



the gospel

ROMANS

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE
CHAPTERS 9-12
(JAN.—MAR. 2018)

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Did God Make A Mistake?

Romans 9:1-18

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Jan. 21.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, January 15

1. Before moving forward into this section, spend a few moments **journaling** or **praying** over the following two questions: "Did God fail to keep His promises to Israel? If God is not faithful to the Jews, how do we know He will be faithful to the church?" (If you need some help with knowing the promises God made to Israel, you might look first at today's second question below.)
2. What blessings does Paul list in Romans 9:4-5 to show that Israel was, indeed, the object of God's special favor?

Tuesday, January 16

1. **Read Romans 9:1-18. Journal** or **pray** about the following questions. "Do you feel sorrow for the state of your lost fellow man/woman? How sorrowful? Does it reach the level of anguish Paul felt? If you truly grieve because of this, what will you do? If you don't, what will you do?"
2. What is the connection between your conscience and the indwelling Holy Spirit?

Wednesday, January 17

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following question. "How does the knowledge that salvation is based on God's choice, Him who calls, and not on our works (9:11), affect our attitudes and lifestyles now?"
2. What is God's purpose in election? (Some other passages you may consider are Acts 13:48, Romans 8:27-30, and Ephesians 1.)

Thursday, January 18

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following question. “In verse 15, Paul quotes Exodus 33:19 (‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy’). Why is this an OK thing for God to do? Is God ever arbitrary?”
2. Who are the children of the promise (9:8; 1 Peter 2:9; Galatians 3:29, 4:28)?

Friday, January 19

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following questions. “What does Paul mean by the idea of hardening someone’s heart (9:18)? Does God still choose to harden some people’s hearts? If so, how does this come about?”
2. **Read Matthew 26:59-66.** What does this passage add to your understanding of Paul’s explanation in Romans 9?

Saturday, January 20

1. **Journal** or **pray** about the following questions. “Do you ever find yourself feeling like circumstances are unfair? What are ways you have lost sight of how compassionate and merciful God truly is?”
2. **Read Matthew 23:37-38.** What do you think Jesus was telling His audience when He said, “Your house is left to you desolate”?

God's Justice & Grace

Romans 9:19-33

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Jan. 28.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, January 22

1. **Read Romans 9:19-33.** Thinking about 9:19, **journal** or **pray** about a time in the past when you felt like you let God down in a situation that He caused.
2. 9:19 asks the question, "Why does God find fault with Israelites who turned from Him if He didn't choose them?" What is the answer in 20-24?

Tuesday, January 23

1. In verse 21, Paul refers to God's "right" to create people with different purposes. **Journal** or **pray** a response to the questions, "Why can this be an offensive idea? What about God helps you to see beyond the offense?"
2. **Read Romans 9:24-29.** Throughout the chapter, Paul has been saying that many sons of Abraham are not chosen and only some are chosen. Can you see this idea in the two quotes, from Hosea in 9:25-26, and from Isaiah in 9:27-29? What words are key?

Wednesday, January 24

1. **Look at 9:22.** **Journal** or **pray**, describing a situation in your life where God could have demonstrated His wrath and/or could have made His power known, but didn't. What was the impact?
2. In Romans 9:25-26, Paul quotes from two places in the book of Hosea (1:10 and 2:23), as he affirms that the Gentiles have been given a place in God's kingdom. How does Paul's use of these quotations extend from the original meaning of the text in Hosea? (To whom are these verses spoken in Hosea vs. in Romans?) What is the context in Hosea regarding the people of Israel (what were they guilty of)?

Thursday, January 25

1. **Journal** or **pray** in response to the following questions. "If you were an ethnic Jew, reading Paul's quotations of the Old Testament in 25-29, what emotions and thoughts might you have in response? How do you respond now?"
2. In Romans 9:27-28, Paul quotes from Isaiah 10:22-23. According to Isaiah 10:20, what was the specific error that Israel made? How are we at risk of sinning in similar ways?

