

# The Deceitful Heart - Jer 17

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*Phil Beach Jr. explores the deceitfulness of the heart in Jeremiah 17, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God for spiritual fruitfulness and growth.*

**Duration:** 30:29

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 17:5

**Topics:** "Heart", "The Deceitfulness of the Heart", "Spiritual Fruitfulness"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of understanding the deceitfulness of the heart as presented in Jeremiah 17. He illustrates the contrast between a fruitful tree, which remains unaffected by external circumstances, and a barren tree, symbolizing the heart's condition when it trusts in itself rather than in God. The sermon highlights that the heart is inherently deceitful and that true fruitfulness comes from being deeply rooted in God's truth and grace. Beach connects this message to the New Testament, stressing the importance of self-awareness and reliance on God for spiritual growth and victory. Ultimately, he calls for a humble acknowledgment of our heart's condition to experience God's transformative grace.

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## Transcript

Jeremiah chapter 17. If we can understand this concept and allow the Lord to make this very real in our life to the extent that it becomes a way of thinking, oh we find ourselves going through, it will revolutionize your walk with the Lord Jesus. Jeremiah chapter 17.

I'm going to begin in verse number five and this is where I was going to use illustrations. I was going to draw two trees and here we have a picture of two trees or bushes. One is very fruitful and the other is very barren.

The fruitful one, the scripture says, is not affected, listen closely, by the external circumstances that are pressing up against it. But the unfruitful one doesn't matter what the external circumstances are because it's unfruitful anyway, it's barren, it's got bad fruit. Now it's interesting to note that in this scripture, Jeremiah chapter 17, the Holy Spirit is leading Jeremiah to speak of good trees, good bushes with good fruit, bad trees with bad fruit, and then he goes right into the issue of what? The heart.

So I find it to be interesting that we have trees and the heart in the same thought. Now don't believe it's coincidental. I believe there's a concept here.

I believe this truth here is the underlying truth of the entire Word of God from Genesis, right from the very beginning, even before God created Adam, we find there was trouble in heaven regarding the angel Lucifer, and would you believe that his problem was our problem? So here is an underlining principle, and sometimes I hate to use that word principle because people get on the bandwagon of principle and they try and build their Christian life on principles, but for lack of a better word, this is a principle that God reveals to us in the very beginning. The principle of a heart problem with Lucifer. The principle with Adam and Eve was a heart problem.

Let me tell you something. Listen carefully. When God came to Adam at the beginning, and Adam was hiding, we're going to get to Jeremiah 17, when Adam was hiding, God questioned Adam.

Adam, where are you? What are you doing? God was trying to get Adam to do what? Confess. But what was Adam's problem? His heart. Now, does the scripture say that the heart is deceitful? Doesn't the scripture also say that sin is deceitful? The deceitfulness of sin, Hebrews, now watch this.

Here's one of the most deceptive strategies of sin. You ready? Sin will always attempt to make you blame someone else for its presence in your life. What did Adam do? It's the woman's fault.

What did the woman do? It's the serpent's fault. Now, Jesus said he was the father, so he couldn't go any further. All right, so he couldn't blame anyone.

Okay, sin's deceitfulness. The deceitfulness of sin is we get our attention on what? Rather than on, now watch this, Jeremiah chapter 17, beginning in verse number 5. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man. Now, that's flesh, that trusteth in flesh, or it could be understood as trusteth in human heart, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departs from the Lord.

He shall be like, now what is that? A simile, right? Like an ass. Okay, so what we're seeing here is we're seeing the state of a person who trusts in his heart, and now we're seeing an illustration of what this person is like. Watch his strong language.

He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabit it. Now, watch verse number 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, and now we find the same concept here of a simile, for he, that is the one who trusts in God, or we could say it another way, the one who places no trust in his own heart, he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots. Now, there's very, very important words that we need to identify with here.

If you write in your Bible, some people don't, but if you write in your Bible, I want to make a suggestion. Underline the word waters, the word roots, and the word river. Water, roots, and rivers.

I'm going to do it right now, because I forgot to. Waters, roots, and river. Okay? These are very important words that relate to us today in 1990, believe it or not.

Okay, let's read verse 8. For he shall be as a tree, you can underline tree too, that's a good one. Now, does anyone, can anyone relate to a familiar chain reference? Psalm 1. Alright, now if you write, and you see what's going to happen if you start writing in your Bible? Now, if you write in your Bible, you can underline number 8, or circle the number 8, put a little mark next to it, and put Psalm 1. Okay? These are little study guides here, this is how you study your Bible. This is how the Bible interprets Bible, you know? You know the Bible interprets itself? This is how you learn to understand the Bible, this is what Paul meant

when he told Timothy, rightly divide the word of truth.

