



The Book of  
**ROMANS**

**Small Group Study 3: Romans 9–11**

# Introduction

In 2019, The Summit Church will study the book of Romans together. Pastor J.D. will preach through Romans all year long, and our Summit small groups will investigate the message and meaning of Romans in our small group rhythms.

This Bible study booklet includes five studies that comprise the third set in a larger series of studies produced for Summit small groups this year. Each study is designed to aid both our personal study of Romans *and* facilitate our small group discussions. This current volume will investigate Romans 9–11, which explains God’s sovereign choice and the particulars of God’s plan to save both Jews and Gentiles into the same family of God.

Romans 9–11 builds upon the foundation Paul established in Romans 1–8 in many ways. Before we can understand God’s election and his plan for the Jews, we must understand Paul’s presentation of God’s righteousness in the gospel (Romans 1–8). The claims of Romans 9–11 led Paul to demonstrate in Romans 1–3 that everyone needs mercy because everyone deserves wrath. Paul went on to show how salvation was a matter of faith, not nationality or adherence to the law (Romans 2–4). Most pointedly, Romans 9 revisits significant questions that Paul answered in Romans 3:1–8, such as: Is there any advantage for Jews regarding salvation? Does Jewish unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness?

You might find it helpful to read through Romans 1–8 again before you start this study, paying close attention to the first four chapters. Then, throughout this study, ask yourself how each section fits with, rehashes, depends on, and relates to Romans 1–8. Our ability to understand these connections will only enhance our study of Romans 9–11.

This section of Romans is unique, difficult, and intricate. After a discernible shift at the end of chapter 8, Paul leaves the reader pondering what can separate God’s love from his people, and the answer is

emphatically, “Nothing!” (8:31–39). But any Jew reading this in the first century would have paused here, knowing that many prominent Jewish groups had yet to receive God’s love displayed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, Paul spends chapters 9–11 expressing his anguish over this fact (9:2–3; 10:1) and explaining what God is doing among the Jews (9:24–10:4; 10:21; 11:1–12; 11:24–33).

Paul’s primary response to this is to trust in God’s election—that is, his sovereign choice of who to save—and God’s love for his people. And while chapter 9 makes clear that we cannot expect every individual person descended from Israel to eventually be saved, God makes it known that he still has compassion and mercy for the Israelite people. Chapter 11 ends with an explicit statement that God will save the Jewish people in some major capacity, sometime in the future (11:21–32). Once again, Paul will make numerous references to the Old Testament to solidify this expectation, relying even more heavily on these Hebrew Scriptures than in any previous section of Romans. What is Paul saying with this? God has not deviated from his ancient plan for saving both the Jews and the nations.

## How to Use This Guide

Each study begins with some key verses and key principles for each passage, followed by a devotional introduction to prepare our hearts and minds. Then, the Study Guide section incorporates a series of questions specifically designed to help us engage the text of Romans in personal study and small group discussion, according to the H.E.A.R. method of Bible study:

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God’s Word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Work on these exercises at any time throughout the week. Some may find it helpful to work through the exercises in sections—such as two or three blocks of 15 to 20 minutes each, while others may want to study the whole passage in one, hour-long sitting. Whichever approach you choose to take, please answer the exercises *before* your small group meeting. In small groups, we’ll discuss our answers to the Bible study questions together. To maximize our study of God’s Word and the impact it can have on our lives, we encourage everyone to work through *all* the questions in each of the five weekly studies, but small group leaders may choose to focus on some questions more than others.

In addition to the resources in this booklet, we also encourage you and your small group to take full advantage of the following Romans-specific resources.

### ***Explained: The Doctrine of Election Booklet***

Romans 9–11 unpacks the concept of God’s sovereign choice (election) and the particulars of God’s plan to save both Jews and Gentiles into the same family of God. These are weighty matters to consider. Christians of all types can benefit from additional resources and study time to better comprehend such deep ideas.

After all, Christian doctrine—and the journey to understand it— isn’t something reserved for intellectuals or pastors. Rich treasures await those who seek to understand God in a deeper, more intimate way. It might not seem so at first, but understanding Christian theology helps us in the way we encounter and process the world we live in today.

Thus, *Explained: God’s Election in Salvation* is a special-edition, supplemental resource that briefly describes the basics behind the doctrine of election, particularly since Romans 9–11 addresses these themes repeatedly. Download *Explained: The Doctrine of Election* at [summitchurch.com/resources](http://summitchurch.com/resources).

## Discipleship Group Guides

As part of the Summit small group rhythms, we will produce Discipleship Group (D-group) guides throughout the year to assist your group in applying the truths of the gospel and the messages of Romans, encouraging us to grow deeper in fellowship and accountability.

## Romans Scripture Journal

The Romans Scripture Journal is another special-edition resource from The Summit Church to aid your study of Romans in a few specific ways:

- The journal features larger font with extra spacing, wide margins, and blank pages and is designed to give you space to take notes and process what God is saying to you through his Word.
- The journal identifies key terms in bold that correspond with expanded definitions in a glossary at the back of the book.
- The journal includes recommended memory verses from each chapter of Romans, making it easier to hide God’s Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11).

You can find the journal at [summitchurch.com/resources](http://summitchurch.com/resources).

## Bible Reading Plan

Encounter God by reading his Word every day in 2019. In order to help us make daily Bible reading a priority, we have released a daily Bible reading plan for the people of The Summit Church. Our reading plan usually covers one chapter per day, and our scheduled readings allow us to read Romans in its entirety three times throughout the year. The 2019 reading plan also features many books with connections to Romans. Some books represent Scriptures quoted by Paul in Romans (e.g. Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah), while other books represent related themes (e.g. Galatians, James, Hebrews). Join thousands of brothers and sisters in Christ at The Summit Church as we encounter God each day through our 2019 Bible reading plan. You can find the plan at [summitprayer.com/reading](http://summitprayer.com/reading).

