

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

Before you make copies and use the studies...

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- **[DONATIONS]** – Although there is no charge for the studies, feel free to make a non-deductible donation to help offset the annual cost of web-hosting, etc. at: [paypal.me/handsofthur](https://www.paypal.me/handsofthur)
- **[QUESTIONS/COMMENTS]** – Email them to: information@fransciacca.com

Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- “***The Road to Shalom***” *podcast* – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- “***What’s Wrong With the World?***” – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- “***Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage***” – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS
Like Us

JEREMIAH

“Longing to be successful.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“Folks Like Us” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

JEREMIAH

“Longing to be successful.”

A **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – In God’s economy, faithfulness to His cause is more valuable to Him than our personal standards of success.

“When God has need of the proclamation of His word, He must find as an instrument one who in his own personal and private life has become familiar with the voice of God. — G. Campbell Morgan

Jeremiah's preaching ministry lasted forty years, from 627 to 587 B.C. He provided a distinct voice of prophetic judgment prior to, during, and after the darkest hour in the history of Judah, the Southern Kingdom. During his ministry the throne received and dismissed five kings, his people were taken into captivity, and the city of David and the temple were destroyed. Of all God's prophets, Jeremiah stands out as one whose heart was so intertwined with the heart of God that sometimes in his writings it is actually difficult to know which of the two is speaking!

Jeremiah's people had fastened onto the idea that God would never destroy His own "home"- Jerusalem and the temple. As a result of this assumption, a false sense of safety became so deeply rooted in the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom that forty years of anointed preaching could not dislodge it. Despite Judah's resistance, Jeremiah persevered in his prophetic role.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 1 and Lamentations 1-5

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. What external indications made Jeremiah's ministry seem like a "failure"?
 - Jeremiah 1:16-19 –
 - Jeremiah 7:27 –
2. What other events took place during the forty years of Jeremiah's ministry that seemed to point to him as a "failure"?
 - Jeremiah 18:13-18 –
 - Jeremiah 19:14 - 20:2 –
 - Jeremiah 26:1-11, 24 –
 - Jeremiah 32:1-5, 33:1 –

- Jeremiah 36:1-3, 20-26 –
- Jeremiah 37:11-16 –
- Jeremiah 38:1-6 –
- Jeremiah 42:19- 43:3 –

3. In what ways was Jeremiah actually a “success”?
4. What principle contrasting "successful performance" with faithfulness can you see in Micah 6:6-8?
5. What was Paul's most important goal in ministry? (Acts 20:24, 2 Timothy 4:6-7).
6. Can you think of an area of life or ministry where your focus has switched from faithfulness to results? Take some time to write a brief letter to God, yielding the results of your ministry to Him and asking for a renewed perspective.
7. Jeremiah experienced intense feelings of rejection and failure even though he was in the will of God. Read Lamentations 3:1-20 a number of times, and then record the emotions he experienced.
8. What was the focus of this servant's thoughts at a time of depression caused by his apparent failure? (Lamentations J:21-24).
9. Why do you think this focus was so crucial for Jeremiah?
10. What would have happened if he had done otherwise?

11. This attitude has been the sure foundation for other servants of God who knew the difficulty of defeat. What do the following statements show about the focus of Habakkuk and Paul?

- Habakkuk 3:17-19 –

- (Paul) 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 –

12. Jeremiah had to *take charge* of his thoughts when faced with the crushing depression of the seemingly worthless efforts of forty years. This resolute attitude is evidenced in Lamentations 3:21. As you consider your answer to Question 6, write a personal resolution to counter your wrong thinking, meditating on the character of God instead of on your ministry. For scriptural support, see Isaiah 44:21, 46:4, 49:15-16, 54:10, Lamentations 3:22-23, and Habakkuk 3:17-19.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- The *basis* of your hope- Lamentations 3:22-23
- The *object* of ministry- Colossians 3:22-24

OPTIONAL

1. Using Bible software if you have it, follow the word "faithful" through the Gospels. Jesus used the word repeatedly in connection with serving Him. In your study, make a list of the benefits of faithfulness and the dangers of faithlessness. (*free online Bible searches may be done at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/>*)
2. Study God's statements to Jeremiah in chapter one of Jeremiah. Look for phrases where God says, "I . . .," listing the assurances *and* promises given to this dedicated prophet.