How do you divide the word of truth rightly? Well, you let the Bible interpret itself. So that's a Psalm 1 reference, and we all know Psalm 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. For his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in the law he meditates day and night.

The next verse. For he shall be like a tree, huh? He shall be like a tree that's planted by the rivers of water. You think the reference in Psalm 1 for water and river, you think the water and the river in Psalm 1 is the same water and river here in Jeremiah 17? I have a funny hunch it is.

What do you think? Same water and same, now listen. Common sense will tell you. Here's 2 out of probably 300 scriptures in the Bible that you could reference this thought to.

If we've just got 2 of them here, and we see that there is a river, there is water that will guarantee fruitfulness. Wouldn't it be logical to say, what is this water and river, and how do I plant my roots in that water? Sure it would. Okay.

He shall be as a tree planted by the waters that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh. Uh oh. What are we getting here? Shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought.

Neither shall cease from yielding fruit. This is incredible. This is revolutionary.

Can you see what concept we have here? We're looking at a tree whose roots are so deeply rooted in a river of water that the scripture says that this tree shall not see heat when it comes. In other words, this tree shall not be affected by heat. Now what does heat represent? An external circumstance.

Neither shall be careful or lack in the year of drought. Wow. What do we have a picture of here? We have a picture of something that is planted that is not affected by the normal circumstances that would affect a normal plant or tree.

Now what about Isaiah 61? Stay in Jeremiah 17 because we haven't even read the portion of scripture that correlates to the truth that the Holy Spirit, I believe, is seeking to drive home in our hearts this morning. Isaiah chapter 61. Now here's another cross-reference.

Isaiah 61. Now remember the key words that we're dealing with. Make a mental note.

We're dealing with water. We're dealing with rivers of water. We're dealing with fruitfulness.

We're dealing with unfruitfulness. Listen. We're dealing with a tree that is not hindered by an external force.

Now what does that sound to you like? How does that relate to human experience? Isn't that the preoccupation of all the Christians today? How to be fruitful in God. There's 150 books. How to bear fruit for God.

Not only is there 150 books on how to be fruitful for God, but don't you always find people trying to tell you how to deal with what people do to you? How to deal with what's been done to you? How to cope with your offender? How many has had an offender? Someone who has offended you in some way. How to deal

with it? Right here, Jeremiah tells us, very simply. So to me, this entire Jeremiah 17 has an incredible application to my world right now, where I'm living.

Even though it's something that was spoken of. I see myself. I see the heat, the drought, the fruitfulness, the fruitlessness, the water, the rivers.

I see all of that as interpreting my life as a Christian now and the things that I face. I see in this little portion, one chapter, I see the entire secret in being a victorious Christian in the 1990s. A victorious Christian in the 1990s.

All in one portion of Scripture back in Jeremiah that was prophesied 3,000 years ago. Incredible. 61 Isaiah.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. The day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn.

To appoint them that mourn in Zion. To give unto them beauty for ashes. The oil of joy for mourning.

The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Now listen. That they might be called trees of righteousness.

The planting of the Lord that He might be glorified. Now there's another cross. You see every time you cross reference you get another facet of that diamond of truth.

So if we put all of these cross references together we get an incredible picture of what? The redemption of Jesus Christ. Taking us out of Adam. Planting us in Christ.

Being filled with the Spirit. And causing our roots to go deeply in God. Okay there's several cross references.

Now we'll go back to Jeremiah and we'll read. Jeremiah chapter 17. One thing bad about these little tabs here.

Is you get dependent on them. How many have found that? And you lose the ability. Let me see Jeremiah is it this way? I'll look on the tab.

Huh? It does it. It really makes you. It sort of gives you a veggie mind.

Regarding the order of the books in the Bible. And you forget them. Jeremiah chapter 17.

Alright now we've looked at two trees. We looked at the fruit of these trees. We've looked at one of the trees and where they're planted.

And now all of a sudden. All of a sudden the prophet goes from trees to the heart. Verse number 9. But before we read verse 9. I'm going to give you a thought.

What character in the New Testament. Related trees, fruit and heart. As all one concept.

Who? Jesus. The sermon on the mount. We'll go there.

Watch this. Pull it all together here. Jeremiah chapter 17 verse 9. The heart is deceitful above all things.

And desperately wicked. Who can know it? Now there are several references to the heart in the New Testament. Mark chapter 7. Jesus deals with the things that are in the heart of man.

What are some of the things? Adultery. Fornication. Lying.

Deceit. Gossip. These are things where? In the heart.

Who can know it? Aren't you glad the Lord answers it in the very next verse? I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins. Now we can't go on until we just look at this for a moment.