## Additional Romans Resources

For even more resources, The Summit Institute has provided a list of recommended Romans resources to meet a variety of ministry needs. Visit [summitrduinstitute.com/romans](http://summitrduinstitute.com/romans).

# Week One: Romans 9:1–13

## Key Verse

- “Now it is not as though the word of God has failed, because not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.” - Romans 9:6 (CSB)

## Key Principles

- We are saved according to God’s purpose and his work in us. Nothing about our salvation is determined by us.
- Not all ethnic Jews are included as the chosen people of God because we all enter into God’s family by grace and through faith.
- Despite what we may believe when times are difficult and circumstances are dark, God’s Word has not failed, nor will it ever fail.
- God is unswerving in his faithfulness to his Word, and he is absolutely sovereign in the salvation of sinners.

*Note: Romans 9:1–13 introduces the doctrine of election. For a brief supplement on the topic, download Explained: God’s Election in Salvation at [summitchurch.com/resources](http://summitchurch.com/resources).*

## Read

Life is complex, isn’t it? Even with God, it remains so. There are days when we feel like God is for us and there are other days where God seems to be absent, unconcerned with us. Does he not care? Does he not see us? We live with a constant challenge to trust. After all, it’s one thing to believe *in* God, it’s another thing to *believe* God. Will God make good on his promises? Is he faithful to complete what he has started? How can we know he is trustworthy? These questions are Paul’s main concern in Romans 9–11.

In Romans 1–8, Paul proclaimed and defended God’s righteousness by highlighting God’s faithfulness and truthfulness. Romans 9, however, addresses an important objection to God’s faithfulness. What makes trusting and resting difficult is that God’s faithfulness doesn’t always look like faithfulness to us. His goodness doesn’t always feel good. In the days before Christ, God made promises with the people of Israel. The promises of God in the Old Testament established a covenant with Israel, as God’s chosen people. And yet, somewhat surprisingly, Paul shows that some Israelites are not experiencing the salvation available to them in Christ (9:2–3). Instead, these Israelites are cut off from Christ and their hearts are hardened (9:2–4, 11:5–7). So, the question becomes: Is God still faithful to his Word?

Paul’s answer to this objection is a relevant one, not only for the Israelites in his day but for any person who hopes in God’s Word. After all, if God has been unreliable in his promises to Israel, what hope is there that he will be faithful in his promises to us? This is an important tension because just a few verses earlier, Romans 8 ends with

some magnificent promises for the people of God. For instance, God promised in Romans 8 that no amount of suffering, nor even death, could ever separate us from his unfailing love! What a promise for God's people!

Romans 9:1–13 helps us better understand God's faithfulness to his Word and his faithfulness to Israel. In Romans 9:1–5, Paul is grieving. His heart is full of "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" (9:2). Paul mourns because fellow Israelites—his own kinsmen—continue to reject Christ and remain outside God's family of promise, because "not all who are descended from Israel" are actually God's people. This is difficult for Paul because he knows all the ways Israel enjoyed God's privileges (9:4–5). Think of the Red Sea. Think of the Promise Land. Paul even mentions the law, the temple, the fact that the Messiah came from their family tree. How could Israel, of all people, not trust God? Were God's promises to Israel ineffective?

Paul's wrestling can cause us to reflect on our own times of wrestling with God. We might wonder why God hasn't moved in the lives of our neighbors. We mourn over the reality that our family members remain far from Christ and uninterested in the gospel. We wonder how people who have seen God work fail to trust him for salvation. We fight to continue on believing that God knows what he's doing. In our prayers we exclaim, "God, why haven't you saved them yet?" But we must look at how Paul wrestles with God. In Paul's emotional wrestling over the salvation of his kinsmen, he moves to the question, "Is God's Word trustworthy?" Paul's concerns start with God's character, not a felt need or a perception of how God should act. As believers, our focus should—like Paul—be on God's righteous character and his ever-faithful Word. We should begin, in short, by answering the same question Paul asks: Is God's Word trustworthy?

Paul doesn't leave his struggles open-ended. He knows the lack of Israel's belief doesn't negate God's covenant or tarnish his character. What could be seen as an unfulfilled promise is far from it. The answer to Paul's wrestling appears in Romans 9:6, where Paul explains with confidence that God's Word has not failed, "because not all who are descended from Israel are Israel." Paul shows that being an ethnic Israelite does not automatically make someone a part of God's chosen people. There is ethnic Israel, and there is chosen Israel. Not every ethnic Israelite is a chosen Israelite. Paul makes sense of this reality using two Old Testament accounts.

First, Paul points to the story of Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 15–21). Though both were Abraham's sons, Paul shows that it was Isaac who was the child of promise (Romans 9:8), while Ishmael was merely a physical descendant. As such, Isaac is a part of God's people and Ishmael is not. Genesis 15–21 warns us to not take matters into our own hands, as this passage demonstrates that God alone is capable of fulfilling his promises. No other story in the Old Testament illustrates these truths so clearly. Likewise, in Romans 9:8–9, Paul affirms that *God's* initiative, efforts, and promises determine those who are truly "Israel."

As a second example, Paul cites Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25–35). In Old Testament times, the firstborn son received the blessing, marked by privilege, prestige, and prominence. According to Genesis 25:23, God chose to bless the younger son Jacob, rather than the older son Esau. Paul reiterates this truth in Romans 9:11–13, emphasizing that God made this decision of unlikely and unearned blessing for Jacob *before* the sons were even born. Romans 9:13 then states God's choice in the most shocking terms, quoting Malachi 1:2–3, "I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau." The emphasis in these verses is on *God's* initiative and *his* choice, not on human lineage or good works.