Friday, January 26

2. **Read 9:30-31. Journal or pray** a response to the following questions. “What role does the concept of ‘fairness’ have within God’s kingdom? Do you feel this is unfair? ☹”
3. **Read Isaiah 1:1-23**, the context for Paul’s quote in Romans 9:29. How does Isaiah 1:9 function within this passage in Isaiah? Why do you think Paul quoted this particular verse?

Saturday, January 27

1. **Read 9:32-33. Journal or pray** a response to the questions, “How have you seen Jesus be a stumbling stone for yourself or others? How have you seen God use someone’s stumbling for His glory?”
2. **Read 9:30-33.** Who or what did the Jews stumble over (Is. 28:16; 8:13-14)? How do Paul’s statements in verses 30-31 relate to what he says in 32-33? (If you have ever struggled to understand Ephesians 2:13-22, this is the basis for the tension Paul solves in that passage.)

God gives men the power to choose, and man’s choices never go outside God’s providential and sovereign will, yet He holds men accountable for their choices.

—Tommy Nelson

The Wrong Righteousness

Romans 10:1-17

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Feb. 4.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, January 29

1. **Read Romans 10:1-17. Journal or pray** about a situation where you thought you were right but eventually found out you were mistaken. How did you learn of your error? How did you respond when you learned the truth?
2. **Consider** the following question. When Paul addresses his “brethren” in 10:1, who is included? Jews? Gentiles? Both? Are they saved?

Tuesday, January 30

1. **Journal or pray** a response to the question, “Why isn’t zeal for God enough (10:2)?”
2. What does it mean for someone to establish his/her own righteousness (10:3)? Think of examples of how people do this.

Wednesday, January 31

1. **Look again at 10:9-13.** Many times we hear the language, “Have you made Jesus your Lord?” **Journal or pray** a response to the questions, “What are all the ways verses 9-13 would say this statement is wrong? Why is this important?”
2. What does it mean that Christ is the “end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes” (10:4)?

Thursday, February 1

1. **Journal or pray** a response to the questions, “What is involved in believing in your heart that Jesus is Lord? How have you experienced this?”
2. Is calling on the name of the Lord different from believing in your heart (10:9, 13)? How so?

Friday, February 2

1. **Re-read 10:11. Journal or pray** a response to the questions, “Have you ever been disappointed that you believed in Christ? What about people who professed belief and then something happened to make them angry or bitter toward God? Do they prove this verse wrong? Is that what this verse is talking about?”
2. From this passage, how would you answer the questions, “What must I do to be saved”? How might the answer be different if you were talking to a Jew versus a non-Jew?”

Saturday, February 3

1. In 10:5-13, Paul contrasts two kinds of “righteousness.” What are they, and how do they differ? How do we ensure that we have embraced the righteousness of Christ?
2. What events form the essential link between the facts of the gospel and the response of faith (10:14-15)?

Rejection and a Remnant

Romans 10:18-11:10

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Feb. 11.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, February 5

1. **Read Romans 10:18-11:10.** What do you observe about the character of God in this section? **Respond to God** and what you see of Him, either in prayer, journaling, or both.
2. Connecting to last week's study, **read 10:16-21.** Just because we tell the good news doesn't mean that everyone will believe. Paul dismisses two reasons some give for why some Israelites did NOT believe. What does he say?

Tuesday, February 6

1. Considering the whole section, from 10:18 to 11:10, what was the root of Israel's unbelief described here? (If you need help, refresh your memory of 10:3). **Journal** or **pray** a response to the questions, "Do you have moments or behaviors that are tied to your own unbelief? How can you move beyond those weaknesses?"
2. Paul's quotation in 10:19 comes from Deuteronomy 32:31, and 10:20-21 comes from Isaiah 65:1-2. How does the age of these texts (~1400 and 800 years) impact Paul's argument?

Wednesday, February 7

1. The section beginning in 11:1 is based around a rhetorical question? What is the question? What support does he give to his answer (11:1, 2)? Who was truly responsible for rejection? **Journal** or **pray** about any occasions when you reject God, even in seemingly small things.
2. Considering 10:20, how does God go about revealing Himself to those who do not ask for Him?

