

Leverage Your Life

Engage Your City

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Today we wrap up our six-week series that is all about leveraging (using something to maximum advantage) our lives for the mission of God where we live, work, and play.

This impact is built on **Five Key Values**:

- Seek First the Kingdom – God is At Work Locally & Globally
- Deepen Devotion – Without Prayer and the Word, We are Powerless
- Stick Together – We are a Family United by a Mission
- Think Multiplication – We Need Disciples & Churches that Multiply
- **Engage Your City – The Gospel Changes Lives, Families, & Cities**

More than half the world's population lives in urban areas or cities and research indicates that over 5 million people per month are moving into the great cities of the world.

Consider Four Perspectives:

- **Romanticize the City:** May be saying, *'I love the city'*, but mean that they love the *'experience in'* the city, the excitement, energy and options, but may not be concerned for the health or wholeness of the city.
- **Disdain for the City:** Avoiding so much of it at all costs. I hate the expense, the competition, the pace and even the people at times.
- **Indifference to the City:** Don't particularly love or hate the city. Just getting by while getting what's necessary, before moving away.
- **Love for the City:** Realizing that the city brings out the best (art, food, academics, medicine, jobs etc.) and worst (greed, exploitation, debauchery, selfishness, immorality, violence, etc.) in people, we resolve to love our city enough to put down roots here for God's glory!

Main Idea: Leveraging My Life for the Mission Where I Live, Work, and Play involves Engaging my City with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." **Jeremiah 29:4-7**

Three Elements to Engaging My City from Jeremiah 29:4-7

- I. **Accept God's Assignment to My City** - *"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon"* **Jeremiah 29:4**

Background: In 597 BC, God sent the Babylonian Empire and Nebuchadnezzar to invade Jerusalem, destroy the city and take over 3,000 of the brightest, strongest and healthiest Jewish people back to Babylon against their will. This was due to the Jewish people's continual disobedience to God's law & prophets (i.e., Jeremiah). Chapter 29 records a letter sent from the prophet to the exiles on how to live in a city that does not always share their values and provides the biblical basis for our message on Engaging Your City.

God, not the Babylonians. or Nebuchadnezzar, sent the people into exile. They were where they were because God put them there! The same is true for us, we live, work, and play here because God placed us here. We have been assigned here, so ACCEPT IT & Embrace it!

"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory." **Ephesians 1:11-12** – **Where you live, work, & play is for His glory!**

God has assigned you and me to NYC for this moment in our life for His glory. We can complain about it, or resist it, or make it all about us...or, we can accept that assignment and leverage our life for His mission right now!

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- II. **Advance God's Kingdom in My City** - *"Build houses & live in them; plant gardens & eat their produce. Take wives and have sons & daughters; take wives for your sons, & give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons & daughters; multiply there, & do not decrease."* **Jeremiah 29:5-6**

The exiles had false prophets saying they would be going home soon, so keep living in tents and don't put roots down in Babylon. Jeremiah corrected the lie, telling the Jews to settle in and advance God's kingdom in Babylon.

Specific Kingdom Activity in My City to the Glory of God:

- **Get Established (vs. 5a):** Make a home with your neighbors in mind.
- **Cultivate My Area (vs. 5b):** Put down roots, trade, do business, etc.
- **Start a Family (vs. 6):** God's idea! Get married, have kids, multiply!
 - Some are called to be single (1 Cor. 7), but the rule is true!

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." **1 Corinthians 10:31** – **As we do all these things, we do it to God's glory**

Rather than trying to get out or adopting an approach of taking all you can from the city, God is calling us to put down roots where we live, work, and play for his glory and the GOOD of our city! See your neighbors, not as nuisances, but as people made in the image of God who Jesus died to save!

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III. **Ask God's Peace for My City** - *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*
Jeremiah 29:7

Three times in this one verse the Hebrew word *shalom* is used, which means *wholeness, completeness, and lasting peace*. This *shalom* had always been a desired reality for the Jewish people, but this was very different...They were to both SEEK and PRAY for Shalom in BABYLON as their quality of life was inextricably tied to the quality of life for all Babylonians. (But, enemies!)

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” **Luke 6:27-28**

Seek the welfare and pray for those we like, and those we don't. Leveraging our lives where we live, work, & play as we seek the welfare of others & pray for them. Go through the highs & lows, grieve losses & celebrate wins together.

Jesus is the prime example of what it means to leverage a life, including engaging the city with the gospel. He shows us how & why!

“And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.” **Luke 19:41**

“But he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” **Luke 4:43**

You cannot engage your city with the gospel until you have experienced the gospel for yourself. Jesus died on the cross for your sins, rose from the dead, and is willing to forgive and save you from your sins as you turn to him in repentance and faith. **Embrace the Gospel, then Engage Your City!**

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *New Bible Commentary* – Carson, France, Motyer, & Wenham (1994)
- *New American Commentary: Jeremiah/Lamentations* – F.B. Huey (1993)
- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *Faithlife Study Bible* – Barry, Mangum, Brown, & Heiser (2012)