From these Old Testament stories, Paul shows that the issue of Israel’s unbelief does not nullify God’s faithfulness to his promises. **Not all ethnic Jews are included as the chosen people of God because we all enter into God’s family by grace and through faith.** More importantly, God’s plans and his promises rest solely on his work. **Despite what we may believe when times are difficult and circumstances are dark, God’s Word has not failed, nor will it ever fail.** We cannot disrupt or dismantle God’s purposes and promises. **Whatever God promises and determines, he always brings to pass.** He is righteous in all his ways and in every choice he makes, even when we disagree or have difficulty with what he chooses. As the prophet Isaiah describes, God’s ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8–9).

In wrestling with the text of Romans 9, we must remember these two truths: **God is unswerving in his faithfulness to his Word, and he is absolutely sovereign in the salvation of sinners.** May we rest in the fact that our salvation—and the salvation of our friends, family, and neighbors—does not depend on us, but on *God*. It is not determined by anything we do. It is not our family tree. It is not what we achieve. God saves us according to his purpose and his choice. Thank God for your salvation and continue to ask him for the salvation of those who have yet to believe. We can have great hope knowing that God’s promises of salvation in Christ are trustworthy. As the old hymn exclaims, “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!”<sup>1</sup>

## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God’s righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul’s major points. Then, read Romans 9:1–13 in preparation for this week’s study.**

<sup>1</sup> Attributed to George Keith and Robert Keen, “How Firm a Foundation (Ye Saints of the Lord),” Public Domain.

## Highlight

Underline the list of things that Paul says are true about Israel in Romans 9:1–5.

Circle the names of all the individuals from the Old Testament Paul mentions in Romans 9:6–13.

Highlight all the quotations from the Old Testament stories referenced in Romans 9:6–13.

Find any purpose clauses in this section. (Purpose clauses identify the purpose of an action, e.g., “so that.”)

## Explain

Why does Paul have “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” in his heart (9:2)?

Why does Paul feel the need to emphasize that the Word of God has not failed (9:6)?

What point Paul is trying to make through the stories of Isaac and Ishmael and Jacob and Esau?

Rewrite Romans 9:11–12 in your own words.

## Apply

What are some ways in which you struggle to trust God's Word? How does Romans 9:1–13 speak to your doubts about God's faithfulness to do what he has promised?

What motivates God to save people according to Romans 9:1–13? How does this passage influence how you might explain salvation in your own words?

Romans 9:1–13 teaches us about God's sovereign choice (9:6, 11). What is comforting about this teaching? What questions does it raise for you?

How does Romans 9:1–13 increase your confidence in God as you share the gospel with others?

## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

### **This Week's Prayer Passage: Psalm 119:1–24**

Read Psalm 119:1–24.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **A**doration: "Lord, may you be blessed" (Psalm 119:12). Praise God for his "righteous judgments" (119:7) and delightful Word (119:16, 24). Reflect on the faithfulness of God in giving and keeping his Word. Praise him for his faithfulness.

- **Confession:** Acknowledge to God where you have failed to “keep his decrees” (Psalm 119:2). Ask him to forgive you for not seeking him with all your heart (119:2). Plead with him, “Deal generously with your servant” (119:17).
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for not being hidden but for revealing his ways and will to us (Psalm 119:14–15, 19). Spend some time thanking him for all the moments where his Word has given you protection and hope (119:9–11). Thank him for his faithfulness in Christ to forgive your sins.
- **Supplication:** Ask the Lord to make you wholly devoted to him and his Word. “Don’t let me wander from your commands” (Psalm 119:10). “Teach me your statutes”(119:12). “Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction” (119:18).

# Week Two: Romans 9:14–29

## Key Verse

- “For he tells Moses, ‘I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’” - Romans 9:15 (CSB)

## Key Principles

- Our salvation is an act of God’s mercy, as well as God’s choice.
- God is always perfectly just, both in executing judgment and in extending mercy.
- Both God’s judgment and his mercy display his glory to the world.
- God’s mercy is a key feature of Christ’s work to achieve our salvation.
- Election is a term used to describe God’s sovereign choice regarding whom he saves and whom he does not.
- God’s mercy for humankind shines brighter than his judgment.

## Read

In Week One, we introduced the complexities of God’s election (9:6, 11). We considered that, at times, God’s faithfulness and his goodness don’t always seem faithful or feel good. It’s important for us to realize that when God’s actions don’t make sense to us or line up with what we think they should be, we shouldn’t jump to discredit his faithfulness or his goodness. If his ways are truly higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8–9), it would make sense that we can’t fully grasp all that he is and all that he does.

These truths help us understand Paul’s motivation for writing this letter, specifically chapters 9–11. Paul writes these words from a place of deep anguish for his own people (the Jews), because many of them had not yet put their faith in Jesus Christ. Many in Israel—Paul’s very kinsmen!—were missing out on the best part of God’s plan. Despite all that God had done for them, they had yet to understand and see clearly his greatest provision—Jesus, the Messiah.

So where does Paul turn for comfort over the anguish he feels for his people? And where does Paul go to understand how God’s salvation works? The answer to both questions might surprise us: Paul picks up the doctrine of election (introduced in v. 11) in Romans 9:14–29. **Election is a term used to describe God’s sovereign choice regarding whom he saves and whom he does not.** (For additional resources to help you understand election, visit [summitchurch.com/resources](http://summitchurch.com/resources).)

For many, the idea of election doesn’t sit well. It’s an aspect of God’s character that people wrestle with deeply, and a variety of interpretations exist regarding what election is and how it applies to the Christian life. So, why does Paul turn to election to find comfort in the fact that his kinsmen have yet to receive Christ? Paul sees God’s

glory in God’s plan of salvation, and election teaches Paul that God is powerful, faithful, and loving enough to bring all of his plans to completion. Now, knowing the glorious salvation that Paul communicates to us in Romans 9–11, we can rest in God’s merciful plans, righteous judgments, and sovereign choices.

