



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 1

Perfected Through Love

Scripture reading Jeremiah 31:1-3

“The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

In Jeremiah 18, God compares the nation of Israel to clay in the hands of a potter. He says in verse 6, *“Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.”* This is true for the nation of Israel and it is also true for every individual Christian. God wants to mold us and make us into vessels that would be used for His glory and honor. He molds and shapes us in various ways. The first tool that He uses to mold us is His love. We are sinners, separated from God. He loves us so much that He came to this earth to die and pay the penalty for our sin. He was buried and three days later, He rose from the dead. He was seen by hundreds of people. He did that because He loves us and He wants to transform us through His love into children of God.

When we call on Him to ask Him to give us eternal life, He pours His love into us. *“Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us”* (Romans 5:5). Now we have the ability to love others. As we genuinely love others, it will change our attitude towards them. We will want to do that which is right instead of that which is wrong. *“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law”* (Romans 13:10). God shapes and molds our lives in His love first for us, in us and then through us.

Today, as you bow your head before Jesus Christ, thank Him for pouring out His love for you. Ask Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Tell Him that you love Him and ask Him to love other people through you. When you do, you will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 2

Perfected Through Trials

Scripture reading Jeremiah 33:1-3

“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Thus saith the Lord the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; the Lord is his name; Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

It is amazing to me that these words were spoken to Jeremiah while he was in prison. These were trying days for Jeremiah. Jeremiah had done nothing wrong. He had faithfully proclaimed God’s Word. At one time, Jeremiah determined he wasn’t going to preach anymore because no one was listening. Yet, he said the Word of God burned in his heart, and he had to proclaim truth. Even though he was faithful to God, he found himself in the midst of a trial. He was in prison and suffering for doing what was right. While he was in prison, God reminded him that if he or anyone in Israel would call on Him, God would do greater things than they expected. Trials are brought into our lives to perfect us and make us more like Jesus. James says, *“the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”* (James 1:3-4).

The Potter, our Father in Heaven, is molding our lives through trials and everything that comes into our life. If He sees something that is imperfect in our lives, He has the option to crush the vessel and rebuild it. That does not mean He is throwing away the clay. Anytime we face a trial, it is to make us more like Jesus. Remember, God’s plan for you is to become like Him. Instead of fighting God’s plan, surrender daily to Him. He will mold you through the good and bad circumstances of life. He does that so that you might be like Him and so that you will THRIVE in your life.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 3

Perfected Through Surrender

Scripture reading Jeremiah 26:13

“Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.”

Over and over in the Book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah pleads with the people. His pleading is inspired by God almighty. God wants His people to obey Him. He wants us to obey because if we obey, we will have His peace which passes all understanding. The Word of God teaches us: *“whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth”* (Hebrews 12:6). In order to avoid God’s chastening and to secure God’s blessing, we must surrender to God’s will. This means to surrender to the control of His Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18, *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”* God uses our daily surrender to His Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with music and song where we are praising Him instead of just making it through life. God wants us to surrender to His spirit so that our hearts will be filled with His wisdom so that we are able to be shaped by Him into the people He wants us to be. Are you surrendered to the Holy Spirit of God today? If not, do that today.

Every single day go before God. Bow on your knees. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit. Surrender to His control. When you do that, His Spirit will fill you with the fruit of the Spirit which are *“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance”* (Galatians 5:22-23). God wants to mold your life. Unlike clay, you have a will. You must determine to surrender that will to Him. Allow Him to mold and shape your life into the vessel He wants you to be. Surrender today to Him. Let Him control you, and you will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 4

Perfected Through His Word

Scripture reading Jeremiah 15:15-21

“O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.”

How was Jeremiah able to stand in the midst of persecution? How was he able to stand against his family, friends, and a government that despised him? Or against false prophets that called him a liar, because they were lying themselves? Jeremiah answers that question by saying the Word of God was unto Him joy and rejoicing.

It is primarily through the Word of God that He perfects us and makes us what He wants us to be. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* The Word of God teaches us that is doctrine.

1. It reproves us.
2. It shows us where we are wrong.
3. It corrects us.
4. It instructs us on how to do it right.

According to verse 17, this is so that we might be perfect and prepared to do any work that God has for us to do.

There is no way that a Christian can thrive without being in the Word of God on a regular basis. I encourage you this week to be in your Bible. You can read it. You can listen to it. You can download an app on your smart phone. (Most apps are free of charge.) You can hear it preached Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, Wednesday evenings, in Bible studies, and you can be disciplined in it. I would encourage you to THRIVE as a believer by getting into the Word of God.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 5

Perfecting Through Companions

Scripture reading Jeremiah 45:1-5 & Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

While reading the Book of Jeremiah, you will find that he did not have many friends. However, there was one faithful man, Baruch, who faithfully served Jeremiah as his scribe. God used him to write down the prophecies that were given to Jeremiah. One time Baruch delivered the Book of Jeremiah to the king and the king burned the scroll. When Baruch returned to Jeremiah and told him what the king had done, Jeremiah said, “I guess we are going to have to write the thing all over again,” and that is what they did. Jeremiah was an encouragement to Baruch, and Baruch was an encouragement to Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 25, the shortest chapter in Jeremiah, God promises Jeremiah that He will bless him and will allow him to be used of God in the future. Baruch was a faithful friend. God knows we need companions and that we grow through interaction with companions. *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”* (Proverbs 27:6).

The president of my college, Jerry Falwell, used to say, “Surround yourself with champions.” That is not just so you can inspire them, but so that they can rub off on you. I admonish you to be a faithful friend. I admonish you to allow your friends to share truth with you even when it hurts. When you do that, God will use your companions to perfect you and grow in Christ. When you do, your life will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 38 – Lesson 6

Perfecting Through Pastors and Teachers

Scripture reading Jeremiah 7:25-26

“Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.”

In Jeremiah 35:15 this message was repeated as God pleads with His people to return. God tried to use Jeremiah’s message to perfect, or bring to maturity, the believers in Jeremiah’s day. Jeremiah wanted God’s people to be delivered, but they would not listen. In our day, in the local church, God gives pastors and teachers for the same reason. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”* We need to remember that God has given us shepherds. Shepherds to guard us. Shepherds to guide us. Shepherds to give us instruction in things of God that we may not understand ourselves.

If you want to thrive, I encourage you to get involved in a local church. Get involved with a shepherd. Allow someone you trust locally to minister to you with the Word of God on a regular basis. Make a commitment to be in church Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, for discipleship, special meetings, and adult Bible studies. Make sure your children are involved as well, so that they can become what God wants them to become.

As we have seen this week, God has poured His love in our hearts. God gives us trials. God wants us to surrender to His Holy Spirit. God has given us His Word and He has given us companions. As you allow God to shape your life through love, trials, His Holy Spirit, your surrender, His Word, your companions, and sitting under the teaching of a good pastor or teacher? When you make the determination to do that, then your life will THRIVE.