

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

## *Romans*

A New Life

### Lesson #12: The Potter and His Clay

#### INTRODUCTION

How do you cope with the unbelief of some of your family members, relatives or closest friends?

#### OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

##### Read Romans 9: 1-29

*Note: Paul begins a three-chapter aside on the nation of Israel to explain their spiritual condition: past (Rom. 9), present (Rom. 10), and future (Rom. 11). In this chapter, Paul explains that salvation is not a function of lineage or merit, but of God's merciful election. Mercy is the core concept in Paul's explanation of election and explains why it appears that God has been unfaithful (He has not) in light of the small number of Israelites who believe. <sup>1</sup>*

1. Why does Paul have great sorrow for the people of Israel? vv. 1-5
2. Why are some Jews "lost"? **Rom 8:39** Can that happen to Christians? Why aren't more Jews believers?
3. How does man's responsibility (1-3) intersect with God's sovereignty (4-5)? **Deut 7:7**
4. If God sovereignly decides who enters the Kingdom, why did Paul risk his life to preach the Gospel?
5. How has God demonstrated that He has not failed in His promises and purposes for Israel? vv.6-13
6. How do you respond to the idea of election? vv. 11 ; **2 Pet 3:9**

*Note: The Arabs were the descendants of Ishmael who was a flesh and blood son of Abraham, but the Jews would never have dreamed of saying that the Arabs belonged to the chosen people.<sup>2</sup>*

7. If salvation is not based on lineage, merit or good works, how is it obtained? **Rom 4:9-17**
8. Why does God have "the right" to choose – who and how to accomplish His purpose(s)?
9. Why is justice not negated by mercy? vv. 14-15 Why don't animals and Satan show mercy?

*Note: "God is holy and must punish sin; but God is loving and desires to save sinners. If everybody is saved, it would deny His holiness; but if everybody is lost, it would deny His love. The solution to the problem is God's sovereign election." (Warren Wiersbe, p. 104)*

10. How does the illustration of the potter and clay help us gain a proper perspective? vv. 20-23
11. How are God's mercy and justice revealed in his treatment of the Gentiles and Jews? vv. 24-29
12. Can you recall when you were separated from God and condemned? How do you respond now as God now calls you as "my people" and "sons of the living God? vv. 25-26

#### APPLICATION

Pray that God opens the door for you to share how He has shown mercy to you in a condemned world.

*"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." It is interesting that theologically the only people who sincerely pray the prayer are those for whom mercy has already been extended. Orthodox tradition of Christianity's "Jesus Prayer"*

*If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice in eternity."*

*Anglican Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667*

*In the final analysis, the elect are those who ask for and receive mercy. <sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Boa, K., & Kruidenier, W. (2000). *Vol. 6: Romans*. Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference (274, 291). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1975). *The letter to the Romans* (p. 128). Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press.