



SEPTEMBER 22
THE GOSPEL OF GOD
GOD'S CHOICE & OUR CHOICE (PART 1)



GETTING STARTED

In the message this weekend, we continued our study of Romans 9 and explored the difference between primary and secondary issues. We learned that though true Christ-followers might disagree on numerous secondary issues, our greatest calling is to love one another despite our differences.

As you begin the study, reflect on these verses. Write down anything the Lord highlights for you.

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13:34-35



GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Considering the recent Olympic games, if you had the ability to compete in and win any event, which one would you choose and why?



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are one or two insights that stuck out to you from the message this weekend?
2. Have you become a follower of Jesus? If not, share a little bit about where you are currently at in your spiritual journey. If you are a follower of Jesus, how would you answer the questions below?
 - a. Looking back on your journey to faith, to what extent do you have a sense that God “chose” you to come to Christ?
 - b. Looking back on your journey to faith, to what extent do you sense that you “chose” to follow Christ?
3. In the weekend message, Michael explained that there is often a debate about whether we are saved because God chose us or because we chose Him. Why do you think there is so much debate around this topic of predestination and free will?
 - a. Have you ever experienced the intensity of this debate firsthand? If so, what happened?

b. Is this an issue you have given much thought to in the past? If so, share a little of how your thoughts, beliefs, and convictions have developed over time.

c. To what degree do you think your personal faith journey (how you came to Christ) impacts the way you view this debate?

4. This weekend, Michael asked *How Do You Decide ... What You Believe?* with the answer being *the Word of God*. Read through the Scriptures below that are often used to support the two different sides of this debate.

- Romans 8:29-30

- Acts 13:48

- Ephesians 1:3-12

- 1 Timothy 2:1-6

- 2 Peter 3:9

- John 6:35-47

a. Which of these passages seem to support the concept of predestination the most?

b. Which of these passages seems to support the concept of free will the most?

c. Can you see a way for all of these passages to work together in a way that is true to each of them?

d. Using the above passages, how might you explain *God's Choice & Our Choice* to someone not yet following Jesus?

5. The final question from this weekend was *How Spiritually Mature ... Are You?* How would you answer this question?

a. Have you witnessed or experienced a situation where disagreements over secondary issues led to a breakdown in the relationship? If so, what happened?

b. What are some of the best experiences you have had in the body of Christ where differences over secondary issues have been handled well?

c. Are there any secondary issues in your life that you are passionate about and therefore need to be careful when discussing them with other Christ-followers who see these issues differently? If so, what are they?



TOPICAL PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of each Life Group. Often those who are new to a Life Group are intimidated by praying aloud if they have never done it before. Others are so comfortable with prayer that they can take over the prayer time without meaning to. For these reasons, we suggest practicing topical prayer to help your group get comfortable praying together. Here are three basic guidelines:

1. Focus on a Single Topic/Request at a Time

Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request. Once a topic is introduced, one or two members pray for that request. Then the Life Group Leader will direct the prayer time by sharing the next topic/request.

2. Pray Several Times Together

By focusing on one topic at a time, each member has an opportunity to pray at different times for the requests they are most passionate about.

3. Keep Requests/Prayers Short and Simple

By keeping both requests and prayers short and simple, everyone has a chance to share and pray. This helps those who are new to prayer feel more comfortable praying. It also helps everyone stay focused during your time of prayer together.