

John Piper: 10 Impacts of Romans 9 on My Life

The ninth chapter of the book of Romans has had a profound affect on my life. Here are 10 reasons why:

1. Romans 9 makes me confident that God's Word will not fail and all the promises of Romans 8 will prove true for me, even in the worst suffering.

2. Romans 9 makes me stand in awe of God, and leads me into the depth of true God-centered worship.

I am burdened because the evangelical church in America is so light-hearted. There are so many church services where everything has to be funny. There's never any sense of wonder or weight or reverence. That's just who America *is*. We're viewed that way around the world. We are a chipper, funny, light-hearted people. Just turn on the television. It's all funny, all silly.

If the God of Romans 9 exists, it should change and shape how we worship.

3. Romans 9 helps protect me from trifling with divine things.

4. Romans 9 helps to keep me amazed at my own salvation.

John Newton was *really* amazed that he was saved. We get amazed by a lot of things. We need to ask ourselves periodically if we are amazed that we are saved. Are we blown away that we are included in the eternal family of the living God, especially in view of all our remaining sin?

5. Romans 9 makes me groan over the indescribable disease of our secular, God-belittling culture.

If God finds you in a culture that has so completely lost its

way that it calls two homosexual men regularly having sex marriage, you need to groan. We *must* groan—with a lot of compassion and a lot of conviction. To not groan in this culture means you are blind to the holiness of God.

6. Romans 9 makes me confident that the work which God planned and began, he will finish—both globally and personally.

Think about ISIS—beheadings, the possible unification of a Muslim world around a caliphate armed with nuclear weapons. If it comes true, it really will be like the events described in the book of Revelation. If you don't have a God who is unshakable when everywhere you look it seems like Christianity is losing, you will be in trouble. You need a theology that reminds us we're not losing, that God will triumph.

7. Romans 9 makes me see everything in the light of God's sovereign purposes—that from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever and ever.

Everything everywhere I look in life—*all* things—are related to God. Nothing is *not* related to God. Everywhere you look, something is coming from Him, moving through Him, going back to Him. God has not lost control of this world. Everything relates to God, and there's a way to talk about how.

8. Romans 9 makes me hopeful that God has the will, the right and the power to answer prayer that people be changed.

Sometimes people try to pit prayer against the sovereignty of God. They ask "Why should we pray if God is sovereign?" To which I respond, "Why pray if he's *not*?" All the things I care about God doing, He doesn't have the right to do if you believe in absolute free will. By absolute free will, I mean *ultimate* self-determination. If you have self-determination, God has no right to intrude on you and change you. So why would we pray?

But if you believe that God has the right to break into any

life, overcome the will, make someone His, take out the heart of stone, put in the heart of flesh, and cause someone to walk in his statutes, *then* you'll pray. You probably have people that you've been praying for over decades who are not believers, and you're frightened that they may not be elect. You're frightened that they might go to their grave not believing in Jesus. I do.

There's simply no hope if God is not sovereign for those people. If there is any hope for the most hardened sinner that you love, if there's *any* hope that that person might be saved, it is God. God can save. God can just stop them in their tracks, take out the heart that's been rebelling for 50 years, and put in a new heart. *That* is why we pray.

9. Romans 9 reminds me that evangelism is absolutely essential for people to come to Christ and be saved, and that there is great hope for success in leading people to faith, but that conversion is not finally dependent on me or limited by the hardness of the unbeliever.

This is one of the most liberating truths for evangelism. On the one hand, you know that you cannot save anybody. You cannot make a person stop trusting himself or loving his sin. God has to do it. But you also know that all are born again through the living and abiding Word. My job is to witness. I don't save anybody. God Almighty saves. He alone can save, *and* he chooses to use witnesses.

So let's go to the nations, to the unreached peoples of the world. World missions will succeed, and we should be about it.

10. Romans 9 makes me sure that God will triumph in the end.

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