Election, though, does not start with the New Testament. We see the work of election as far back as the Exodus, when God chose to deliver the Israelites from slavery and judge the Egyptians. God chose to harden Pharaoh’s heart in order to demonstrate his power, and he chose to place his love on Israel (Deuteronomy 7:7–8). Though Pharaoh experienced the negative side of God’s election and judgment, God sovereignly worked through Pharaoh’s hard heart to bring mercy to thousands upon thousands of people and put his glory on display for the nations. Paul references this Exodus story in Romans 9 because he hopes that God will bring others to know Christ through the hard hearts of those who have rejected the gospel.

There’s no doubt that the doctrine of election comes with mystery. Some verses describe Pharaoh hardening his own heart, while others say God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Consider these verses from Exodus to see how divine sovereignty and human responsibility work together:

- God hardened Pharaoh’s heart—Exodus 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8.
- Pharaoh hardened his own heart—Exodus 7:22; 8:15; 9:35; 13:5.

Throughout Romans, Paul affirms and expounds on these ideas regarding our salvation. We cannot thwart God’s will for our lives, *and at the same time*, we are responsible for the choices that we make.

Even with Old Testament examples and Paul’s explanations, grappling with the concept of election remains difficult, and a variety of interpretations are possible. For example, why does God send some people to hell (Romans 9:19–24)? First, it’s important to remember that God never sends people to hell without their participation. Second, Paul explains that our understanding of God’s just judgment increases our appreciation for God’s mercy. After all, why did God ordain Adam, Pharaoh, Israel, and many others to walk away from him? So that we—as recipients of God’s mercy—can truly understand what God did to save us from the judgment we really deserved.

The truth is, God’s mercy is the dominant theme of the salvation story throughout history. When we reflect on our own sinful rebellion against the backdrop of God’s holiness, we catch a glimpse of just how patient and merciful God is to put up with us all—even with what Paul calls “objects of wrath” (9:22).

Paul hopes that we look at Pharaoh’s hard heart, as well as the other Old Testament references in Romans 9:14–29, and learn this basic principle through God’s history of salvation: **God’s mercy for humankind shines brighter than his judgment.** So how does all this talk of God’s election help us understand what God is doing in our communities today?

1. We can take great comfort in knowing that God has our salvation, and our friends’ salvation, completely in his hands. He is a just judge and he will always do what is right. He loves your friends even more than you do, and he desires that all of humankind would be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).
2. Notice that the doctrine of election does not make Paul any less energetic in his attempts to share his

faith. Paul knows God’s plan for the salvation of the world, and he desperately wants to be a part of seeing others come to Christ.

3. When we are concerned about our friends’ salvation, we can meditate on God’s glory.

When we watch how God has worked salvation through the centuries, we can remember how merciful he truly is. God is both merciful and just, but he leads out in mercy and patience to us sinners. As we study Romans 9:14–29 this week, let’s express our gratitude for God’s mercy and for our status as “objects of mercy that [God] prepared beforehand for [his] glory” (Romans 9:23).

## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God’s righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul’s major points. Then, read Romans 9:14–29 in preparation for this week’s study.**

## Highlight

What questions does Paul bring up in this chapter? What answers does Paul provide for these questions? (Write down the verses where you find these answers.)

What parts of the Old Testament does Paul quote in Romans 9:14–29? What are the main points of these quotations?

Read back over Romans 9 and write down every example where Paul describes the character of God.

Find and note the verses that highlight God's sovereign choice. What do you learn about salvation in these verses?

## Explain

How does Paul explain the doctrine of election in Romans 9:14–29?

Why is it important that Paul grounds his points in Old Testament Scriptures?

How do God's characteristics of mercy and judgment work together in the story of salvation according to Romans 9:14–29?

Romans 9:19–24 presents a rapid series of questions, some of which are answering other questions. What do these questions teach us about resisting God's will? What do these questions teach us about God's mercy and judgment?

## Apply

How are you wrestling with Romans 9 to understand your salvation and election?

Based on your study of this passage, how would you explain salvation to a non-Christian?

How would you explain election to a Christian friend who is struggling to understand God's justice?

How does this passage encourage you in your efforts to see your loved ones become believers?

Are there any circumstances in your life right now where it's difficult to trust God's sovereignty? Share them with your small group and pray together.

## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

### **This Week's Prayer Passage: Romans 9:14–29**

Read Romans 9:14–29.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **Adoration:** Praise God for being the God of justice, mercy, and compassion (Romans 9:14–18). Praise God for being the Potter, able to shape us and mold us for his glory (9:19–23). Give God glory for being your

Creator and giving your life meaning and purpose (9:19–24). Praise God that, thanks to his justice, we never have to fear injustice (9:19).

- **Confession:** Confess to God ways you have doubted his goodness, justice, and mercy when circumstances in your life don't go the way you want them to (9:14, 18). Ask God's forgiveness for how you have tried to resist God's will for your life (9:19). Ask God's forgiveness for how you have not lived up to the title "sons and daughters of the living God" (9:26).
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God that despite our dishonorable and unworthy actions, he has still chosen to save us (9:27–29). Thank God that he shows mercy and compassion to frail, sinful humans (9:14–18). Thank God for showing us his power and his justice (9:14, 17). Thank God for saving you to bring him honor (9:21). Thank him for specific ways that he's using you to bring him honor.
- **Supplication:** Ask God to save your One and your lost friends, bringing them into God's family (9:26). Ask God to show his power in your life, specifically in the areas where you face great difficulty (9:17). Ask God for wisdom and understanding as we study through Romans. Ask that God would show you his glory as we look deeper into the gospel together.