Thursday, February 8

1. Paul identified a remnant chosen by the grace of God (11:5). What does this mean? Who are they? **Journal** or **pray** about the significance for you that God works this way.
2. Name some of those among the remnant during Paul's time. What was the response of the majority of Israel? Is there a remnant now?

Friday, February 9

1. **Journal** or **pray** a response to the question, "Does Paul's emphasis on God's sovereignty (11:2, 5, 7 especially) bother you? Why or why not?"
2. **Read Romans 11:7-8**. What does it mean that the "rest" were hardened? Who does the "those" refer to in verse 7? Does this mean that God chooses randomly? What does it mean? (Look back at Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 6:10, and 29:10 to see these references in their original context.)

Saturday, February 10

1. In 11:9-10, Paul quotes Psalm 69. What type of psalm is this? (If you can't tell, a study Bible might tell you, or you should easily be able to find this information by searching on the internet.) **Journal** or **pray** about the attitude David expresses in Psalm 69 and how it relates to the unbelief Paul discusses in Romans 11.
2. What is the point of the illustration concerning Elijah in Romans 11:2-5? (see 1 Kings 19:9-18)

Riches for the World

Romans 11:11-24

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Feb. 18.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, February 12

1. **Read Romans 11:11-24** and then **journal** or **pray** a response to the passage. You might consider the questions, “What two illustrations did Paul use to show that God was not finished with the Jews? Why are these passages effective or limited?”
2. What is the time frame of “their transgression means riches for the world” (11:12), and what is the time frame of “their full restoration”? (11:15 says the same thing with the phrases “their rejection” and “their acceptance.”)

Tuesday, February 13

1. **Look again at 11:11-12.** What do you see about God’s power to overcome sin? **Reflect** on how you have seen God turn sin or misfortune in one circumstance into blessing in another. **Journal** or **pray** a response.
2. Explain the “holy dough” picture in 11:16. This is language that we see elsewhere in Numbers 15:18 (in the verses following), Nehemiah 10:37, and Ezekiel 44:30.

Wednesday, February 14

1. You (assuming you’re not Jewish), a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in (11:17). What is the significance of this? **Journal** or **pray** a response.
2. In 11:16-24 Paul uses an illustration of an olive tree to explain the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. From this illustration, identify:

The cultivated olive tree/root

The wild olive tree/shoot

The “branches” which have been broken off

The “branches” which have been grafted in

Thursday, February 15

1. **Read 11:21-24.** It might be easy to read these verses and think that they are saying you can lose your salvation. Other passages like Romans 8:38-39, John 10:28-29b, Ephesians 4:30, and John 5:24 clearly express that one who is born again cannot lose his/her salvation. Why isn't Romans 11:21-24 saying you can lose your salvation? **Journal** or **pray** your gratitude to God for the eternal security believers have.
2. In 11:23-24, Paul says that "God is able to graft them [Israelites] in again." What specifically is Paul expecting to happen?

Friday, February 16

1. As you read through this section (and the broader context in Romans), you probably have some questions. Write down those questions. Make your best effort to propose answers. **Journal** or **pray**, asking God for wisdom and insight and faith to trust Him despite your limited understanding.
2. What is the ultimate destiny of Israel? Whom does this include?

Saturday, February 17

1. As you consider this section again (11-24), What is Paul telling the Gentiles to not forget? **Journal** or **pray** your acknowledgement and thanksgiving of these things.
2. What is Paul's main practical application point in verse 17-19? What about in 20-23? What attitude should we have toward Jews? Toward God?

*Predestination is a matter of mercy,
not justice.*

Beloved Enemies

Romans 11:25-36

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Feb. 25.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, February 19

1. **Read Romans 11:25-36** and then **journal** or **pray** a response to the passage. You might consider the question, “Why is the ugly truth about sin absolutely essential to a faithful and powerful witness to the gospel of Jesus?”
2. What is the “mystery” Paul references in **11:25**? What does the term “mystery” refer to in the NT?

Tuesday, February 20

1. Much of Paul’s message in chapter 11 emphasizes unity and commonality. Mitch White has referred to this as “team thinking,” citing 11:25-27 as an example. What are some of the ways that Paul has called people to think as a team in this chapter? **Journal** or **pray** through the question, “How does that perspective impact your attitude toward those who don’t believe in Jesus?”
2. What do you think is the definition of “all” in verse 26? Can you correlate Revelation 7 with the scenario in 11:26-27?

