

## DISCUSSION GUIDE: Romans 4:9-12

MAY 21, 2017

In Romans 4:9-12, Paul continues to defend the doctrine of justification, specifically to his Jewish readers. He continues to use Abraham as an example of justification by faith alone, showing that while Abraham was circumcised, he was not circumcised until almost twenty years after he had faith in God. Circumcision was important in Paul's eyes, but it was a sign of the fact that Abraham was justified by faith, not a means by which God would save people. This shows that we are first justified by faith in Christ, which leads to obedience, as opposed to obedience that leads to being made right with God.

1. Paul specifically attacks circumcision because many Jews believed it was required for salvation, but we fall into the same traps. Christians often define their faith by religious acts or rules they do, as opposed to Christ alone.

—What are some examples of religious acts that people in our day think you must do to be saved?

—Are there specific rules or religious acts that you tend to build your faith on? What are they?

2. In stressing the importance of justification by faith, Paul wants us to understand that we are justified, which leads to obedience, as opposed to obedience that leads to justification.

—Do you often find yourself trying to clean yourself up before you can come to God? How do we combat this with the gospel?

3. Paul presents a radical truth to his audience in Romans 4:11-12 in telling us that Abraham is not just the father of the circumcised, but of all who believe. Paul shows us the gospel is not only for the circumcised ethnic Jew, but for anyone who would repent and believe in Christ.

—Americans may be prone to identify with their country instead of their faith. Is the idea of a "Christian Nation" actually biblical? Who truly are God's people?

—The gospel breaks down walls between people who are not like us. In what ways do we usually put up walls towards others? What types of people do you generally put up barriers and walls towards?

—What does the fact that God's gospel is for all nations and all types of people say about God's character?