

## Start your study here

### Romans 1:18-32

- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven  
    against  
        all ungodliness  
        and unrighteousness of men,  
            who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them,  
    because God has shown it to them.
- 20 For his invisible attributes,  
    namely,  
        his eternal power  
        and divine nature,  
    have been clearly perceived,  
        ever since the creation of the world,  
        in the things that have been made.  
    So they are without excuse.
- 21 For although they knew God,  
    they did not honor him as God  
    or give thanks to him,  
        but they became futile in their thinking,  
        and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- 22 Claiming to be wise,  
    they became fools,
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God  
    for images  
        resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.
- 24 Therefore God gave them up  
    in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,  
        to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,
- 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie  
    and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,  
        who is blessed forever! Amen.
- 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.  
    For their women exchanged natural relations  
        for those that are contrary to nature;
- 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women  
    and were consumed with passion for one another,  
        men committing shameless acts with men  
        and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,  
    God gave them up to a debased mind  
        to do what ought not to be done.
- 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.  
    They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.  
    They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful,
- 30 inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,
- 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.
- 32 Though they know God's decree  
    that those who practice such things deserve to die,  
        they not only do them  
        but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

Closely tied to 1:16-17 theme--Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed "because" God found it necessary to reveal

**Key repetition**  
Known/knew  
Exchanged  
God gave them up

Review: Paul's theme—the Gospel, the power of God for salvation, reveals God's righteousness—now Paul will show why this salvation is necessary.  
Observations: (1) What was plain and rejected (2) conscious exchange of knowledge of God for immorality (3) God "gave them up"—punishes sin with sin (4) what was designed/natural versus unnatural (idolatry and homosexuality)  
Key Question:  
What do we know about God that we don't respond to; that we don't do?

**Romans 1:18-32**

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven

against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

hinder, hold back, restrain

i.e. righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel?

1:18 topic sentence for 1:18-3:20

19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Ontological knowledge—the existence & being of God

God is knowable

20 For his invisible attributes, namely,

Not saving knowledge because it is suppressed (18) and distorted (21-23)

The root of sin—suppress truth of God

his eternal power and divine nature,

The Almighty, Creator (eternal—before all)

The fact that He is God

have been clearly perceived,

ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

God's creation reveals Him (Ps 8, 19)

21 So they are without excuse.

Why the wrath of God is revealed—they did not respond to what could be seen/known

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him,

Knowledge of God should result in honor and thanksgiving (21) and worship (25)

The fruit of sin—idolatry, immorality, wickedness

but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Sin affects our affections, senses and mind

22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools,

Pattern: they exchanged⇒God gave them over (3x)

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images

1:17

resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Idolatry

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,

Notice, as in OT, idolatry leads to immorality Both are unnatural—contrary to God's design

Immorality

25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Idolatry

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

Immorality

For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;

God created order, established intended natural relationships, Human beings were designed to have sex with the opposite sex

27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women

Note: sexual deviation is an outcome, not the reason for judgment—rejection of God's self-revelation is the reason for judgment

Immorality

and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men

Just recompense—punishment in keeping with the transgression

and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,

All forms of evil or wickedness

God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

Does this refer to universal principles of morality? Not culture based?

29 ① They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.

1 general description of sin

② They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.

2 sin that affects relationships

③ They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful,

3 sinful actions

30 inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 Though they know God's decree

Righteous regulation, requirement, command

Moral knowledge—the standards of God, inborn moral conscience

that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them

Just recompense—punishment in keeping with the transgression

God's standards and consequences are known

but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

Worse than doing evil—is encouraging or involving others

**Working Idea** (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Connection and Flow

Having just revealed the wonder of the Gospel—the power of God for salvation revealing the righteousness of God—Paul turns to why this salvation is needed.

This passage begins a section on the problem of sin. (1:18–3:20)

God reveals not only His righteousness (1:17) but His wrath (1:18)

His wrath is the result of man's suppression of God's revelation of Himself (1:18)

God is knowable and man exchanges what is knowable for foolish human thoughts (1:19-23)

Men turn to idolatry, immorality and all forms of wickedness rather than God (1:23-31)

And they do this, knowing it is wrong and that the punishment is death (1:32)

Paul is developing a theology of God and man

God is knowable and His standards and consequences are known—even to Gentile pagans without the Mosaic Law.