Wednesday, February 21

1. Look again at **11:29**. What does God’s faithfulness as reflected in this verse mean to you? Have you lost track of your God-given calling or any God-given gifts? What truth in this verse can help you get back on track? **Journal** or **pray** a response.
2. We must continue in God’s kindness, continue to follow Christ, or we will be cut off (11:22), but God’s call is irrevocable (29). How can both these things be true?

Thursday, February 22

1. **11:31** suggests that God showed mercy to the Gentiles to cause Israel to notice and desire the same mercy. In general, do you think people respond to this type of motivation? Why or why not? Have you been motivated by seeing God's mercy toward others?
2. Why were the Jews enemies of Christians from the standpoint of the gospel (11:28)?

Friday, February 23

1. **Prayerfully journal** or **pray** through **11:33-36**.
2. According to **11:28-32**, what do Jews and Gentiles have in common?

Saturday, February 24

1. A central theme in this section is that **God's wisdom surpasses our own**. Think about a situation when you realized you were not as wise as you estimated (11:25) and discovered the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (33). **Journal** or **pray** in response to your reflection.
2. After chapter 11, Paul makes a major transition into the rest of his letter. What is the significance of **11:33-36** to everything that Paul has said in chapters 1-11? Why is it a fitting conclusion to this section? If you are familiar with the focus of chapters 12-15, why is it also an appropriate transition into the next broad section?

Right Relationships

Romans 12:1-8

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Mar. 4.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, February 26

1. **Read Romans 12:1-8. Journal or pray** a response to the passage. You might consider, without necessarily referencing the passage, what motivates you to obey God. If you have some extra time, you might also start answering tomorrow's devotional questions.
2. Thinking about 12:1, we tend to think of the Old Testament sacrificial system as completely abolished once Jesus came. We have also probably thought that Paul's reference to "sacrificing" one's body is a nice way to "pay honor" or make an allusion to the Old Testament, while recognizing that all the OT sacrifice stuff is now passé. On the other hand, consider that just six weeks after Paul wrote Romans 12:1-2 he actually did offer an animal sacrifice in the temple to complete his Nazirite vow (Acts 21). How does that impact his "living sacrifice" image in 12:1? He really could have talked about offering real animal sacrifices, but of course, he didn't. Why not?

Tuesday, February 27

1. How does this section differ from what Paul presented in chapters 1-11? How would you categorize 12? Paul begins 12:1 with the word "therefore." What's it there for? What has Paul said in the verses immediately before chapter 12 and in the entirety of chapters 1-11 that have bearing on this new section? **Journal or pray** about the connection between 1) the fact that we can't earn God's love and approval and 2) living a life that is pleasing to Him.
2. Paul lists several gifts in 12:6-8. He presents similar lists, though with different items, in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28 and Ephesians 4:11. Despite the particulars differing in each passage, what is his overarching message about the purpose of the gifts and the way they are used?

Wednesday, February 28

1. When Paul tells the Romans not to be “conformed to this world” (12:2), what does he mean? When you think back on what he has explained in chapters 1-11, does your answer change at all? Evaluate how well you do with this command, and talk to God about how He sees things. You can **journal** or **pray**.
2. Still thinking about spiritual gifts, as we did yesterday, would you say that a person receives a gift permanently for the rest of his life? Or do gifts come and go for various seasons and types of service? Are you able to support your opinion with Scripture? What is the impact if gifts are permanent? What about if gifts are provided for specific seasons?

Thursday, March 1

1. Paul tells the Romans to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (12:2). Think about various ways to work with the Holy Spirit in this renewing. How has it happened for you in the past? How have you seen others renewed? **Journal** or **pray** about at least one specific action step you will take to “be transformed.”
2. In 12:2, Paul states that believers can “prove what the will of God is.” What does this mean? How does one go about doing this? Paul uses similar language in Ephesians 5:10, 5:17, and Colossians 1:9. What does Paul’s confidence about how believers can know God’s will mean to you?

