs, then..."

And I would say, "But Tom had hurts from his family..." Then we would trace it all to the fact that Tom's parents didn't listen to God, and Tom, in his trials, didn't listen to God. None of us did! Yet, we all had the opportunity!

Stop for a few minutes, and think about your own wounds, the hurts

which you have suffered. Why did they happen? Think about it and write it out.

As I have been writing *Lord, Heal My Hurts*, I have been thinking about you. It occurs to me that maybe you do not know much about the Word of God. Maybe the Bible has been a closed and boring book to you, like it used to be to me. Or maybe you've never even read it. Maybe you have picked up this book because you are hurting and are desperate for relief. I am so glad the Lord has brought us together! If you are genuinely seeking God, you won't be disappointed.

In case you are new to the Bible, I want to define sin for you. Sin began in the Garden of Eden when the first man and woman disobeyed God. God told them not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He also told them the consequences if they disobeyed. However, instead of believing and obeying God, they listened to the serpent of old, the devil.

Sin is disobedience. To know the right thing to do and not do it is sin (James 4:17). Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Therefore, sin is unbelief. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Sin is man's turning to his own way. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

Now then, let's continue walking through Jeremiah. We will look at

chapters 6, 7, and 8. We are on the brink of finding Jeremiah's solution to the hurts of his people!

The solution will be mentioned at the end of our Scripture reading today, but it will not yet be explained. As we go through Jeremiah 6, 7, and 8, take the information you glean and put it on the chart which follows. It will help you if you are doing this study with a discussion group.

1. If you have time, read all of Jeremiah 6. If you don't have time, read at least verses 6-19. Then note what you learn about God's people in verses 7,10,13,14, and 19. Record your insights on the chart.

2. Read Jeremiah 7. When you finish, look up verses 8-10,13,18, 23-28,30,31 and record your observations on the chart.

3. Did you notice in Jeremiah 7:1-7 that God gave them the opportunity to repent? Repent means to have a change of mind. A change of mind regarding the way they were living would result in a change of their lives, wouldn't it?

4. Finally, we come to Jeremiah 8. Once again, it would be to your advantage to read the entire chapter. When you finish, look up Jeremiah 8:5-7,9-12 and record your insights on your chart.

5. Now then, what is the solution to their problems? Or to put it another way, why is Jeremiah dismayed? Read Jeremiah 8:21-22, and record your insights. As I said earlier, you may not understand the significance of Jeremiah's terminology in these verses, but you will later.

IN JEREMIAH'S DAY

THE PROBLEMS

THE PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE

WHAT THEY NEED FOR HEALING

— D A Y S E V E N —

As many have shared their hurts with me, I have understood how Jeremiah felt when he cried, “For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead: Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?” (Jeremiah 8:21-22).

Can you sense Jeremiah’s anguish? Don’t you sense that some of his despair related to the fact that he knew there was a cure, yet he saw the people were not listening?

There is a sure cure. There is a way to be healed, to be whole. I want you to know that. The people of Jeremiah’s day didn’t have to live in despair and defeat, nor do you. You do not have to be crippled by the trauma of your past any more than the children of Judah did.

I honestly believe, Beloved, that there is no trauma of your past, no wound of your mind, emotions, heart, or soul beyond the healing power of God. Why? There is a balm in Gilead. There is a Great Physician there.

Our study next week will help you see for yourself exactly who the physician is. Then we will take a thorough look at the balm of Gilead. After that we will move on to specific hurts and see how these are to be handled so that there can be a genuine healing.

As Jeremiah looked at the brokenness of the people, dismay overwhelmed him because the people thought they were doomed to a life of total despair. (Maybe you can relate!) The people had forgotten they had a God whose name was Jehovah-rapha, the God who heals. Thus, Jeremiah looked at their awful state and cried, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?” The assumed, obvious answer was a resounding “YES!” You can tell from the way that Jeremiah asked his next question: “Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?” (Jeremiah 8:22).

The ultimate source of your total healing—or anyone’s—will be the Great Physician and the balm He has ordained. Therefore, won’t you close this week by writing out a prayer to God regarding your healing, your mate’s healing, or the healing of a friend. Come to God in faith. If your faith is weak, tell God. If you think your healing is beyond His love, care, ability, or power, tell Him. Just communicate. You might want to incorporate Jeremiah 17:14 in your prayer.

MEMORY VERSE

Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for Thou art my praise.

JEREMIAH 17:14

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you read the passages in Jeremiah this week, you saw the broken, wounded state of the people. Why were Jeremiah’s people in this state?
2. What are some of the hurts in your life, in the lives of your family, in the lives of your friends?
3. What parallels are there between the time in which Jeremiah lived and the time in which we live?

4. What do you think is the reason for these hurts, for the horrors that we see in our world daily?
5. When we do things our own way and not God's way, what are we doing?
6. In Jeremiah 7:1-7, we see God's heart toward the people as He offers them an opportunity to do what?
7. As you have thought about your hurts, the hurts of others, and the state of our world, do you echo with Jeremiah his cry found in Jeremiah 8:18: "My sorrow is beyond healing, my heart is faint within me"? What is God's answer to this cry, the solution to the problem in Jeremiah's day, in our day?
8. What did you learn from this study that you could apply to your own life?
9. What question did this lesson bring to your thoughts?



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