

# GROUP CONVERSATION GUIDE

## WEEK OF June 23-29

**Conversation Title:** Grafted into God's Plan

**Message Text:** Romans 11

**Before Your Small Group Meeting:** Attend or Watch Pastor Mark Ragsdale's Message:  
[churchatviera.com/live/](http://churchatviera.com/live/)

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### Beginning the Conversation

**Read Scripture:** Romans 11:1-36

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### Key Themes

Share the following key themes with your group from this week's message:

- **The Olive Tree Metaphor** - Understanding our place in God's redemptive plan.
  - **Jewish Blindness** - Israel's temporary rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.
  - **Gentile Blessings** - The extension of the gospel to the Gentiles.
  - **Jewish Restoration** - The future blessings when Jews are grafted back into the tree.
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### Discussion Starter Questions (Choose all or some of these questions to discuss in your group.)

What stood out to you from Pastor Mark's message on Romans 11?

How do you understand the metaphor of the olive tree in the context of God's redemptive plan?

**Romans 11:7-8** - "What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day.'"

- How do you interpret what it means by those who were "hardened"? What might this mean for understanding God's sovereignty and human responsibility?

**Romans 11:11-12** - "Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!"

- What insights do you gain from the idea that Israel's stumbling brought salvation to the Gentiles? How do you anticipate the "greater riches" that will come with Israel's full inclusion?

**Romans 11:17-18** - "If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you."

- What does this passage teach you about humility and gratitude in your faith journey? How can this understanding affect your relationships within the church?

**Romans 11:19-20** - "You will say then, 'Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.' Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble."

- How does Paul's warning against arrogance challenge you in your personal faith? What steps can you take to remain humble and reverent before God?

**Romans 11:22** - "Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off."

- How do you balance understanding the kindness and sternness of God in your life? How does this duality influence your daily walk with God?

**Romans 11:29** - "For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable."

- What does it mean to you that God's gifts and call are irrevocable? How does this assurance impact your sense of purpose and identity in Christ?

**Romans 11:33-36** - "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?' 'Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?' For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

- How do you respond to Paul's expression of awe at God's wisdom and knowledge? What practical steps can you take to deepen your appreciation for God's greatness in your life?

What does Israel's temporary blindness teach us about God's sovereignty and mercy?

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## Sharing Your Story

- Describe a time when you felt "grafted" into a community or family. How did that experience shape your understanding of belonging in God's family?
  - How has understanding the blessings that came to Gentiles through Israel's blindness impacted your view of salvation and God's plan for humanity?
  - Share an experience where you witnessed someone who had previously rejected faith come to accept and embrace it. How did that affect you?
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## Worship Song (Optional)

Consider playing the worship song "**Way Maker**" Leeland:

[https://youtu.be/iJCV\\_2H9xD0?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/iJCV_2H9xD0?feature=shared)

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## Key Words (With Greek Definitions)

- **Blindness** (πώρωσις, pōrōsis) - Hardening, dullness, insensitivity.
  - **Graft** (ἐγκεντρίζω, enkentrizō) - To insert, to implant.
  - **Remnant** (λείμμα, leimma) - A remaining portion, a small surviving group.
  - **Fullness** (πλήρωμα, plērōma) - Completeness, abundance.
  - **Mercy** (ἔλεος, eleos) - Compassion, kindness, favor.
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## Summary

This week's message focuses on Romans 11 and the metaphor of the olive tree, illustrating God's redemptive plan through Israel's temporary blindness, the blessings extended to Gentiles, and the anticipated restoration of Israel. Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah led to the gospel being preached to the Gentiles, demonstrating God's mercy and inclusivity. The chapter concludes with the hope and assurance of Israel's future inclusion, bringing fullness to God's plan.

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## Practical Application

- **Embrace Your Grafting:** Reflect on Romans 11:17-18 and consider how you can fully embrace your place in God's family, knowing that you are nourished by the same root.
  - **Pray for Israel's Restoration:** Pray for the fulfillment of God's plans for Israel and for their spiritual awakening, as inspired by Romans 11:23-24.
  - **Celebrate God's Mercy:** Acknowledge and celebrate the mercy extended to you as a Gentile, and extend that same mercy to others in your daily life, drawing from Romans 11:30-31.
  - **Seek Unity:** Promote unity within the body of Christ, recognizing the diversity and inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in God's plan, inspired by Romans 11:25-26.
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## Deeper Personal Questions

- **Grafted into God's Plan:**
    - How do you personally relate to the metaphor of being grafted into God's family?
    - What does this grafting mean for your daily walk with Christ and your sense of belonging?
  - **Experiencing God's Mercy:**
    - Reflect on a time when you experienced God's mercy in a profound way.
    - How did this experience shape your understanding of God's plan and your role in it?
  - **Hope for Restoration:**
    - What does the hope of Israel's future restoration mean to you?
    - How does this hope influence your prayers and actions toward the Jewish community and other unbelievers?
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## Response

If you've been wrestling with understanding your place in God's plan or struggling with feelings of exclusion, know that God offers you a place in His family. Are you ready to embrace this inclusion and respond to His mercy? Today (and everyday) is the day to fully embrace your grafting into God's family and live out His purpose for you.