The revelation of God and man's rejection of Him makes them condemnable.

**Main idea:**

God has made Himself known through creation and conscience so that men are without excuse when they suppress the truth of who God is and reject the natural order. They are therefore subject to God's wrath and death.

**Teaching idea:**

The Root of Sin—sinner

Suppressing the truth of God

God and some of His character and standards can be known from

Creation—powerful, Creator, eternal, (1:19-20, 23, 25)

Conscience—holy standards and consequences (1:32)

Robert Mounce

“The basic problem of the human race is not ignorance of the truth but rebellion against the One who is the truth.”

The Fruit of Sin—sins

The result of the root of sin is acts of sin

The exchange of the divine natural design for the unnatural

Worship of God for worship of idols

Normal relationships for homosexual relationships

The result of the root and fruit of sin—the wrath of God against them; they deserve death

Paul is writing this passage primarily to Christians. Why?

To appreciate our lost-ness

To appreciate the transforming power of the righteousness of God

**Catch Phrase:**

The root of sin

The fruit of sin

Every significant heresy has started from a view of sin that was less than biblical (not anti-biblical)

**Outline**

God revealed and rejected

The foundational sin of refusing to thank and glorify God leads to other sins.<sup>1</sup>

The root of sin  
 The fruit of sin  
 The result—deserves death

**Key Phrase:**

The Diagnosis of Sin  
 Depravity—the sinfulness of all  
 Result?  
 God has standards with consequences  
 God will allow men to follow their sin

**Connection to Section:**

<b>Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20</b>				
	<b>1:18-32</b>	<b>2:1-16</b>	<b>2:17—3:8</b>	<b>3:9-20</b>
<b>Who is Paul addressing?</b>	Pagan	Moralist	Jew	World (everyone)
<b>How do they relate to God?</b>	Disregard God	Try to distract God	Brag about relationship	No one seeks God
<b>What is their problem?</b>	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality	Judgmental	Self-righteousness hypocrisy	Sin
<b>Favorite Phrase?</b>	Live it up	Straighten up	You get to work	(Cursing and Bitterness)
<b>Goal?</b>	Satisfy own passions	Monitor their neighbor	Measure their merit	Autonomy
<b>View of Sin?</b>	No one is guilty	They are guilty, not me	Privileged, not guilty I’m guilty but privileged overcome	No regard (no fear)
<b>Boundaries?</b>	If it feels go, do it.	If they feel good, note it.	If it feels good, stop it.	None
<b>Paul’s Judgment?</b>	You have no excuse for the things you do	You have no authority for the judgments you make	You have no solution for the problem you have	You have no hope in yourself
<b>Key Verse</b>	1:24	2:1	2:23 4:5	3:9-11
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Condemnation: The Universal Need for God’s Righteousness</b>			

**Key Exegetical Issues to be aware of:**

What Paul reveals is the teleological argument for the existence of God  
 As people observe creation, people using their senses should be able to see order and therefore understand that a moral Creator created it

Psalm 19

Please note that this passage is not just focusing on the “worst” people but all people. This passage focuses on the normal response of sinful mankind.

1:18 “wrath”

<sup>1</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998). 97.

But “wrath,” while a bit old-fashioned, preserves the more objective sense the Greek word has when applied to God. God’s reaction to sin is not the “anger” of an emotional person; **it is the necessary reaction of a holy God to sin.** The Old Testament regularly speaks of God’s inflicting wrath on people, both in the course of history (e.g., **Ex. 32:10 – 12; Num. 11:1; Jer. 21:3 – 7**) and, especially, at the end of history. Paul usually also depicts God’s wrath as coming at the Parousia (see, e.g., **Rom. 2:5, 8; 5:9; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10**). Because of this, some interpreters think that the verb “is being revealed” is a futuristic present, meaning “will be revealed.” **But Paul is probably referring broadly to the sentence of condemnation that all people stand under — a sentence that God sometimes inflicts in the events of history but will carry out with finality at the end of history.**<sup>2</sup>

“God gave them up/over” 1:24, 26, 28

God reacts by “handing them over” to the consequences of the choice they have made.<sup>3</sup>

God reacts to the human decision to turn from him by consigning people to the consequences of their actions.<sup>4</sup>

God punishes sin with sin

Augustine—Sin is its own punishment

It’s as though God were saying, “As you wish. If you desire to reject Me and follow sinful desires, I will remove the restraints.”

