



November 2, 2025

The Burden

Romans 9:1-3

When we read Romans 9:1–3, one question naturally arises: *Why?* Why would Paul experience such deep anguish over the spiritual condition—the lostness—of the Jewish people? These were the same people who had beaten him, imprisoned him, and cursed him, yet Paul still loved them. Such love is not natural; it is *supernatural*.

In 2 Corinthians 5:14–15, Paul reveals the source of that love:

“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

It was the love of Christ that compelled Paul to care so deeply. That same love should compel us—to share the gospel, to support missions, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Listen to the hearts of some well-known missionaries:

- **Jim Elliot:** “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
- **Amy Carmichael:** “If something happens and I do not return, there are no regrets, for I am with Jesus... His glory is my reward.”
- **David Brainerd:** “I’d rather be in the heart of Africa in the will of God than on the throne of England.”
- **Hudson Taylor:** “Cannot the love of Christ carry the missionary where the slave-trade carries the trader? I shall open up a path to the interior or perish.”

One missionary once asked, “*Will you shed your tears for the souls of the nations?*”

When we hear the word *burden*, we often think of something negative—something heavy or painful. But when we speak of a *burden for the lost*, we’re describing compassion and conviction. In Romans 9, Paul expresses both: a deep **compassion** for the lost and a profound **conviction** about eternity.



Key Thought:

Living missionally must be motivated by compassion for the lost and conviction about eternity.

A general *burden* refers to life's hardships—illness, grief, financial strain, or personal loss. But a *burden for the lost* is different. It's a spiritual compulsion—a God-given compassion for those who do not yet know Christ, driven by concern for their eternal destiny.

COMPASSION *(Luke 15; Matthew 9:36–38; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 5:8; Ezekiel 33:11)*

- Paul's compassion was for his own people—the nation of Israel.
- Paul's compassion extended even to those who hated him.

Jesus was moved with compassion for the lost. His love wasn't just an emotion; it was a deep ache within His soul (Matthew 9:36–38).

Charles Spurgeon captured this burden vividly:

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for."

(Lectures to My Students, pp. 336–337)

CONVICTION

Compassion must also be paired with a conviction of the reality of eternity. Scripture is clear: those who die without Jesus face the wrath of God and eternal separation from Him.

- **1 Thessalonians 1:9–10** – Jesus "delivers us from the wrath to come."
- **2 Thessalonians 1:8–9** – Those who reject the gospel "will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord."
- **Romans 2:5–9** – God "will render to each one according to his works... wrath and indignation to those who do not obey the truth."



- **2 Corinthians 5:11** – Knowing “the terror of the Lord,” we seek to persuade others to be reconciled to God.
- **Other passages:** Psalm 9:17, John 3:36, Revelation 20:15.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Todd Gray, executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, once wrote about *A Burden for Lost Souls*. He described how Adrian Rogers, the former pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, was known as a *weeper*—a man whose heart broke for those separated from God. Rogers often said, “Weepers are reapers.”

So how can we develop that same burden? Here are 5 suggestions from Dr. Gray:

How to Grow a Burden for the Lost

1. Pray for it.

Many believers pray for *BOB* each day—**Burden, Opportunity, and Boldness**.

Ask God to give you:

- A **burden** for the lost.
- An **opportunity** to share the gospel.
- The **boldness** to speak with compassion and obedience.

2. Act on it.

A burden for souls is like a muscle—the more you use it, the stronger it becomes. Don’t wait for stronger feelings to start sharing Jesus; begin now, and your compassion will grow as you act in faith.

3. Watch it grow.

In revival meetings across Kentucky, Dr. Gray invited believers to pray for a greater burden. The Spirit impressed upon him that if he wanted a stronger burden, he should act on the one he already had. Obedience fuels compassion.

4. Spend time with lost people.

Most lost people don’t realize they’re lost—they just know something’s missing. As we spend time with them, seeing their need for Christ, our love and urgency to share the gospel will deepen.



5. Meditate on hell.

Richard Baxter, author of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, meditated on heaven daily and developed a longing for it. If we meditated on the reality of hell, perhaps our burden for the lost would grow in the same way.

Action Steps

- I will pray for the next **seven consecutive days** for people to be saved.
- I will **invite three people** to church next week.
- I will **share the gospel with one person** this week.