# Week Three: Romans 9:30–10:13

## Key Verses

- “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.” - Romans 10:9–10 (CSB)

## Key Principles

- Righteousness has to come through faith; we cannot obtain it on our own.
- Christ is the only path to righteousness, accomplishing what the law could not produce in sinful humanity.
- The way to bring others to a saving knowledge of the gospel is to preach the gospel to all who will listen.
- Salvation is about God’s work, not ours.
- Believing and confessing is how we are saved.

## Read

When those we love have yet to follow Christ, it affects us. We long for those we care for to know Jesus. The same is true for Paul. Throughout Romans 9–11, we see Paul’s anguish concerning the salvation of Israel. They are his fellow kinsmen, and Paul longs for his ethnic brothers and sisters to come to faith in Christ. It is common for many of us to feel the way Paul does here. We may have an unshakeable confidence in God’s ability to save but simultaneously experience a deep disappointment that many people we care about have yet to believe the gospel.

Paul understands, amidst his own wrestling, that ultimately, God is in control of how salvation unfolds to the nations. This week, we will see in Romans 9:30–10:13 how the Jewish rejection of the gospel helped open the door for Gentiles to experience the power of the gospel. In other words, even though Jews were rejecting Paul’s message, the Gentiles were not. This positive Gentile response to the gospel will later play an important part in Jews responding in faith to Christ as they see God at work in others (see Week Five and Romans 11:11–19, 26).

Throughout Romans 9:30–10:13, Paul maintains that **the way to bring others to a saving knowledge of the gospel is to preach the gospel to all who will listen** (Romans 10:8–17). This means that we must keep taking the good news of Jesus into our workplaces, communities, families, and friend groups, with the hope that many will come to saving faith in Jesus!

As we dig into Romans 9:30–10:13, Paul exposes one huge reason that many people in his day resist the gospel—people look for right moral standing in all the wrong places. This is just as true in our day as it was in Paul’s. Many of us try to convince ourselves that we are good enough for God through upright behavior, involvement in charities, political advocacy, or even church attendance. Unfortunately, when we get so tied to these forms of self-justification, we become unwilling or unable to accept the true work of justification through the gospel of Jesus

Christ. And yet, Paul says God calls us to come to him in faith on the basis of what he's done, not on the basis of what we've done or accomplished.

Paul called this reliance on faith a “stone of stumbling” and a “rock of offense” in Romans 9:32–33. The “stone of stumbling” language is an idea Paul borrows from the Old Testament book of Isaiah as a reminder to the Roman audience that this is not a new problem. In Isaiah's time, the Israelites thought they could find security in their freedom from political oppression, instead of relying on God. The prophet Isaiah had to remind them that they are God's people, and that faith in God would always be the only lasting route to true salvation, security, and significance.

Notice how Paul describes unbelieving Jews in Romans 10:2–5. Paul says they have “zeal for God,” but they are still “ignorant of the righteousness of God” (10:2–3). Paul is saying that the Jews sought a righteousness from the law instead of the righteousness given by faith. To explain this, Paul pulls from two significant passages in the Old Testament. First, Paul says, “the person who does commandments shall live by them” (Leviticus 18:5). This verse represents a righteousness that could have come from obeying God's law, from full obedience to all of God's commands. Paul identifies this as the *wrong* path to righteousness (Romans 10:2–13)! Why is this the wrong path? Because humanity is unable and has always been unable to perfectly follow God's commands.

Second, Paul says, “the message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (Deuteronomy 30:14). This verse shows us that righteousness comes by faith. In Deuteronomy 31:27–29, Moses explains that righteousness earned by obedience to the law will not work! Still, the Jews of Paul's day reverted to Leviticus 18:5 as the path to righteous living and ignored Moses's instruction in Deuteronomy 30–33. It wasn't about outward obedience. Righteousness is about inward faith. Paul announces that God's restoration of the people, predicted by Deuteronomy 30, began when Jesus saved us and put his Spirit inside of us. Thus, the Leviticus 18:5 way of being righteous failed and the Deuteronomy 30 way of being righteous prevailed.

Paul then applies Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30 to what it is like to have faith in Jesus. Just as Moses said centuries before, Paul says that all a believer has to do is “confess with your mouth” and “believe in your heart” (Romans 10:9–10). We do not have to make some special effort to find righteousness. So, we shouldn't try to be like Moses in order to experience God's saving hand. At the same time, any effort on our part to bring about salvation is essentially undoing what Jesus did for us in our place. All we have to do is believe the good news of God's work in Jesus—that he obeyed God perfectly in our place—and God will restore our hearts. Paul knows that we can't even believe the good news unless God gives us faith and puts his Spirit inside of us to help us. As we've mentioned before, **salvation is about God's work, not ours.**

What does this mean for us? Paul gives us the simple mechanics of faith in verses 10:9–11. **Believing and confessing is how we are saved.** There is no other way. We must believe in God and the work that he accomplished. It's not about what we can do on our own. We can't achieve right standing before God by trying to live rightly on our own. Rather, right standing comes from confessing our inability to stand on our own. In our weakness, we put all our hope and trust in what Jesus did for us.

## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God's righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul's major points. Then, read Romans 9:30–10:13 in preparation for this week's study.**

### Highlight

What questions does Paul address in this passage? Where do you see Paul give the answers to these questions?

What Old Testament passages does Paul quote in this passage? What is the main point of each Old Testament quotation?

List out the elements of salvation according to verses 5–13.

Circle the significant conjunctions in this passage (e.g., and, because, but, yet, etc.). How do these conjunctions move the argument along?

## Explain

Using Romans 9:30–10:4, explain in your own words why many Jews were not putting their faith in Christ at the time of Paul’s writing.

In what way is Christ the “*end of the law* for righteousness to everyone who believes” (10:4)?

Why is it important that the “message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (10:8)?

