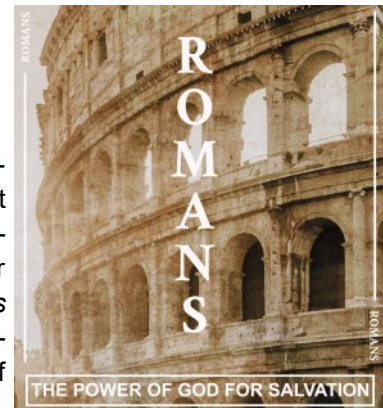


**The Potter & His Pottery**

**Romans 9:19-24**

**Big Idea:** In Romans 9:19–24, Paul uses the metaphor of the potter and the clay to expose the heart's posture toward God. The question is not whether we talk to God, but whether we are back-talking. Paul confronts our distorted responses: denying God's existence (cynical pots), resenting His design (picketing pots), and demanding His favor (proud pots). Each reveal whether one is a vessel of mercy, *humbly embracing God's sovereign grace*, or a vessel of wrath, *resisting the Maker*. Our words and attitudes toward God—especially when faced with hard truths—can be a window into the status of our relationship with God.



**Isaiah 64:8** ~ “But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.”

1. Cynical Pots: Pottery Denying the Potter

Romans 9:20: “Why did you *make me* like this?”

Isaiah 29:16 – “He did not make me”

2. Picketing Pots: Pottery Boycotting the Potter

Romans 9:20: “Why did you make me *like this*?”

Isaiah 45:9 – “Your work has no handles”

3. Proud Pots: Pottery Demanding the Potter

Romans 9:21: “Has the potter no right over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?”

Jeremiah 18:1–11

## Small Group Discussion Guide

**Scriptures: Romans 9:19-23; Isaiah 29:15&16; 45:9; Jeremiah 18:1-11**

Getting Started - Have you ever had something you created, built, or owned act like it had a mind of its own—or even “talk back” to you? *(It could be a GPS giving wrong directions, Alexa responding sarcastically, or a DIY project refusing to cooperate.)*

Digging Deeper

### 1. Cynical vs. Confused Pots

- What does it mean to be a “*cynical pot*”?
- How is that different from a pot that is simply confused, hurting, or honestly questioning God?

### 2. Denying the Potter - Pots (people) denying the Potter (God) is deeply irrational.

- How does the metaphor illustrate this?
- How would you try to explain the irrationality to a skeptic?

### 3. Reshaping God (Isaiah 29:16) - Denial isn’t always atheistic; sometimes it looks like reshaping God into a version we prefer.

- Have you ever felt tempted to downplay or soften certain truths about God’s nature or commands?
- How does this passage help us resist the urge to “put the Potter on the wheel”?

### 4. “No Handles” – The Complaint of Comparison - Isaiah 45:9 describes clay protesting, “Your work has no handles.”

- What might “handles” represent in our lives (talents, looks, personalities, etc.)?
- Have you ever struggled to celebrate someone else’s gifting because you wished it was yours?
- How does the potter/clay image help address both resentment toward God and envy toward others?

**5. Proud Pots and Misunderstood Value** - Some pots demand honor based on their own value.

- What does this reveal about a misunderstanding of the potter-pot relationship?
- Reflect on this statement: "*Value is not discovered in the clay—it is transferred by the Maker.*" What does that mean for our identity and worth?

**6. From the Same Lump** - Paul emphasizes that all clay is "from the same lump".

- How would this truth confront the national and religious pride of Paul's Jewish peers?
- How might it challenge our own pride, prejudice, or sense of superiority today?

**7. The Spoiled Vessel and Grace (Jeremiah 18:1–11)** - Jeremiah describes a spoiled pot being reshaped by the potter.

- How does this image bring clarity to the Jew/Gentile dynamic Paul is addressing?
- How does it encourage those who feel disqualified or unworthy?
- How does it confront those who feel spiritually entitled or superior?

Resources

**Romans: Righteousness from Heaven** | R. Kent Hughes

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

[www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)

[www.preceptaustin.org](http://www.preceptaustin.org)