



[Jeremiah 7:4-12](#)

(4) Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these. (5) For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; (6) If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: (7) Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. (8) Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. (9) Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; (10) And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? (11) Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD. (12) But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.

King James Version

We can learn a great deal from the prophets' descriptions of conditions in Israel in the years just before [God](#) scattered them. Jeremiah 7 contains an especially vivid description, describing attitudes and conduct just before Babylon's invasion of Judah. Anybody who cares and diligently searches for the causes of our present scattered condition can easily find many of them.

Verse 4 reveals a casual, self-righteous, and presumptuous self-confidence that, since they were fellowshiping with the "church," everything would be fine! Nevertheless, the enemy conquered Judah and took the people into captivity, so membership in the church is no guarantee that judgment will not come on us individually or collectively. Jeremiah expresses the Jews' prideful *assumption* of being above correction, an attitude that has its basis in a confused understanding of God's [love](#) and the purity of His holiness.

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We must be prepared for God's Kingdom. The attitudes and conduct of these people, expressed here but applied to us now, show that we were not living up to God's expectations. We can learn, though, that fellowshiping with the church without the right attitudes and conduct can easily foster a delusion that all is well, while by God's judgment all clearly is not well! Verses 5-6 illustrate that their judgment of how to apply God's Word in their lives was severely compromised. They definitely did not love their neighbor as themselves; they were unmistakably self-centered. Is there more evidence here that we may have been the same?

Verse 10 expresses the extent this delusion had permeated their lives. By ignoring God's moral and ethical demands, they were in effect telling God that attending services released them from the guilt accrued during the rest of their lives. It was as if God's judgments did not apply to them. They were after all "in the church," right? It reads almost as if they felt they were doing God a favor by showing up! What is more, while there, they heard insipid messages telling them, "[Peace](#), peace. Everything is okay. God's [grace](#) covers all."

Though ceremonially going through the motions, they lacked thorough dedication and devotion to God's way in every aspect of life. Beginning in verse 12, God reminds them that they should remember the history of former generations and take warning because they are on track to experience the same calamities. Have we in our time repeated their assumptions that everything is fine when it is not? It seems so, since the Laodicean assumes he is rich and increased with goods and needs nothing. The reality is that he is blind to his true condition and not clothed with God's righteousness.

God has called us into a courtship relationship leading to marriage with [Jesus Christ](#). He makes clear what He expects from us as our part in this relationship. Jesus says to His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" ([John 14:15](#)). A love relationship requires each to sacrifice thoughtfully for the other. Keeping of the commandments does not "save" us, but it prepares us to live eternally with Him and shows our attitude of submission to Him.

[Jeremiah 7:5-9](#) plainly portrays precious little concern for fellow man. In fact, most of the sins Jeremiah directly mentions are transgressions of the last five commandments. Only one [sin](#), [idolatry](#), focuses directly on the first four commandments. This suggests that a breakdown in human relationships quickly followed the disintegration of the relationship between God and Israel. Similarly, [1 John 4:20-21](#) calls upon those who say they love God and claim to be Christians to love the brethren. John goes so far as to say that, if we do not love the brethren, our claim to love God is a lie! This is another area in which many fell short, and it led to division, which continues to the present.

This indicates that self-absorbed people indulged themselves at others' expense. Self-absorption produces strained marital relationships (and ultimately divorce) and alienated children as they and their parents go in wildly different directions. Within congregations, it yields shallow and casual relationships that show little true concern. Its fruit are intolerance, impatience, strong opinions about trivial things, offense, harsh judging, and division.

It produces busy people who feel as if they are accomplishing a great deal because they seem to get many things done. The church member may even prosper more than at any other time in his life. However, the busy-ness is spent on things of minor spiritual importance. Meanwhile, the [relationship with God](#), while existent, is allowed to be neglected. That is what [Laodiceanism](#) is. People bring it in from [the world](#) where God is a figurehead but with whom there is no relationship. It is a deceitful fruit of too much time, attention, and energy focused on the wrong things. Laodiceanism is deceitful because the Bible reveals that the person afflicted with it is unaware that he has it. He is blind to it, but God certainly is not because He is being neglected in this relationship. How can He possibly marry someone who will not draw close to Him because of involvement in so many other things?

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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