Describe the role belief plays in God’s plan of salvation according to Romans 9:30–10:13. Why is belief such an important part of salvation?

## Apply

How do people you know try to prove themselves to be good enough for God? How are people in your community “ignorant of the righteousness of God” (10:3) in their pursuits?

Romans 9:30–10:13 helps us see the dangers of looking for righteousness in the wrong places. How have you chased after a false sense of righteousness? How can we know when we are drifting into these habits again?

How does Romans 9:30–10:13 motivate us to share the gospel?

## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

### **This Week's Prayer Passage: Romans 9:30–10:13**

Read Romans 9:30–10:13.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **A**doration: Praise God for being righteous (10:3). Praise God for being the Lord of all people (10:12–13). Adore God for being the Rock that we can count on for salvation (10:13). Praise God for his power, which he wields on our behalf (10:9–10).
- **C**onfession: Confess to God that you have wrongly sought righteousness in ways that do not lead back to Christ (9:30–10:4). Confess the ways that you have not submitted to God's righteousness and wanted to establish your own (10:3). Ask for forgiveness for the ways that you have taken Christ's salvation for granted (10:6–10).
- **T**hanks-giving: Thank God for hearing our prayers (10:1) and for acting on our behalf. Thank God for saving people of every nation, tribe, and tongue (10:12–13). Thank God for providing a way of salvation for us, even though we are unrighteous (10:9–10).
- **S**upplication: Ask God to remove any stumbling block from your friends and neighbors, so that they would believe the gospel along with you (9:33). Pray that your friends and neighbors would not be ignorant of the gospel or zealously chase after things that cannot satisfy their souls (10:1–2).

# Week Four: Romans 10:14–11:10

## Key Verses

- “In the same way, then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. Now if by grace, then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace.” - Romans 11:5–6 (CSB)

## Key Principles

- People come to faith in Jesus Christ through hearing the gospel proclaimed by other people.
- God has not rejected his chosen people, whom he “foreknew” (Romans 11:2).
- God saved a remnant of Jews in Paul’s day, just as God preserved a remnant throughout the history of Israel.
- The entire Old Testament points to salvation in and through Christ.

## Read

In Romans 10:14–11:10, Paul addresses the Jews’ lack of faith through a series of questions concerning God’s justice and his faithfulness, some of which we will study this week. Concerning the absence of salvation among the Jews, Paul asks:

- Is it because the Jews have not heard the gospel? (10:18)
- Did Israel just not understand? (10:19)
- Has God rejected his own people? (11:1)
- Did Israel fail to obtain what they were seeking? (11:7)

The answers that Paul gives to the questions in this passage are centered around this fact—**people come to faith in Jesus Christ through hearing and receiving the gospel proclaimed by other people** (10:17). The reality is that the Jews *had* heard. They just did not obey it or receive it. So, God’s plan is to put his power and blessings on full display by saving the Gentiles. Through the work of God in the lives of the Gentiles, the Jews would witness God’s goodness and the joys of uniting with him in Christ. Somehow, God intends even this period of Jewish unbelief to provide a blessing (11:11–12). God had always preserved a faithful remnant throughout Israel’s history. Paul reminds us that this was true as he wrote these very words. (After all, Paul himself was an ethnic Jew who believed the gospel, one of many such examples throughout the New Testament.) And it is true for us, even today. This “remnant” is an indication that God has not given up on his plan to save ethnic Israelites.

Paul’s answers to these tough theological questions hold extra significance because he grounds them in the Hebrew Scriptures. By using the Old Testament, and the book of Isaiah in particular, Paul is reminding his audience that God’s plan of salvation has always been the same. Here are the references to Isaiah that Paul makes in Romans 10:14–11:10:

- Romans 10:15 (citing Isaiah 52:7): “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”
- Romans 10:16 (citing Isaiah 53:1): “Lord, who has believed our message?”
- Romans 10:20 (citing Isaiah 65:1): “I was found by those who were not looking for me; I revealed myself to those who were not asking for me.”
- Romans 10:21 (citing Isaiah 65:2): “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and defiant people.”
- Romans 11:8a (citing Isaiah 29:10, which itself cites Deuteronomy 28–33): “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that cannot see.”

Understanding the background of Isaiah helps us understand Paul’s message in Romans 10:14–11:10. Isaiah was a book that addressed the nation of Israel at a time when they struggled to believe that God would save them. Isaiah implored his kinsmen to have faith, especially in God’s future salvation. But many of Isaiah’s contemporaries did not believe, and it was disastrous for them. So, Isaiah responded by predicting how God would save in the future, through a suffering Messiah (Isaiah 7, 9, 11, and 53), then restore his people, and finally create a new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65–66) where his people would flourish. Paul took comfort in Isaiah because of this great vision of salvation, and Paul would even see the suffering Messiah—Jesus—with his own eyes (Acts 9). Paul also took comfort in the fact that Isaiah’s message was rejected at first, just like what was happening to him. Both Isaiah and Paul had a vision of God’s glorious salvation, and they knew it would overcome unrighteousness and unbelief.

In addition to Isaiah, Paul also cites other passages from the major sections of the Old Testament in Romans 10:14–11:10. This arrangement of references is not a coincidence. Paul does all of this in such a short section of Romans to make an important point: **The entire Old Testament points to salvation in and through Christ.**

Notice that these Old Testament references convey a key point from Romans 10:14–17: God has good news for the world, and he uses his people to spread this message of salvation. He allows *us* to participate in his plan of salvation. God’s Word even calls the feet of those who bring good news “beautiful” (Romans 10:15)! The message of God’s righteousness in the gospel spreads through people! Yes, the local church remains God’s “Plan A” to carry the gospel to those who have yet to believe.

There is so much beauty and honor in taking the gospel to the world. But Paul knows that taking the gospel to the world also entails rejection (Romans 10:18–21). Paul’s message was rejected by his kinsmen. Faithful prophets like Isaiah and Elijah were also rejected. Even Jesus was rejected. This rejection will also happen to you and me.

