SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

REFLECTION JOURNAL · FIVE DAYS

Romans

Chapter 9

Great Sorrow and Sovereign Mercy

MEMORY VERSE · ROMANS 9:16

"So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO _____

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This week in Romans 9

Romans 9 is a hard chapter, and Paul does not open it with an argument — he opens it with tears. This week God is asking you to rest your whole standing with Him on His mercy, not on your background or your effort, and to let that mercy soften your heart toward the people you love who are still far from Christ.

How to use this journal

1. Each day, read the passage slowly — out loud if you can.
2. Answer the **Observe** question from the text before you write what it means.
3. Write honestly on the **Reflect** questions. No one grades this.
4. Do the **Respond** step today, not someday. Say the memory verse.
5. Bring this journal to the group. The last page is for the table.

The full Deep Dive, the O·I·A study, the slides and the film for this chapter are on the Romans study page.

WHERE I AM AS I START THIS CHAPTER

What is going on in my life right now that I want to bring to God this week?

DAY 1 OF 5

Tears Before Truth

READ · ROMANS 9:1–5

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

List every gift Paul says belongs to Israel in verses 4–5. Which one comes last, and how does Paul describe Him?

REFLECT

Paul says he has "great sorrow and unceasing grief" (v. 2) for people who were hunting him down. Whose lostness weighs on you like that, and what keeps that grief from turning into prayer?

REFLECT

Israel had the covenants, the Law and the promises (v. 4) and still missed her Messiah. What spiritual advantages have you been given — a praying mother, a church, a Bible — and when have you leaned on them instead of on Christ Himself?

RESPOND — TODAY

Write down the name of one person whose lostness grieves you, and pray for him by name today. Then pray for the Jewish people and for the peace of Jerusalem.

❐ READ IT ❐ PRAYED IT ❐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ROMANS 9:16)

DAY 2 OF 5

The Promise, Not the Pedigree

READ · ROMANS 9:6–13

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

According to verse 11, what had the twins done before God's choice was spoken? What does Paul say the choice did not rest on, and what did it rest on?

REFLECT

Paul writes that "they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel" (v. 6). What have you counted on to make you right with God — a family name, a church, a clean stretch of time — that was never meant to carry that weight?

REFLECT

God chose Jacob "not because of works but because of Him who calls" (v. 11), and Jacob was a schemer. What does it do to your shame to know that God's call never rested on your record?

RESPOND — TODAY

Pray: "Lord, I am Yours because You called, not because I earned it." Then thank Him for one specific way He came after you before you were looking for Him.

❒ READ IT ❒ PRAYED IT ❒ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ROMANS 9:16)

DAY 3 OF 5

Mercy That Cannot Be Owed

READ · ROMANS 9:14–18

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

In verse 15 God speaks to Moses. Which two words does He repeat, and what do they tell you about what God loves to give?

REFLECT

Paul says "it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs" (v. 16). Where are you still running hard to earn what God gives freely — in recovery, at home, in ministry?

REFLECT

Pharaoh is the picture of a man who kept setting his heart against God (vv. 17–18; Exodus 8:15). Where do you notice your own heart getting stiff when God keeps speaking to you about something?

RESPOND — TODAY

Stop running for five minutes today. Sit still and simply receive mercy. Tell God, "I cannot earn this; I receive it," and thank Him that Jesus already paid for it.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ROMANS 9:16)

DAY 4 OF 5

The Potter and the People He Renames

READ · ROMANS 9:19–29

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

In verses 25–26 Paul quotes Hosea. What were these people called before, and what are they called now?

REFLECT

Paul asks, "who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" (v. 20). When life does not make sense, what is the difference between bringing God your honest questions and putting Him on trial?

REFLECT

God "endured with much patience" (v. 22) and called those who were "NOT MY PEOPLE" His people (v. 25). What name did you wear before Christ, and what name does He give you now?

RESPOND — TODAY

Write down one question about your life that you cannot answer. Pray it to God honestly — as clay talking to a Potter who is patient and good — and leave the answer with Him.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ROMANS 9:16)

DAY 5 OF 5

Trip Over It or Stand On It

READ · ROMANS 9:30–33

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Verses 30–32 compare two groups. Which group was not even looking and still found righteousness, and how did they receive it?

REFLECT

Israel stumbled because she pursued righteousness "as though it were by works" (v. 32). What does chasing God by works look like in your own week?

REFLECT

"HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED" (v. 33). What else have you built your life on that let you down, and what would it look like to stand on Christ in that very place?

RESPOND — TODAY

Say the memory verse (v. 16) out loud three times today — morning, midday and before sleep — and each time thank Jesus that He is the Stone you stand on.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (ROMANS 9:16)

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS

Questions for the table

FOR THE GROUP · 1

Paul holds two truths in one chapter — God's free choice (vv. 11–16) and Israel's own responsibility (vv. 30–32). Which of the two do you tend to forget, and how does forgetting it show up in the way you live?

FOR THE GROUP · 2

Verse 29 says that unless the Lord had left a posterity, Israel would have become like Sodom. Where can you look back and see God's hand keeping you from what you could have become?

FOR THE GROUP · 3

How should verses 15–16 and 25–26 change the way we talk to a brother who believes he is too far gone for God's mercy?

MY PRAYER

Father of mercy, my place with You rests on You and not on me, and today I thank You for…

CUT OUT · CARRY IT · ROMANS 9:16

“So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.”