

## STUDY 3

# Examining Your Self-Talk

JEREMIAH 1:1-9,17-19; ROMANS 12:1-2

**W**e know our words can hurt and wound others, but the Bible tells us that we can also hurt and paralyze ourselves with negative self-talk. Many of us, men and women alike, struggle with self-criticism, tearing ourselves down, and minimizing our abilities. Do you find yourself saying: “God can’t love me because...?” “I failed, so I’ll always be a failure.” “Why would anyone want to hire me, marry me, or be my friend when I’m...?” What we think about ourselves and about God can affect us emotionally, spiritually, and physically. But we’re never helpless victims of our habitual thought patterns. The Bible makes it clear that we don’t have to remain mired in negative and paralyzing thoughts. We can have transformed minds as we replace lies with scriptural truth.

In this study we’ll see that Jeremiah, a man whom God called and used greatly, also wrestled with negative self-talk. He

didn't want to do what God asked because he was sure he wouldn't succeed. However, God knew Jeremiah's potential and challenged him not to limit the impact of his life. He says the same to us.

1. When you are asked to do something that might stretch you beyond your comfort zone, what are your immediate thoughts and feelings? In what ways do these thoughts and feelings influence your response?

**READ JEREMIAH 1:1-9,17-19.**

2. What facts do you learn about Jeremiah from verses 1 through 3?
3. What was God's message to Jeremiah (verses 4-5)?

4. As you apply the truth of this message today, what do these verses teach you about the following:

your uniqueness

God's awareness of who you are and the potential he has put in you

5. What do you think Jeremiah meant by his reply to God (verse 6)?

Have you ever felt like Jeremiah? Explain.

6. Where was Jeremiah's focus? How did this focus affect his response to God?

7. On what could Jeremiah have focused instead (verses 8-9,19)?

What positive difference might this change of focus have made in Jeremiah's thoughts and feelings?

✧ 8. Answering Jeremiah, the Lord said, "Do not *say*, 'I am only a child.'" (verse 7, emphasis added). In what ways might saying negative words repeatedly to yourself or about yourself affect the quality of your walk with God?

How might it affect the direction of your life?

If you feel comfortable doing so, describe a time when your self-talk kept you (or almost kept you) from moving forward into a new situation.

**READ ROMANS 12:1-2.**

✧ 9. What did Paul urge Christians to do in verse 1?

What do you think this means for us today?

10. How might negative self-talk hinder people from presenting themselves wholeheartedly to God?

11. According to verse 2, what is the key to inner and outer transformation?

Why is this the starting place for healthy, biblical self-talk?

### *Life Changes*

✎ 12. We must train ourselves to think the truth—about ourselves, other people, and God. What changes do you think God wants you to make in your self-talk?

13. List three steps you can take to begin renewing your mind. (See Philippians 2:12-13; 3:12-14; and 4:4-8,13 for ideas.) Share these steps with your group and help one another put them into practice.