



The Book of
ROMANS

Small Group Study 3: Romans 9-11

Week Three: Romans 9:30–10:13

Key Verses

- “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.” - Romans 10:9–10 (CSB)

Key Principles

- Righteousness has to come through faith; we cannot obtain it on our own.
- Christ is the only path to righteousness, accomplishing what the law could not produce in sinful humanity.
- The way to bring others to a saving knowledge of the gospel is to preach the gospel to all who will listen.
- Salvation is about God’s work, not ours.
- Believing and confessing is how we are saved.

Read

When those we love have yet to follow Christ, it affects us. We long for those we care for to know Jesus. The same is true for Paul. Throughout Romans 9–11, we see Paul’s anguish concerning the salvation of Israel. They are his fellow kinsmen, and Paul longs for his ethnic brothers and sisters to come to faith in Christ. It is common for many of us to feel the way Paul does here. We may have an unshakeable confidence in God’s ability to save but simultaneously experience a deep disappointment that many people we care about have yet to believe the gospel.

Paul understands, amidst his own wrestling, that ultimately, God is in control of how salvation unfolds to the nations. This week, we will see in Romans 9:30–10:13 how the Jewish rejection of the gospel helped open the door for Gentiles to experience the power of the gospel. In other words, even though Jews were rejecting Paul’s message, the Gentiles were not. This positive Gentile response to the gospel will later play an important part in Jews responding in faith to Christ as they see God at work in others (see Week Five and Romans 11:11–19, 26).

Throughout Romans 9:30–10:13, Paul maintains that **the way to bring others to a saving knowledge of the gospel is to preach the gospel to all who will listen** (Romans 10:8–17). This means that we must keep taking the good news of Jesus into our workplaces, communities, families, and friend groups, with the hope that many will come to saving faith in Jesus!

As we dig into Romans 9:30–10:13, Paul exposes one huge reason that many people in his day resist the gospel— people look for right moral standing in all the wrong places. This is just as true in our day as it was in Paul’s. Many of us try to convince ourselves that we are good enough for God through upright behavior, involvement in charities, political advocacy, or even church attendance. Unfortunately, when we get so tied to these forms of self-justification, we become unwilling or unable to accept the true work of justification through the gospel of Jesus Christ. And yet, Paul says God calls us to come to him in faith on the basis of what he’s done, not on the basis of what we’ve done or accomplished.

Paul called this reliance on faith a “stone of stumbling” and a “rock of offense” in Romans 9:32–33. The “stone of stumbling” language is an idea Paul borrows from the Old Testament book of Isaiah as a reminder to the Roman audience that this is not a new problem. In Isaiah’s time, the Israelites thought they could find security in their freedom from political oppression, instead of relying on God. The prophet Isaiah had to remind them that they are God’s people, and that faith in God would always be the only lasting route to true salvation, security, and significance.

Notice how Paul describes unbelieving Jews in Romans 10:2–5. Paul says they have “zeal for God,” but they are still “ignorant of the righteousness of God” (10:2–3). Paul is saying that the Jews sought a righteousness from the law instead of the righteousness given by faith. To explain this, Paul pulls from two significant passages in the Old Testament. First, Paul says, “the person who does commandments shall live by them” (Leviticus 18:5). This verse represents a righteousness that could have come from obeying God’s law, from full obedience to all of God’s commands. Paul identifies this as the *wrong* path to righteousness (Romans 10:2–13)! Why is this the wrong path? Because humanity is unable and has always been unable to perfectly follow God’s commands.

Second, Paul says, “the message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (Deuteronomy 30:14). This verse shows us that righteousness comes by faith. In Deuteronomy 31:27–29, Moses explains that righteousness earned by obedience to the law will not work! Still, the Jews of Paul’s day reverted to Leviticus 18:5 as the path to righteous living and ignored Moses’s instruction in Deuteronomy 30–33. It wasn’t about outward obedience. Righteousness is about inward faith. Paul announces that God’s restoration of the people, predicted by Deuteronomy 30, began when Jesus saved us and put his Spirit inside of us. Thus, the Leviticus 18:5 way of being righteous failed and the Deuteronomy 30 way of being righteous prevailed.