Friday, March 2

1. 12:3 tells us that we are to think of ourselves with the measure of faith God has given us. Why is how we think of ourselves important? **Journal** or **pray**, asking God to help you see yourself as He sees you.
2. Paul taught the Romans a lot about the Holy Spirit in chapter 8. How does that knowledge about the Holy Spirit apply to the instructions he provides in 12:1-8? How is the Spirit involved in these things?

Saturday, March 3

1. What does Paul mean when he says in 12:5 that “each member belongs to all the others”? **Journal** or **pray** about how this affects our actions and attitudes toward fellow believers in Christ. Consider the broader context of 12:4-8, too.
2. Considering Paul’s thoughts in 12:1-2 about relating to God and in 12:3-8 about relating to other believers, what role does independence play in the life of the believer? How do we normally support our arguments for independence? Do we give it more credibility than it deserves, or it truly a biblical ideal?

Right Living
Romans 12:9-21

3 Approaches, 1 Goal: Knowing God better by meeting Him with His revealed word

1. **Reading Plan:** Read the passage some time before it is taught on Mar. 11.
2. **Devotional Plan:** Follow step 1 for each day of the week.
3. **Bible Study:** Follow all of the steps for each day.

Monday, March 5

1. **Read Romans 12:9-21. Journal or pray** a response to the passage. You might consider the question, "What happens if you follow the commands of 12:9-21?"
2. According to Paul in this section, what does it mean to love with God's love? How do we go about doing this?

Tuesday, March 6

1. **Journal or pray** a response to the questions, "What are the connections between these pairs: doctrine and duty, beliefs and behavior, learning and living? How are these related to relationships?"
2. What knowledge helps us to be "patient in affliction"? (12:12; see Romans 5:2-5, 8:18, 8:23-25)

Wednesday, March 7

1. Spend some time thinking specifically about the type of love Paul describes in 12:9-13. In particular, what opportunities do you have to do the following?
 - Love without hypocrisy (9:9)
 - Be devoted to a brother or sister (9:10)
 - Give preference to another (9:10)

Journal or pray about these opportunities, asking God for help to honor Him in them.

2. What is the difference between "sincere" and "insincere" love? (12:9; see also 1 John 3:16-18)

Thursday, March 8

1. Spend some more time thinking specifically about the type of love Paul describes in 12:9-13. In particular, what opportunities do you have to do the following?
 - Diligently and fervently serving the Lord (9:11)
 - Devotedly and joyfully praying for others, even in the midst of challenges (9:12)
 - Contributing to the needs of the saints and/or practicing hospitality (9:13)

Journal or **pray** about these opportunities, asking God for help to honor Him in them.

2. In general, we ought to mimic the character of God in all things, but 12:19 offers a rare occasion when that isn't true. Can you think of any other areas where God's behavior is not appropriate for us to follow?

Friday, March 9

1. A normal Christian life is characterized by peace—peace with God, of course, peace within ourselves, and peace toward others. Paul suggests in 12:18 that we need to do *whatever* we can to restore and/or maintain peace with others, both in the body of Christ and outside of it. **Journal** or **pray**, asking God to show you any relationship in which you do not have peace and still have opportunity to promote peace. (And then respond in obedience to what He shows you!)
2. How are we to respond to those who mistreat us? What answers to this question can be found in 12:14, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21? What knowledge helps to keep us from taking revenge on those who mistreat us (12:19; see also Luke 6:35-36; Romans 2:9-11)

Saturday, March 10

1. In many ways, the essence of the gospel is summed up in Paul's exhortation "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (12:21). Is there an evil situation in your life where you need to trust God to overcome evil with good? Do you have opportunities to apply good to evil around you? **Journal** or **pray**, asking God to help you recognize evil and to think creatively about how to apply good.
2. Why does Paul specify that we are to share with "God's people" who are in need (12:12)? Shouldn't we share with everyone (see Gal. 6:10)? How does this command compare with 2 Thessalonians 3:10? How does the Christian view of hospitality differ from the world's view (12:13; see also Luke 14:12-14)?

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