When God says I know the heart. And I try the reins. Here's what he's saying.

God is saying here you don't know your own heart. But I assure you God says it's wicked. Couraging words, huh? But did you know a sinner can't be saved until he knows.

He has knowledge of sin. The Puritans and the Reformers used to intentionally preach the law to such an extent where it would rip the hearts of the hearers to pieces and create such a despair of their wretchedness. And they said only then can a man come to the Savior.

Because before then he's not too sure whether he needs a Savior. So what's one of the chief concerns of the Holy Spirit in this day? Two fold. Number one, to reveal to the sinner his utter, damnable worthlessness as far as righteousness is concerned in God's eyes.

But that's not the only chief concern. Once the sinner comes to acknowledge of his sin and receives the gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit is very concerned that that perspective is continued in the Christian life. Because as soon as the Christian becomes self-sufficient, self-reliant, self-confident, and loses that sense of utter dependency upon God, listen, the benefits or the full inheritance of the salvation is greatly hindered.

Because from beginning to end, the salvation that the believer experiences is all contingent upon one thing. God imparting into a heart that has the posture of, I am nothing, and I am in need, and I am wholly dependent upon God. And when that posture changes, and that's the picture of the Laodicea church, I am in need of nothing.

The exact opposite. Rather than, oh Lord, I am in such need. I am in need of nothing.

What's the next confession? I am increased with goods. I am wealthy. God says, thou knowest not what? Wretched, lying, miserable, naked, and poor.

Here's what happened. They lost sight of the wretchedness of their heart. Sin deceived them.

Sin clothed itself in garments of sufficiency, garments of self-confidence, garments of a sense of, I am strong, independent of God. The results? The corrupt fruit. All that to say this.

I, the Lord, know your heart, and I try. What God is saying is this. God seeks, in the life of His children, to try, meaning, to reveal the true state of the heart.

For one purpose. That you might see yourself as you are. And consequently, be humbled, be lowered.

And in that posture, God births in you a cry for grace. A cry for mercy. A cry for more of His saving love to me.

More of His grace. Now, here's the thing that we need to be very careful of. This very principle that is so near and dear to God's heart is being seduced in the Christian church today.

And here's the seduction. We're being taught from the pulpit, from counselors, from everywhere. Here's what we're being taught.

Don't allow the exposure of your own heart to crush you. Don't allow it to bring you down to total despair. But find a scapegoat.

Listen, find a scapegoat. And then ask God to give you love for that scapegoat. Now, when I say scapegoat, I say find someone to blame your state on.

But God says that He exposes our heart, not so that we play that game, but that we see what we really are and break before Him and find in Him a work of grace. That's what the word try means. When God tries us, He makes known to us our heart.

Beloved, several weeks ago we mentioned that you cannot know the Savior in the fullness that He wants you to know Him unless right along with it you are receiving self-knowledge, yourself, who you are. And you are accepting it and you are being honest before God. That's the only way that grace stays in proper proportion.

Now, I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. Now, here Jeremiah is showing us that the trees that bear good fruit, that bear bad fruit, the one tree that is not affected by the external circumstances have to relate to a spiritual concept of the heart.

Now, let's turn to Matthew chapter 5. We'll bring it all together. Matthew chapter 5, we'll bring it all together. No, Matthew 7, excuse me.

Matthew chapter 7. Let's begin in verse number 13. Okay? Verse number 13. Enter ye in at the straight gate.

Now, the straight gate here, does this mean very, very strict rules and regulations? And it's only those who can follow these rules and regulations that find life? Didn't Jesus say in John chapter 10, I am the what? He said a lot of things. He said He was a good shepherd. What else did He say? I am the gate by which the sheep enter in.

Ah, straight is the gate. There's only one way. Jesus, John 14, 6. I am the way.

See? Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. But straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Wonder why few find it.

Listen to this. Paul said in 1 Corinthians, God hath not chosen the who. Wow.

Let's go there. Let's just go there. Let's just go there.

And again now, if you write in your Bible, these are key words to write. Key words to circle. 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Let's begin in verse number 26.

For ye see your calling. That word calling there is, you have seen the fact that God has chosen you, that God has called you out, that God has snatched you. Now watch this.

Have it not many wise men. Okay, circle the word wise. Now remember what we're doing.

Why are there so few that find the way of life? Because God hath not chosen many wise. Wise. Now, are we wise by natural disposition? Yes we are.

We're wise by natural disposition. Watch this. Wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.

Oh my. Mighty and noble. Don't we really consider ourselves before grace really gets a hold of us that we're quite noble? And we are indeed quite mighty? You see, God hath not chosen such an attitude of the heart.

And now listen beloved. Even us children of God, when this type of heart begins to get festered.

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