

DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

Our text is Romans 11:11-24, where Paul explains how Gentile believers are incorporated into God's salvation plan for the world. He wants to be sure that the Gentiles understand that they are not in God's Kingdom because they've accomplished something. They were outsiders, but because of God's grace, they now share in the covenants God made with His people.

Paul loved to make the Jewish synagogue his first stop in a new city. He always wanted to give the Jews of the city the chance to hear the Good News about their Messiah. But fairly early in his ministry, he realized that he would find more fertile ground among the Gentiles. Read about his experience and his realization in Acts 13:44-49.

INTRODUCTION (observation):

- Paul uses a variety of literary devices to drive home his point.
 Find them.
 - a question to advance his argument
 - if-then reasoning (in more than one verse)
 - direct address to the Gentiles in the Roman church
 - two word-pictures (one culinary, one agricultural).
- 2. Make sure you understand from the context whom Paul refers to in his pronouns "you" and "they"/"them."
- 3. There are three commands in this text, or really one command reworded three times. What is it?

DISCUSSION (interpretation):

- Twice Paul says that he turned to the Gentiles in order to make the Jews jealous. What does this mean? Did Paul deliberately appeal to the lower nature of his Jewish brethren?
- 2. What does the culinary word-picture mean in v. 16 and its context? It might help to consult a paraphrase like the *Message* or a commentary.
- 3. Why do you think Paul needed to give the Gentiles these commands? What should cause them to "stand in awe"?

SO WHAT? (application): Here we move toward first-person pronouns as we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.
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- It's clear enough from this text that God did something significant in the lives of the Jews ("severity") so that the Gentiles would benefit from God's kindness.
 - Have you ever seen God do that in your life or in someone else's life – work in one person's life in order to accomplish something in another person's life?
 - This can be disruptive for us to see that God's work in our lives is not just about us.
 - When you've seen God work in this way before, how did the different people involved handle God's working in this way?
 - What part did you play? How did you handle it?
- 2. Twice Paul tells the Gentiles not to be proud or arrogant; rather, they should stand in awe.
 - Why would the Gentiles in the Roman church be tempted to be arrogant and proud?
 - Why would anyone who has experienced God's grace be tempted to be arrogant?
 - When you think about what God has given you in Christ, what effect does that knowledge have on your self-image? Does your knowledge of God's grace ever tempt you to be proud or arrogant?

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