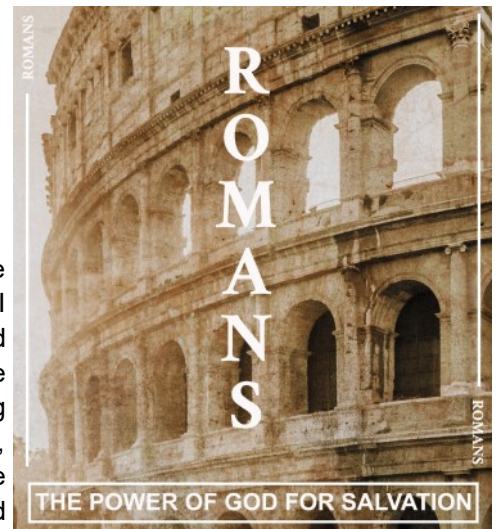


**Before What You Do**

**Romans 9:24-33**

“<sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As indeed he says in Hosea, “Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’ ” <sup>26</sup> “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’ ” <sup>27</sup> And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, <sup>28</sup> for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay.” <sup>29</sup> And as Isaiah predicted, “If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.” <sup>30</sup> What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup> but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup> as it is written, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”



**The Big Idea:** One question people ask about Christianity is this: how can two people live equally good, moral lives—and yet only one be counted righteous before God? The answer is both profound and practical. The Christian life isn't just about *what* you do, but *who* you are, *how* you live, and *where* your life is built. These always come before your actions. Understanding this is essential—not only for salvation, but also for protecting the joy and freedom of the Christian life from the substitutes that subtly steal it.

1. *Who* Before What

Vs. 24-25 ~ “not from the Jews only but also the Gentiles...Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ ... ‘sons of the living God.’”

2. *How* Before What

Vs. 32 ~ “they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works.”

3. *Where* Before What

Vs. 33 ~ “I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling...; and whoever believe in him will not be put to shame.”

## Small Group Discussion Guide

### Romans 9:24-33

Getting Started – On Sunday Pastor Jake told a story of a woman (Glenda Blackwell) who played the lottery for the very first time to show her husband that it never works. She won. Share when you won something unexpected. How was the story tied to the passage we’re studying?

Digging Deeper (*READ Romans 9:24–33*)

#### 1. “It’s Not Fair!” - Read Romans 9:30–32.

- What was so shocking about verses 30&31?
- Why might the Jews feel this is unfair?
- How have people used this idea to critique Christianity?

#### 2. Who Before What

- What does it mean that “who you are” must come before “what you do”?
- How does Paul’s argument about Gentile Christians being made “Israel” shape how we view identity and salvation? Review what he says in all of chapter 9, but especially verses 24-29.

#### 3. Identity Over Effort

- How do the analogies of the home intruder or stalker illustrated in the message help you understand why “who you are” is more important than “how hard you try”?

#### 4. How Before What - Re-read Romans 9:32.

- What’s the difference between pursuing righteousness by works and by faith?

#### 4. Continued)

- Can you think of a time this week when your own morality was driven more by guilt, pride, or fear rather than love for God?
- How does pursuing righteousness by faith alone in Christ alone empower you to be real about your bad motivations, and at the same time have them transformed into good ones?

#### 5. Where Before What - Read verses 32–33.

- What is a cornerstone, and why is it such a powerful image for Jesus?
- Christians are called living stones being built up. On Sunday, it was said that the Christian life is best lived by focusing on the cornerstone instead of yourself. In light of the function of the cornerstone in architecture, why might that be the case?
- How does looking to Jesus change your motivations for prayer, serving, or generosity?

#### Making It Real

- What are some practical ways to keep “Who,” “How,” and “Where” in the right order in your daily life?

#### Prayer Prompts

- Thank God for the gift of grace that changes who we are before we do anything for Him.
- Ask God to expose areas in your life where you are living by the “law of works.”
- Pray for a deeper reliance on Jesus as the foundation, motivation, and goal of your life.

#### 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)