

**JEREMIAH: SHINING AS SPIRITUAL TWILIGHT FALLS**  
**"Part II: Victory Over Crippling Mindgames Played By Carnal Associates"**  
**(Jeremiah 1:7-19; 15:15-21)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

Some people play **mindgames** to **manipulate** other people:

(1) The evolutionary biologist, Richard Dickerson, has written this admission of the effort he and other evolutionary scientists make to control the thinking of others: "Science is fundamentally a **game**. It is a game with one overriding and defining rule: Rule #1: Let us see how far and to what extent we can explain the behavior of the physical and material universe in terms of purely physical and material causes, **without invoking the supernatural**." (Dickerson, J. *Molecular Evolution*, 34:277, 1992; *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith*, 44:137-138, 1992 cited in J. Safarti, *Refuting Evolution*, p. 18).

(2) **Christians** can practice the same thing: Dr. Hudson Armerding, former president of Wheaton College wrote of a disillusioning experience he once had in a Christian organization.

While calling a new leader for the organization, the chairman entered the room where the board met one day with an airmail letter from the candidate for leadership. Before opening the letter, he asked the board for a round of prayer that they would be open to the Lord's leading whatever the letter announced.

After the prayer, he opened the letter to read that the candidate had agreed to come. Everyone praised the Lord in His clear leading.

Dr. Armerding later discussed this issue with the new leader when he arrived to assume his office. Quite matter of factly, the leader explained he had called the board chairman earlier on the same day the letter had been opened to announce that he was indeed coming.

Thus, the chairman had manipulated the Board, priming the pump for them to accept the leader's coming by his charade with the prayer before the letter opening!

(3) Such mindgames can be destructive! I head recently of a family in which a child has been found to have rheumatoid arthritis, and its religious beliefs has led the family to feel they must have done something very wicked to displease God to have seen their daughter stricken with such a disease! The capacity for the older sister to do her homework has even been thwarted by such false religious guilt!

**How do we handle destructive "mindgames" by oppressive parties, and do so EFFECTIVELY?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

***Need:*** "I WANT to believe the truth and do God's will for my life, but others are OPPOSED to what I ONCE THOUGHT were God's views, and they have led me to DOUBT what I THOUGHT was truth and God's will for my life! Where do I NOW define the truth?!"

- I. **When God called Jeremiah to prophesy, he was TOLD that he would have to stand AGAINST the very people who were supposed to be his colleagues in faith in the Lord, Jer. 1:7, 8, 18-19a.**
- II. **For Jeremiah to ACHIEVE this task, God gave him CLEAR, CONFIRMING signals of this ministry and call, 1:7-14, 17b-18:**
  - A. Having called Jeremiah to prophesy, God touched his mouth with His hand in a vision, signaling Jeremiah was given **God's words**, 1:9.
  - B. Then God gave him "practice", showing Jeremiah two visions and commenting on how well Jeremiah identified their signs, 1:11-16.
  - C. These **clear visions** were given to **encourage** Jeremiah not to fear the colleagues he was to critique, Jeremiah 1:7-8, 17b-18.
- III. **However, GREAT OPPOSITION from colleagues for his WORDS to them EVENTUALLY led Jeremiah to think GOD had let him DOWN, so he DOUBTED his VIEW, Jer. 11:18-23; 12:6; 15:11-18:**
  - A. Jeremiah faced the discouragement of men in his hometown of Anathoth (1:1; 11:21) plotting to kill him!
  - B. He was even told by **God** that his own **relatives** were going behind his back to call a multitude to oppress him, Jeremiah 12:6.
  - C. When the loneliness pressure mounted, Jeremiah murmured that **God** had not **delivered** him from trial as promised in Jer. 1(15:10, 16-18).
- IV. **God then revealed Jeremiah had been deceived and helped him regain his bearings, Jer. 15:19-21 with 1:8, 17b; 1:7b with 9-14:**
  - A. God responded by charging Jeremiah to **change** his **view** about **God** being the One Who had let him down so God could **restore** Jeremiah to a position of fellowship and usefulness in his ministry, Jer. 15:19a.
  - B. Then Jeremiah could utter worthy words rather than the worthless words of complaining about **God** being his problem, Jer. 15:19b.
  - C. God then exposed a **mindgame** Jeremiah suffered from his **colleagues**:

1. In Jeremiah 15:19, there is a play on the KJV words "return", "bring again", "return" & "return" (NIV "repent," "restore," "turn" & "turn") as they are **all** from the **same** root, *shuv*, Bib. Heb., 734.
  2. Thus, God revealed Jeremiah was ill-treated by **associates** so they could **manipulate** him to want to get along with **them** to **ease** his **painful** isolation from **them**, and thus end up **opposing God's will!**
    - a. The trouble Jeremiah received from associates had been **aimed** to dole out pain in feeling isolated for opposing **their** views.
    - b. Jeremiah would then be tempted to give up on God's views so as to stop saying the judgmental words his hearers despised.
    - c. God saw through this "mindgame" rebellion of Jeremiah's colleagues and warned him about it: He revealed Jeremiah was to **give them** God's view **instead of yielding to their** view, v. 19b
- D. To **counter** his colleague's "mindgame", God **repeated** His **call** to Jeremiah for his ministry of Jer. 1:18-19 in 15:20-21:
1. Originally, God called Jeremiah to prophesy with the promise He would protect him in his **standing against** those he warned, 1:18.
  2. In so doing, God would deliver him from being murdered, 1:19.
  3. Thus, were Jeremiah to "repent" by re-adopting God's view that **God** was **upright** and the **colleagues** were the **cause** of Jeremiah's **pain**, God would keep Jeremiah encouraged mentally to resist his colleagues' mindgames and deliver him from their efforts, 15:20-21.
  4. In fact, comparing the first call of God in Jeremiah 1:18-19 with this repeated one in Jeremiah 15:20-21, we find even **greater mental encouragement** as God's **repeated** promise of deliverance given in Jeremiah 15:20b, 21 is **double** what God offered in 1:19b!

**Application:** *To remain faithful to God amidst the trying MENTAL MINDGAMES of FALSE GUILT played on one while functioning among carnal, manipulative associates, (1) like Jeremiah, we must KNOW God (Jer. 1:5a), and that occurs by our commitment of faith in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) Then, as a believer, GOD expects us to BOLSTER our thinking by REMINDING ourselves of what is TRUE as HE has (a) BEFORE LED us to be PERSUADED is reality. (b) His Word will also define reality, (c) and His SURE PAST signals of leading with (c) CREDIBLE teacher input of the PAST will also supply insight, cf. 2 Tim. 3:12-13; 3:14-17. (3) Yet, if we LET ourselves heed the false guilt views of those who pressure us ABOVE these signals, we will experience a loss of God's blessing!*

**Lesson:** *Jeremiah faced the challenge of retaining GOD'S CORRECT VIEW in contrast to yielding to the pressured, false guilt trip VIEW of his colleagues! The KEY to his achieving this MENTAL victory was for Jeremiah to RECALL God's SIGNALS of REALITY that came BEFORE he ever encountered his evil associates in ministry!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

Apply that message along with the special notes I have on that Ecclesiastes passage. He put a major portion of his **retirement** money into a mutual fund on April 30th that some think is "*too risky*."

In fact, when his relatives found out what he was doing, they expressed, "O-o-o-h, you're in a **risky** investment! Don't you know that in a stock market correction, that kind of fund will **drop** the **most**?"

**Aggressively** invest providing he has a **long-term** time frame and **stays with** that course **during** that time frame. He also knew from those lessons that reputable studies reveal such volatile funds are the first to jump back up, and that at the highest and quickest rate following a market downturn. He has many years before retirement, and knew from our material (especially Ecclesiastes 11:1) this was long enough to be as aggressive as he could make himself be!

He decided to stick with what Scripture had convinced him to do regardless of these comments from his relatives.

Now he is glad he did! **In** the 6 months of his being in that fund, it has climbed **142.5%**, effectively causing his **total retirement portfolio**, including moneys he did **not** have in that fund -- to **DOUBLE!**

"Mindgames" that are played on us by others can be effectively handled if we go **BACK** to **FOCUS** on what we became **CONVINCED** was **TRUE** from **GOD'S Word BEFORE** encountering manipulators. We must trust **there was a reason God let us become CONVINCED what we believed them was reality from His Word, 2 Timothy 3:13-15. Then we can discern what is FALSELY and often counterproductively MANIPULATIVE from what is TRUTH, and stay the course of TRUTH for God's glory and blessing!**