Paul’s struggles surrounding Israel’s acceptance of the gospel show us that we are not alone when we experience friends and family who reject the good news of the gospel. Even so, we press on and preach the good news even when we know rejection might come. We know from Romans 9:30–11:10 that throughout history, God chose to save his people by sending his messengers to proclaim the good news. Because of this, we can trust God with our lives and our ministry, as we take the gospel to our neighborhoods, cities, and the ends of the earth.

And when rejection comes, don’t shrink back in fear; ask God for more faith, courage, and boldness (Acts 4:29; Ephesians 6:19–20). Brothers and sisters, continue to share Jesus boldly, even in the face of rejection, just like

Paul did among his own people many centuries ago. We are Christians today in part because Paul pressed on to make sure he fulfilled his calling in God's mission to bring salvation to a lost world. Likewise, may we be faithful to make the most of our God-given opportunities to bring the good news of eternal life in Christ to every last person in our communities.

## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God's righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul's major points. Then, read Romans 10:14–11:10 in preparation for this week's study.**

## Highlight

Paul raises many questions in Romans 10:14–11:10. Write down—or underline—each of these questions and highlight the answers that Paul provides.

What Old Testament passages does Paul quote in Romans 10:14–11:10? Write out the main point of each Old Testament reference in your own words.

What do we learn about God's character in Romans 10:14–11:10? Which verses support these truths?

What do we learn about God's plan of salvation in Romans 10:14–11:10? Which verses support these truths?

## Explain

Why does Paul have confidence that God will not give up on unbelieving Jews according to Romans 10:14–11:10?

What is the stumbling block (or pitfall, in some translations) that prevents some from believing (Romans 11:5–6, 9)? Why is it important?

Why is preaching the gospel an important part of God’s plan for saving people according to Romans 10:14–11:10?

When Paul explains God’s plan of salvation in Romans 1–11, grace is an important component. Why? How does Romans 10:14–11:10 reinforce these thoughts?

## Apply

How does Romans 10:14–11:10 motivate you in your efforts to help others believe in Christ?

In your everyday life, what stumbling blocks prevent you from believing and living what God says in this passage?

Are there people you think are beyond God’s reach—that you think he has given up on? How does Romans 10:14–11:10 encourage you and help you fight against such hopelessness?

How do we help people whose “eyes have been darkened” and “hearts have been hardened” (11:7–10)?

## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

### **This Week's Prayer Passage: Romans 10:14–11:10**

Read Romans 10:14–11:10.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **A**doration: Praise God that he is sovereign, always working a plan of salvation that is larger than what we can see and understand (11:1–5). Adore God because he is the God of grace (11:5–6). Praise God as the one who has control over our lives and our fates (11:7–10).
- **C**onfession: Confess that we are too weak and self-centered to comprehend God's work in the world (10:19–21; 11:8–10). Confess and repent to God for how you have become frustrated or angry with him for how he has managed his plan of salvation. Ask God's forgiveness for how we have blinded ourselves and turned our backs on him (11:9–10).
- **T**hanksgiving: Thank God that he is patient with us (10:21). Thank God for making himself and his glorious salvation known to us (10:15–18). Thank God for bringing people into your life who have helped you understand God's grace (10:14–18). And thank God for extending his grace to you and changing your life (11:5–6).
- **S**upplication: Ask for the strength, courage, and obedience to preach the good news to your friends and neighbors (10:14–18). Pray that your One would not reject the gospel, but that they would find God and obey his Word (10:20).

# Week Five: Romans 11:11–36

## Key Verses

- “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.” - Romans 11:33–36 (CSB)

## Key Principles

- As we consider God’s sovereignty in salvation, our hearts should turn to humble and joyful worship.
- God was, and is, bringing Jews and Gentiles together in the gospel.
- God’s very inclusion of the Gentiles will lead to the salvation of the Jews.
- Humility and trust should be our response as we consider God’s kindness to us in Christ.
- Just as Gentiles experienced God’s mercy after a time of disobedience, Israel will also receive mercy after their disobedience.

## Read

What brings your heart to a place of worship? Your favorite song? An answered prayer? These are all good things. But above all else, God wants our worship to be informed by who he is and what he has done. The goodness of his character should move us to praise his name. Meditating on these things—God’s Word and his ways—should lift our hearts to joyful adoration of God. This is exactly where we find Paul in Romans 11. As Paul concludes his explanation of God’s unsearchable plan, he cannot help but burst into worship.

So, what is it from Romans 9–11 that brings Paul to a place of worship? God’s faithfulness. The central theme of Romans 9–11 was stated at the beginning: “It is not as though the word of God has failed” (Romans 9:6). Previously, God had made promises of salvation to Israel, and yet, many Israelites did not experience salvation in Christ. We discussed in Week One that, at first glance, it seems that Israel’s present unbelief brings God’s faithfulness into question. How did Paul defend God’s faithfulness? He showed from the Old Testament that salvation was never promised to every single ethnic Israelite. Not every ethnic Israelite is chosen. True Israel was never determined by family lineage or their works. Many Israelites who resisted the gospel made the error of trying to pursue righteousness through works of the law, instead of faith in Christ (Romans 10:1–4). Thus, there was a preserved group—a remnant—of Israel that believed in Christ. (Romans 11:1–7)

Paul could have ended his argument here, but he doesn’t. Paul continues because the story of Israel isn’t over. The last word cannot be that Israel is doomed to hardened hearts. The majority of Israel will not always continue to resist the gospel. For now, Israel has been temporarily calloused to the gospel so that the fullness of the Gentiles

may enter into the family of God (Romans 11:25). But the inclusion of the Gentiles will eventually provoke Israel to jealousy and lead to their salvation (Romans 11:14).