“female” / “male” in 1:26-27

Rather than using the normal “woman” and “man” Paul uses “female” and “male,” same words used in the Greek OT in the creation account. Paul seems to be closely aligning his argument with the creation account and order. God is Creator and mankind was created with certain natural, in-born standards.

These words also show the sexual distinction created by God.

Scripture universally condemns homosexuality. But in our contemporary culture, this has come under attack.

Modern controversy over homosexuality has led to a reevaluation of this text. Some scholars argue that Paul does not condemn all forms of homosexuality but only homosexual acts practiced by people who are “naturally” heterosexual (e.g., Boswell 1980: 109–12). According to this interpretation, to act contrary to nature involves engaging in sexual activity that is contrary to the personal nature or character of the individual. Thus Paul should not be understood as implying that all homosexuality is contrary to what God intended from creation. He speaks only against homosexual acts that are practiced by those who are heterosexuals by nature.<sup>8</sup>

This interpretation should be rejected since there is no evidence that Paul understood the “nature” of human beings in the individualized and psychological sense that is familiar to us in the twentieth century. Instead, in accord with Stoic and Hellenistic Jewish tradition, Paul rejects homosexuality as contrary to the created order—homosexual activity is a violation of what God intended when he created men and women (Hays 1986: 192–94; Malick 1993: 335).<sup>9</sup> Paul’s prohibition of all homosexual relations is also supported by the unanimous rejection of homosexuality in Jewish sources (see De Young 1990). For instance, Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.24 §199) declares that the marriage of a man and woman is “according to nature” (*κατὰ φύσιν, kata physin*), and proceeds to say that the OT law demands the death penalty for intercourse between males. Both Philo (*Spec. Laws* 3.7 §38; cf. *Abr.* 26 §§133–36) and Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* 2.37 §273) specifically criticize homosexual relations as *παρὰ φύσιν*. The author of the Testament of Naphtali (3.3–4) sees homosexuality as a departure “from the order of nature,” and his appeal to creation in verse 3 reveals that he understands this in term of God’s created intention.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas J Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000). p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000). p. 60–61.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000). p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Countryman (1988: 110–17) argues that Paul does not classify homosexual acts as “sinful” but as impure and unclean. This interpretation has been decisively countered by T. Schmidt (1995: 64–85), whose entire discussion is extraordinarily useful.

<sup>9</sup> So also T. Schmidt 1995; Soards 1995. In surveying the evidence Scroggs demonstrates that in Judaism homosexuality is consistently rejected (1983: 66–84), while in the Greco-Roman world (1983: 17–65) there was significant acceptance of homosexuality.

Scroggs (1983: 109–18) attempts to minimize Paul’s negative remarks on homosexuality in Rom. 1:26–27 by arguing that he is simply drawing on Hellenistic Jewish tradition, that probably only pederasty is being condemned, and that the focus of the section is theological rather than ethical. The first point reveals the weakness of Scroggs’s case. There is no evidence that Paul reverses the unanimous Jewish conviction that homosexuality was sinful (e.g., Gen. 19:1–28; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Deut. 23:17–18; Wis. 14:26; T. Levi 17.11; Sib. Or. 3.596–600; see also the above citations of Josephus and Philo; and Boughton 1992).<sup>10</sup> Paul’s negative comments on homosexuality, even if they are traditional, signal his acceptance of the tradition. The claim that only an abusive form of homosexuality is prohibited, such as pederasty, suffers from lack of evidence. The wording of Rom. 1:26–27 is not restricted to a specific kind of homosexuality but is a general proscription of the activity. In fact, no mention is made of homosexual relations between men and boys but of “males with males” (ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσενι, *arsenes en arsesin*, v. 27). Moreover, the idea that pederasty is in view is contradicted by the reference to the homosexual acts of women in verse 26 (Malick 1993: 339; Byrne 1996: 76), for pederasty, by definition, involves men and boys, and evidence is lacking that women engaged in sexual activity with girls. Finally, Scroggs artificially separates theology from ethics in Pauline thought, implying that the vices listed would not be part of Paul’s ethical exhortations. But theology and ethics are closely wedded in all of Paul’s letters. Any attempt to drive a wedge between them is unsatisfactory. The rejection of God theologically is concretely illustrated in evil that is promulgated by human beings.

