

Group Leader Cheat Sheet

Week 2 – Salvation: The Gift We Could Never Earn

1. Welcome & Warmup (0–3 min)

“Tonight we’re continuing from Sunday’s message: *Salvation — The Gift We Could Never Earn*. Romans 3–5 takes us from the mirror that tells the truth to the grace that restores the reflection. This isn’t about us improving the image — it’s about Jesus becoming the image we stand behind.”

Quick Icebreaker (optional):

“*What’s one thing you’ve tried to fix yourself that only got worse?*”

Tie it in: *That’s the story of salvation — when we stop fixing angles and finally stand behind Jesus.*

2. Message Recap (3–8 min)

The Big Picture:

Romans 3–5 shows us why salvation isn’t earned, improved, or achieved — it’s received. The mirror tells the truth, but grace tells the rest of the story.

Key Flow from Sunday:

1. The Truth About Us — Romans 3:23–24 (NLT)

Everyone falls short. Everyone is freely made right by grace.

2. The Problem We Couldn’t Solve — Romans 3:10–12 (NLT)

No one is righteous. Religion polishes the mirror; rebellion replaces it.

Power phrase: *Sin is not what you do against God; it’s what you do without God.*

3. The Angled Mirror Illustration

• Toward Others — Romans 2:1

We deflect instead of reflect.

• Toward Self — Romans 3:10

The mirror becomes a microscope.

• Toward Jesus — Romans 3:27

Faith, not boasting.

• Aligned Behind Jesus — Romans 5:1

Peace arrives when we stand behind Him.

Power phrase: *Works adjust the mirror; faith stands still behind Jesus.*

4. The Righteousness We Can’t Define — Romans 3:1–4 (ESV)

We discover righteousness in Him — we don’t define it in ourselves.

5. The Gift We Could Never Earn — Romans 3:25–26 (NLT)

God didn’t ignore sin — He absorbed it.

Power phrase: *We don’t climb to heaven; heaven stepped into us.*

6. The Faith That Frees Us — Romans 4:1–5 (ESV)

Abraham believed before he behaved.

7. The Peace & Hope That Follow — Romans 5:1–2, 6–9 (NLT)

Peace is the sound grace makes when it lands.

Hope is grace projected forward.

Core Truth:

Salvation isn't behavior modification — it's alignment behind Jesus.

Big Line:

When we stand behind Jesus, the whole reflection changes — righteousness, peace, and hope.

3. Highlight Talking Points (8–14 min)

Use these to steer the room before sending groups out.

1. The Truth That Reveals

- Romans 3:23–24 — We all fall short; grace makes us right.

Ask:

Where did the “mirror” tell the truth for you this week?

2. The Problem We Couldn't Solve

- Romans 3:10–12 — No one is righteous.

Ask:

What's an example of polishing or replacing the mirror in your own strength?

3. The Angled Mirror

- Romans 2:1, 3:10, 3:27, 5:1

Ask:

Which angle is your default — toward others, toward self, or toward Jesus without seeing yourself in Him?

4. The Gift We Could Never Earn

- Romans 3:25–26

Ask:

What does it mean for you personally that heaven stepped into you?

5. The Peace That Follows

- Romans 5:1–2

Ask:

Where is shame still trying to steal peace?

4. Prayer Focus (14–15 min)

“Let's thank Jesus for the gift we could never earn and the peace we could never produce.”

Pray for:

- Alignment behind Jesus — not adjusting angles
- Peace to replace shame
- Hope to steady every cracked place
- Faith to receive, not achieve

End with:

“Jesus, You are my reflection. Let Your righteousness, peace, and hope shape us this week.”

1. CHAT ROOM DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 2 — Salvation: The Gift We Could Never Earn

Romans 3–5

ICEBREAKER

“Describe a time you looked in an actual mirror and saw something you hadn’t noticed before.”
(Use this to transition into the theme of truth → grace → alignment.)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Truth About Us

Romans 3:23–24 (NLT)

“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.”

Discussion:

- Why is it important that grace meets us where our control ends?
- In what ways does the “mirror” of Scripture clarify rather than condemn?

2. The Problem We Couldn’t Solve

Romans 3:10–12 (NLT)

“As the Scriptures say,
‘No one is righteous— not even one.
No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.
All have turned away...
No one does good, not a single one.’”

Discussion:

- Why does Paul first confront us with what we *cannot* do?
- How does this passage expose our need for a Savior more than our need for self-improvement?
- Which part of this truth is hardest to accept?

3. The Angled Mirror

Romans 2:1 (NLT)

“You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad...”

Romans 3:10 (NLT)

“As the Scriptures say, ‘No one is righteous— not even one.’”

Romans 3:27 (NLT)

“Can we boast...? No... It is based on faith.”

Romans 5:1 (NLT)

“Since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God...”

Discussion:

- When are you most tempted to angle the mirror toward others?
- When do you angle it toward yourself?
- What does it look like to “stand still behind Jesus” this week?

Leader Insight:

Everything changes when the reflection passes through Christ first.

4. The Righteousness We Can’t Define

Romans 3:1–4 (ESV)

“Let God be true though every one were a liar...”

Discussion:

- Why do we try to define righteousness on our own terms?
- How does trusting *His rightness* give rest to your soul?

5. The Gift We Could Never Earn**Romans 3:25–26 (NLT)**

“For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin...”

Discussion:

- Why is it important that salvation is a *gift* and not a *paycheck*?
- What does it mean to you that “heaven stepped into us”?

6. The Faith That Frees Us**Romans 4:1–5 (ESV)**

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

Discussion:

- How do we confuse “believing” with “behaving”?
- What does it practically look like to “stand still long enough for the true reflection to appear”?

7. The Peace That Follows**Romans 5:1–2 (NLT)**

“Since we have been made right... we have peace with God...”

Discussion:

- Where does shame try to steal peace from your week?
- What does dropping shame look like in real life?

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God that salvation is a gift we could never earn.
- Ask for renewed alignment behind Jesus — reflection through Him.
- Pray for peace to replace shame, and hope to fill every cracked place.