

LifeGroup Study Sheet

March 5th and 8th, 2026: Romans 3:9-20

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing for your group discussion.

Quick Review

Look back from your sermon notes – Was there anything that particularly challenged you from this sermon? Anything you didn't understand, agree with or connect with?

Introduction

Growing up, what was the thing you said to get out of trouble, your go-to excuse? Did it ever actually work? What's something you do that you're convinced is fine, but deep down you know other people would judge you for? (Eating potato chips in bed, having pizza for breakfast, etc.)

Digging In

Question 1: Read Romans 3:9-12. Paul is now setting up the closing argument for what was stated way back in Romans 1:18. **"Everyone is ruled by sin."** For two chapters Paul has outlined that both Gentiles (without the Law) and Jews (with the Law) are equally guilty before God! Paul uses the phrases like "no one" and "not even one" and "all" to sum up the universality of sin. 9 different times in 4 verses!

What is your default way of thinking about yourself compared to other people? **"Everyone has failed God's righteous standard."** Do you tend to think of yourself as a *little better*, *about the same*, or *genuinely as broken*, as Paul describes? What makes it difficult to accept what these verses say about us before we are changed by Christ?

Read Isaiah 64:6. Paul is quoting a Scripture that goes back centuries. This is not a new diagnosis. Why do you think human beings have always found it so difficult to agree with God's assessment of us? Why is it so important to understand our diagnosis before Jesus' message of salvation makes sense?

Question 2: Read Romans 3:19-20. Verse 19 says the law speaks "so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." Paul is describing a moment of total accountability. No defense, no argument, no loophole. **"Everyone will remain silent."** What excuses or justifications do you find yourself reaching for most often when confronted with your own sin or shortcomings? What would it feel like to have those taken away?

Verse 20 says the law's purpose is to give us "knowledge of sin," not to fix us, but to show us the truth. Has there been a season in your life where God used a rule, a standard, or a moment of failure to show you something about yourself you did not want to see? What did that feel like, and what did it lead to?

Read Galatians 3:24. Paul calls the law a "guardian" or tutor that leads us to Christ. How does understanding that the law was never meant to save us, only to point us to our need, change the way you relate to your own failures? Does it bring relief, or does it feel unsettling? Why?

Question 3: Read Romans 3:9-20. This is one of the heaviest passages in the New Testament, and yet it is essential to the understanding the Gospel. Paul's indictment ends at verse 20, and verse 21 begins with the two most important words in Romans: *"But now."* In your own faith journey, was there a moment when you genuinely accepted the diagnosis of these verses? Not just intellectually, but personally? What was that moment like, and how did it change the way you received grace from the Lord?

C.S. Lewis wrote, "God cannot give us a new life until we stop trying to make the old one work." How does Romans 3:9–20 function as God's way of stopping us from doing that? In practical terms, what does it look like to *stop* trying to earn standing before God, in the way we pray, the way we treat failure, the way we relate to people whose sins are more visible than ours?

Read Psalm 51. This is David's song to the Lord after he had been confronted with his sin with Bathsheba. David's prayer after his greatest failure, use this as a model for what it looks like to come before God with no excuses.

Consider: Where in your life are you still trying to earn standing before God rather than receive it?

Application

This week, pay attention to the moments when you catch yourself defending yourself to God, in prayer, in your thought life, in how you respond to conviction. There is no such thing as different levels of righteousness! Practice what Paul is pointing us toward: *"Lord, I have no defense. I receive your grace."* Share with the group: What would change in your daily life if you lived from that posture instead of from one of self-justification?

Praise / Prayer Requests

Pray for your group with these things in mind:

Adoration – How can I praise God for what this teaches me?

Confession – What sin can I confess because of what this teaches me?

Thanksgiving – How can I thank God for what Jesus has done?

Supplication – What do I need to ask of God in order to grow in light of this?