Paul's line of reasoning here raises many questions about ethnic Jews today. Is Paul claiming that all ethnic Jews will become Christians? Or is he referring, instead, to the "true Israel" he introduced in Romans 9:6? Commentators differ about who precisely Paul is talking about in his references to "Israel" in this passage. (And we would do well to allow for various interpretations ourselves.) But one thing is clear: God is not done with Israel.

Paul uses the illustration of an olive tree to explain God's plan for both Jews and Gentiles. Once again, Paul borrows an image from the Old Testament (Jeremiah 11:16–17; Hosea 14:6; Isaiah 5:1–7). As gardeners already know, it is possible—and common—to move a branch from one tree to another. This process is called grafting. The way Paul uses the image in Romans 11, the root of the tree represents the patriarchs, while the branches are the descendants (11:16). The natural branches refer to the Jews, while the wild branches refer to the Gentiles (11:17–24). The natural branches (Jews) were broken off, so the wild branches (Gentiles) could be grafted into the tree of God's people.

However, in 11:17–22, Paul warns the Gentiles that their inclusion is no reason for them to boast. A Gentile cannot say, "God rejected Israel and saved us Gentiles because we are better!" Salvation is by God's choice and not because of something in us. As we marvel at God's sovereign choice, may we all remember Paul's warning to the Gentiles (Romans 11:20–22). Pride has no place in the heart of God's people. **Humility and trust should be our response as we consider God's kindness to us in Christ.** As Paul tells the Gentiles, we must continue to trust God and not ourselves.

Romans 11:30–32 gives a great summary of Paul's argument. **Just as Gentiles experienced God's mercy after a time of disobedience, Israel will also receive mercy after their disobedience.** God does this to show his mercy. We can find rest in the fact that God has orchestrated all of his ways in order to magnify his glory and his mercy!

Overcome by the weight of God's faithfulness, Paul overflows into worship. But Paul doesn't just mention vague phrases of praise, he adores God for specific aspects of his character and deeds. Paul praises the depth and richness of God's wisdom and knowledge. He praises God for his supreme nature; the fact that God's judgments and ways are far above and beyond us (Romans 11:33). God's mind is incomparable; no one can understand it. God's actions are always right; no one can instruct him. God is never in debt; no one can give God anything that isn't already his. Because all things are from him, through him, and to him—all glory belongs to God forever.

For Paul, his thoughts about God lead him to worship God. In this sense, some might say Paul's rich understanding of God has turned into praise for God: his theology has transformed into doxology. As one pastor states:

Our study of God and his ways among us should turn our hearts to music. The term theology produces in the mind of the man on the street visions of damp libraries and musty tomes and somber monasteries. Instead, theology should suggest light and dancing! And that is what our present passage should do for us. Formally stated, Romans 11:33–36 identifies the proper response of our hearts to God's sovereign working.

Any person who truly appropriates something of Paul's response in these verses will experience a marked increase in joy.<sup>2</sup>

It's only appropriate that we end our study of Romans 9–11 with a hymn of praise. As you reflect on these words from William Cowper, pray that God would lead your heart to praise as you consider his sovereign ways.<sup>3</sup>

<p>God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform; he plants his footsteps in the sea, and rides upon the storm.</p> <p>Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill he treasures up his bright designs, and works his sov'reign will.</p> <p>Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread are big with mercy, and shall break in blessings on your head.</p>	<p>Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust him for his grace; behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face.</p> <p>His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding ev'ry hour; the bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow'r.</p> <p>Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain; God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.</p>
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## Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God's righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



**Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul's major points. Then, read Romans 11:11–36 in preparation for this week's study.**

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 202–204.

<sup>3</sup> William Cowper, "God Moves In A Mysterious Way." Public Domain.

## Highlight

What questions does Paul ask in Romans 11:11–36? What answers (if any) does he give in these verses?

How many times does Paul mention Jews (or Israel)? Gentiles?

What direct commands does Paul give in Romans 11:11–36?

What Old Testament quotes does Paul reference?

## Explain

According to Romans 11:11–36, what was the good purpose for which God hardened many Israelites?

What are the reasons that the Gentiles should not be conceited (11:20)? How are they instructed to fight this conceit (11:22)?

What does Paul say is going to happen to ethnic Israelites in the future (11:25–27)?

In your own words, rewrite the questions from Romans 11:34–35 and turn them into sentences.

## Apply

What are some ways you can grow in regularly obeying the command to “consider God’s kindness and severity” (11:22)?

Does thinking about God’s election make you more prideful and argumentative? What are some things in this passage that can help you remain humble and joyful?

How often does thinking deeply about God’s Word move you to worship? What are some ways you can grow in this habit and practice it regularly?

It is a good practice to meditate on God’s character until our heart sings with praise. What are some truths we learn about God in Romans 11:32–36? What are some ways to regularly bring these truths to mind in your everyday life?

## Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

### **This Week’s Prayer Passage: Romans 11:33–36**

Read Romans 11:33–36

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **Adoration:** Praise the “depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God” (Romans 11:33). Consider how “unsearchable” and “untraceable” God’s ways are (11:33).
- **Confession:** Confess to God your low thoughts of him. Ask him to forgive you for all the times you have wrongly believed that he needed your wisdom in running the world (11:34–35).
- **Thanksgiving:** What has God graciously given you? Thank God for every good gift you have in your life, “for from him and through him and to him are *all things*” (11:36). Consider God’s greatest gift of all, his own Son (Romans 8:32). Thank God for giving us Jesus Christ.

- **Supplication:** Ask the Father to grant you a heart that regularly bursts into praise toward him (11:33). Pray that God would grant you more joy in Christ than all his other gifts. Pray that God would give you the boldness to speak of his greatness to others who do not yet know him.