

Small Group Discussion Guide

VOL 3: Part 18: God's Sovereign Choice: Mercy and Mystery

BIG Idea: God's sovereign plan has always included both mercy and human response—and He remains faithful to His promises without violating the freedom He gave us.

Application: Live as a vessel of mercy—shaped by the hands of a gracious God, not hardened by pride or resistance.

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker: Have you ever had a moment where something *should* have worked out—but didn't? How did that shape your understanding of God's plan?

1. Read Romans 9:1–5. What stands out to you most about Paul's emotional tone toward Israel? How does his grief challenge or inspire your view of evangelism and intercession?
2. Paul says he would be "cut off from Christ" for the sake of his people. How do we reconcile that kind of love with our typical attitudes toward those who reject the gospel?
3. In verses 6–13, Paul discusses "not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members." What does this mean for our understanding of salvation and identity in Christ?
4. How do you personally wrestle with the tension between God's sovereignty and human free will? Does one feel more dominant in your theology or your lived experience?
5. In verses 14–18, Paul uses Pharaoh as an example. How do you interpret the idea that God hardens hearts? What does this teach us about human responsibility?
6. What are some modern-day "vessels of mercy" that you've witnessed? How can we avoid becoming hardened vessels in our walk with God?
7. How does 2 Peter 3:9 support the idea that God is both sovereign and patient? In what ways is God's patience evident in your life or the lives of others?
8. What's the difference between loving truth and mourning with it? How can our group better live out that balance in our relationships, workplaces, and witness?

Prayer Prompt: Invite the group to spend time praying over specific people in their lives who have turned from or resisted the gospel. Pray for soft hearts, divine encounters, and bold compassion like Paul's. End by asking God to make each person in the group a vessel of mercy—shaped and surrendered to His will.

Join us as we read the Bible together in 2025. <https://bit.ly/ReadwithMe25>