

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, November 10, 2013

Passage: Romans 9:19-29

Memory Passage: Romans 9:20-21

Based on much of the feedback the elders received in the survey we took a few months ago we are trying something different in our Discussion Guides. These changes are a work in process, and we might not get everything right on this first try, so if you have feedback please pass it on to one of our elders.

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 9:19-29.** Explain in detail the connection between the questions (v. 19) that Paul expects his readers to posit and what he has just taught in the preceding verses.
- (b) Why is Paul's answer (v. 20) surprising, and what facts does his answer presume?
- (c) In what ways do you, or have you, by word, thought or deed, challenged your Creator's authority & prerogative, and how does/has He remind you that you are man and He is God?
- (d) *Family:* Using the object lesson of your children not being allowed to talk back to you as you train them and rule over them (something I am assuming that you do not let your children do ☺), **Read Rom. 9:19-20** and explain that God's creation has even less right to talk back and object to God's sovereign purpose of election in which he "has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills" (Rom. 9:18). In your discussion, flesh out some of the ways people might object to God's sovereign work and how we should answer those objections.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 9:19-29.** Who or what are the "vessels" (v. 22) and to what do the 2 different uses refer?
- (b) What differences do you see between Jer.18:1-10 & Rom. 9:20-21, and what do you see in the context of both passages that gives Paul warrant to apply this metaphor to the salvation of individuals?
- (c) How do vs. 20-21 motivate you toward a deeper love for God and a deeper sense of awe for God? These are 2 broad questions designed to get you to fully consider & meditate upon the grand doctrine of God's sovereign elective purposes, and to grow in your understanding of God's character and follow that growth with worship.
- (d) *Family:* Prior to your lesson, gather enough clay or Play-Doh for each person to have one lump. As you start your lesson, tell everyone to make something from his/her lump. Let them know that, as the creator, they have the right to make whatever they desire. Then **Read Rom. 9:21-22** and explain that Paul answers the questions from v. 19 first of all with this rebuke. Then go to each person and begin criticizing their work, telling them how they should have done it better. You probably won't have to criticize every person before they understand in a personal way how much greater is God's right over His creation.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 9:19-29.** How does v. 17 relate to and help you understand v. 22?
- (b) How does God's patience with vessels of wrath prepared for destruction "show his wrath and make known his power" and what is the reason He shows this patience (v. 23)?
- (c) How does v. 23 answer the challenge to God's justice (v. 14) and God's fairness (v. 19)?
- (d) *Family:* **Read Rom. 9:22-23.** Be sensitive to the difficulty of these verses as your family comes to terms with this awesome work of God. To help them, show this video of a dolphin stampede: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlmDVuxerQ0>. Let them know that in one sense, the dolphins represent all of humanity lost in sin, heading full-steam toward destruction (notice that all the dolphins are aggressively swimming in the same direction). But God, showing His mercy to some, rescues some of them from their aggressive path toward eternal destruction while leaving others to continue on to their destruction by their own choice. None desire to be saved, but God overcomes their lack of desire because He is powerful and has a plan to save them that cannot be thwarted. It would be similar to God reaching down from heaven and grabbing dolphins and sending them in the opposite direction. And once they are swimming in the opposite direction they realize that God, according to His own plan and for His own glory, sovereignly chose them out of the mass of other dolphins to overcome their previous desires and set them on a path that leads to life rather than destruction. They now swim amazed and grateful for God's sovereign choice, something they had absolutely nothing to do with.

### DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Romans 9:19-29.** What does v. 24 tell you, and how does this tie all of Paul's argument to his overarching concern first voiced in 9:6?

- (b) What do vs. 25-26 teach us, and what is shocking, especially for the Jews in Rome, about this truth?
- (c) **Read Hos. 2:23 & 1:10.** Explain these verses in their context, and then compare how Paul applies them by answering this question: According to Paul, in what way has Hosea's prophecy been fulfilled.
- (d) *Family:* **Read Rom. 9:24-26.** Help your family understand that as Paul has been describing God's sovereign choice of electing His children that he was not talking only of Jews, but of Gentiles as well. In 9:25-26 he reminds us of that. To help them understand the verses he quotes, explain the names that God commanded Hosea to give to his 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> child (Hos. 1:6 & 1:9): Lo-ruhama, which means "she has not received mercy" and Lo-ammi, which means "not my people." Next, read the 2 passages he quotes (first Hos. 2:23 and then Hos. 1:10) and explain that God intended to overturn the judgment on His people by showing mercy on those who had not received it and making a people who had turned away from God in rebellion to be His people in spite of their rebellion. Then re-read Rom. 9:24-26 and show that Paul explains that God's people have always been chosen in this way, whether Jews or Gentiles. Those who once were not His people and did not receive mercy have now been chosen by God as His people and thus receive mercy from Him.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Romans 9:19-29.** To whom does Paul turn his attention in vs. 27-29, and why is this important?
- (b) What truths are you taught from the 2 quotes Paul uses from Isaiah 10:22-23 & 1:10, and how do these truths fit into the argument Paul is making in Romans 9?
- (c) A recurring theme in Romans 9 is the fact that God works in surprising ways. What details about God's work do you find surprising in Romans 9:19-29 and why do you find them to be surprising?
- (d) Summarize what you learned in Romans 9:1-29 and write down at least 3 applications that you will implement this week.
- (e) *Family:* **Read Romans 9:27-29** and explain that Isaiah prophesied that only a small portion of physical Israel was actually spiritual Israel (the remnant). This was true in Paul's day, but it was also true in the OT. It will not always be true, for at the end of this age "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26, which we will explain when we get there ☺). Also point out that God continues to act in surprising ways because many Gentiles are chosen while few Jews are chosen.

**DATE: November 10, 2013**

**PASSAGE: Romans 9:19-29**

*The Potter's Right over His Clay*

In Romans 9:19-29 Paul presents 2 pieces of evidence to prove that God is not unfair (v. 19) when He chooses whom to show mercy and whom to harden (v. 18).