Paul then applies Moses’ words in Deuteronomy 30 to what it is like to have faith in Jesus. Just as Moses said centuries before, Paul says that all a believer has to do is “confess with your mouth” and “believe in your heart” (Romans 10:9–10). We do not have to make some special effort to find righteousness. So, we shouldn’t try to be like Moses in order to experience God’s saving hand. At the same time, any effort on our part to bring about salvation is essentially undoing what Jesus did for us in our place. All we have to do is believe the good news of God’s work in Jesus—that he obeyed God perfectly in our place—and God will restore our hearts. Paul knows that we can’t even believe the good news unless God gives us faith and puts his Spirit inside of us to help us. As we’ve mentioned before, **salvation is about God’s work, not ours.**

What does this mean for us? Paul gives us the simple mechanics of faith in verses 10:9–11. **Believing and confessing is how we are saved.** There is no other way. We must believe in God and the work that he accomplished. It’s not about what we can do on our own. We can’t achieve right standing before God by trying to live rightly on our own. Rather, right standing comes from confessing our inability to stand on our own. In our weakness, we put all our hope and trust in what Jesus did for us.

Study Guide

The following study questions are meant to help us wrestle with the text of Romans and see how the gospel displays God's righteousness. Set aside some time this week to meet with God and answer these questions for yourself. Complete each question *before* your weekly small group meeting. Then, when you gather with your small group, be prepared to discuss your answers together.



Read Romans 1:16–17 to remain focused on Paul's major points. Then, read Romans 9:30– 10:13 in preparation for this week's study.

Highlight

What questions does Paul address in this passage? Where do you see Paul give the answers to these questions?

What Old Testament passages does Paul quote in this passage? What is the main point of each Old Testament quotation?

List out the elements of salvation according to verses 5–13.

Circle the significant conjunctions in this passage (e.g., and, because, but, yet, etc.). How do these conjunctions move the argument along?

Explain

Using Romans 9:30–10:4, explain in your own words why many Jews were not putting their faith in Christ at the time of Paul's writing.

In what way is Christ the "*end of the law* for righteousness to everyone who believes" (10:4)?

Why is it important that the "message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (10:8)?

Describe the role belief plays in God's plan of salvation according to Romans 9:30–10:13. Why is belief such an important part of salvation?

Apply

How do people you know try to prove themselves to be good enough for God? How are people in your community “ignorant of the righteousness of God” (10:3) in their pursuits?

Romans 9:30–10:13 helps us see the dangers of looking for righteousness in the wrong places. How have you chased after a false sense of righteousness? How can we know when we are drifting into these habits again?

Respond in Prayer

Each week of this study guide will include a recommended Scripture passage that helps us focus on the faithfulness of our great God. Set aside some time this week to read through the selected passage and use the prayer prompts below as your guide. We recommend praying through this passage on your own at home *and* together with your small group.

This Week’s Prayer Passage: Romans 9:30–10:13

Read Romans 9:30–10:13.

Pray through the following prompts, according to the A.C.T.S. method.

- **Adoration:** Praise God for being righteous (10:3). Praise God for being the Lord of all people (10:12–13). Adore God for being the Rock that we can count on for salvation (10:13). Praise God for his power, which he wields on our behalf (10:9–10).
- **Confession:** Confess to God that you have wrongly sought righteousness in ways that do not lead back to Christ (9:30–10:4). Confess the ways that you have not submitted to God’s righteousness and wanted to establish your own (10:3). Ask for forgiveness for the ways that you have taken Christ’s salvation for granted (10:6–10).

- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for hearing our prayers (10:1) and for acting on our behalf. Thank God for saving people of every nation, tribe, and tongue (10:12–13). Thank God for providing a way of salvation for us, even though we are unrighteous (10:9–10).

- **Supplication:** Ask God to remove any stumbling block from your friends and neighbors, so that they would believe the gospel along with you (9:33). Pray that your friends and neighbors would not be ignorant of the gospel or zealously chase after things that cannot satisfy their souls (10:1–2).