

## Hardening

### Key Scriptures

Romans 9:14-24 <sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? Certainly not! <sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

<sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the scripture says to Pharaoh: "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then, God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has ever resisted His will?" <sup>20</sup> But who indeed are you— a mere human being— to talk back to God? Does what is molded say to the molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special use and another for ordinary use? <sup>22</sup> But what if God, willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath prepared for destruction? <sup>23</sup> And what if he is willing to make known the wealth of his glory on the objects of mercy that he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup> even us, whom he has called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

**Key Point:** Election is not from lineage or merit, but God's mercy alone.

## TALK IT OVER

**Start talking:** Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- If you could ask God one question knowing you would receive an immediate answer, what would it be?

**Start thinking.** Ask questions to get your group thinking.

Take some time as a group to read through Romans 9:14-33. Feel free to share any problems or questions you may have as you read it.

- In Romans 9:17 Paul quotes from Exodus 9. One of the things to consider is that when God hardens Pharaoh, He does it to achieve a positive purpose. In Exodus 9:13-16, how did God's interaction with Pharaoh in the 10 plagues cause His name to be proclaimed in all the earth?
- There are many other places in the Old Testament which also speak of God hardening a person. Look up Deuteronomy 2:30, Joshua 11:20, and Gen 15:16. What do these passages contribute to your understanding?
- For those of you who would like to walk through the passages in Exodus where Pharaoh's heart is hardened . . . Exod 4:21-23; First plague: 7:13, 22; Second Plague: 8:15; Third Plague: 8:19; Fourth Plague: 8:32; Fifth Plague: 9:7; Sixth Plague: 9:12; Seventh Plague: 9:34-10:1; Eighth Plague: 10:18-20; Ninth Plague: 10:27; Tenth Plague: 11:10, 14:4-5, 8.

**Start sharing.** Choose a question to create openness.

- What are the most problematic aspects of the doctrine of election to the average Christian? Why has the average Christian never heard a sermon from the pulpit on the doctrine of election?
- In what ways in our culture do we see a rebellious questioning "why have you made me like this?" (v.20)
- We think we have the right to question everything, and every authority. Why do we do this? What are you most likely to complain to God about?
- Where have you been the most confused about what God was doing in your life? OR, In what way has God made you or shaped you that seemed like a weakness? (see 2 Cor 12:1-10)

**Start doing.** Commit to a step and live it out this week!

- Purposefully think of how God's sovereignty is involved in your everyday life this week, and take time to thank God for what He is doing.

**Prayer Requests.** It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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