

Message Discussion Guide THE MARVEL OF GOD'S MERCY

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

December 12, 2010

Romans 9

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to answer the following questions: How involved do you consider God to be in your life? At what level of detail does His sovereignty control your life?

Explain that today we will discuss God's sovereignty over all things that happen in life—good and bad.

Option 2

Invite learners to answer the following question: Name five things from this past week that was evidence of the grace of God in your life. Did you deserve any of the evidences? Why did God extend His grace to you? Why did God extend His gracious call to salvation to you?

Explain that today we will discuss God's gracious call to salvation.

Review the Message . . .

- We long for the salvation of others.
 - This is not an argument for theologians to have.
 - This is an affection for Christians to feel.
- We lean on the faithfulness of God.
 - We cannot deny God's election.
 - His call to salvation is unconditional.
 - It is not based on who we are.
 - It is not based on what we have done.
 - It is not based on how we would respond

Does God desire for everyone to be saved? Doesn't God love everyone in the world?

- Remember the multiple perceptions of the will of God.
 - God's revealed will: What He declares in His Word.
 - God's secret will: What He decrees in the world.
- Remember the multiple dimensions of the love of God.

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- **God's general love for all people.**
- **God's particular love for some people.**
- **When we talk about God's call to salvation here, we are talking about what God decrees in the world according to His particular love for some people.**
 - **His call to salvation is effectual.**
 - **This compels humility in ourselves.**
 - **This creates hope for others.**

Discussion

- Direct learners to scan the chapter and passage headings of Romans 1-8. What were the major themes of those chapters?
- Point out that Paul wrote a thorough explanation of the sinfulness of man and his need for a Savior, God's provision of righteousness through Christ, to sinful man, and God's faithful commitment to complete the sanctifying work in His people.
- Enlist a learner to read Romans 9:1-5. Describe Paul's desire for his fellow Israelites to know Christ? What does his willingness to give up his own salvation for theirs indicate about his longing?
- Read Romans 9:6a. What does Paul's statement about the Word of God convey about the faithfulness of God?
- Enlist three learners to read Romans 9:6-18, Deuteronomy 7:7-8, and John 15:16. How do these passages clearly teach that God specifically calls some people to Himself (election)?
- Enlist three learners to read 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:16, and 1 Timothy 2:3. How do these verses seem to differ from the ones we just read? How can we understand these two truths in terms of God's general love for the world and His particular love for some people?
- What did Paul outline as the qualifications to be elected by God? What is man's contributing work toward being worthy of God's calling?
- According to Paul, how is God totally and completely responsible for calling men to Himself for salvation? For what purpose does He call some to salvation?
- Enlist a learner to read Job 14:5 and Isaiah 14:24-27. What is certain about God's will in the world? How is His sovereignty displayed in everything—good and bad?

Application . . .

- How does Paul's burden for the lost compare with ours? Do our actions and attitudes reflect a sincere burden for the salvation of others? How can we change it?
- What is our usual initial response to hearing truths about God's specific calling to salvation? Why?
- Do our responses indicate our desire to create a God that we are comfortable with or to worship the God that He truly is?
- How does the truth of God's calling teach us more about the intentionality, intensity, and faithfulness of God's grace and mercy?

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- What should be our response to knowing that we had nothing to do with God calling us to salvation?
- How does God's effectual call affect the way that we pray for others?
 - **We do not deserve God's mercy.**
 - He would be just to condemn all of us.
 - He is gracious to save some of us.
 - **We dare not defy God's authority.**
 - He is Creator . . .
 - We are creature.
 - He is Owner . . .
 - We are owned.
 - He is God . . .
 - We are not.
 - We do not have the right to judge His ways . . .
 - He has the right to do what He wants.
 - **We must not diminish our responsibility.**
 - God is sovereign.
 - We are accountable.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner or two to read Romans 9:19-33.
- How does the analogy of the potter and clay give a clear picture of God's authority in man's life?
- Thinking of the potter and clay analogy, describe the relationship between God and His creation?
- Why does God have all authority to do what He pleases in the world? Why is His judgment completely fair? If God's judgment is what all deserve, how could His grace be considered unfair (undeserved)?
- What does man's propensity to question God reveal about our own sinful nature?
- Enlist a learner to read Romans 6:23. What does this verse say about man's responsibility to pay for his sin?
- Point out that God's sovereignty and man's responsibility work together. How can God maintain His sovereignty and require responsibility from man?

Application . . .

- Why does it make us uncomfortable to think of God having the power and the will to do whatever pleases Him in the world?
- Why would we want to serve a God who did not have this kind of sovereignty and control?
- Why can we trust Him in the midst of His complete sovereignty?

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- How can we get and maintain a proper perspective of ourselves before a completely sovereign and graceful God?
- Why must our faith be content to know that we will not understand all of the things of God? Intellectually speaking, why would it be disconcerting to think that simple man could understand all of the things/ways of God?

- **We live for the glory of God.**

Application . . .

- Knowing that we don't understand exactly how God works or the specifics of His plan to call others to salvation, what is our role in response to His general will that all people come to know Him?
- Why should we not concern ourselves with who is or who is not part of the "elect"?
- How should knowing that there some who are elected, spur us own to share the gospel boldly?
- How can we live unashamedly of the gospel in a way that is used by God to call others to Himself?