Sheppard (1985) admits that Paul’s rejection of homosexuality cannot be explained away but argues that loving homosexual relations can be accepted in the light of the canon as a whole and the recognition that our understanding of the Word of God advances as we gain more knowledge about homosexuality. To say that the whole of Scripture supports homosexuality is weak, since there is no canonical acceptance of homosexuality. Sheppard’s argument depends ultimately not on the canon, but on his conviction that recent study and human experience validate homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle. Furnish (1985: 79–80; so also M. Davies 1995) is more straightforward in saying that we can no longer accept Paul’s view on homosexuality, for he was limited in his understanding of it.<sup>11</sup> For those who accept the Pauline proscription as authoritative (as I do), avoidance of homosexual relations is the path of happiness and holiness.<sup>5</sup>

#### 1:27 “receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error”

The punishment is in keeping with the offence.

Some have tried to use this phrase to claim that HIV/AIDS is the penalty.

The focus on homosexual acts in these verses again reflects Jewish tradition, which often saw in homosexuality particularly striking evidence of the Gentiles’ idolatry and depravity. At the end of this section, Paul indicates the consequences of the indulgence in homosexual acts (in this case, among men in particular), that they “received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion” (v. 27b). Since Paul in this passage seems to be detailing various ways in which God’s wrath is inflicted on human beings, and since AIDS so often afflicts homosexual men, it is not surprising that some interpreters have thought that this disease is one manifestation of God’s wrath against human sin. But such a conclusion is possible only if we recognize that virtually all that is evil or wrong in our world is likewise a manifestation of God’s wrath. AIDS is simply one visible and deadly evidence of a world that has turned from God and brought on itself tragedies of all kinds.<sup>6</sup>

The last clause in verse 27 has engendered some controversy. What is the “penalty” (ἀντιμισθίαν, *antimisthian*) that people receive in themselves? The context suggests that the “penalty” is not something in addition to homosexuality. The penalty is rather being handed over to the sin of homosexuality itself. The words ἦν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν (*hēn edei tēs planēs autōn*, which was necessary of their error) point in this direction. The πλάνη here is not an inadvertent mistake but the rejection of the true God for idols (Byrne 1996: 77). Thus people had to be (ἔδει) handed over to punishment precisely because they had scorned God’s glory. Once again, the main theme of the text is driven home. **The foundational sin of refusing to thank and glorify God leads to other sins.**<sup>7</sup>

#### 1:28 debased minds

<sup>10</sup> In fact, Scroggs himself (1983:66–84) demonstrates that the Jews of Paul’s day were distinct from Greeks in that they consistently rejected homosexuality.

<sup>11</sup> For helpful surveys of the issue along with practical ministry suggestions see T. Schmidt 1995; J. Taylor 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 95.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas J Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000). p. 62

<sup>7</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 97.

While we will be looking at the theological concept of total depravity in greater detail later, this statement about “debased minds” reminds us that every part of mankind is affected by sin—including the ability to reason.

At the end of [verse 28](#), Paul finally introduces the “handing over” that corresponds to the “exchanged” of [verse 26b](#). He has muddied their close relationship in his desire in [verse 28](#) to emphasize the correspondence between sin and result. The relationship is intolerably awkward in English, but it would go something like this: Because people did not “approve” (*edokimasan*; NIV, “think it worthwhile”) of God’s knowledge, he handed them over to “unapproved” (*adokimon*; NIV, “depraved”) minds. Sin affects not only our affections (idolatry) and our senses (sex) but our very thinking.

Turning away from true knowledge of God means cutting ourselves off from any ultimately accurate understanding of this world and our place within it. No wonder that people do not understand the moral stances that Christians take on the basis of God’s truth! Another result is not surprising either: People end up doing “what ought not to be done” ([v. 28b](#)). In [verses 29 – 31](#), Paul provides several illustrations of this sinful conduct. His list falls into three parts, indicated accurately in the NIV in its three-sentence arrangement:

- “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.”
- “They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.”
- “They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”<sup>8</sup>

[1:28-31](#) gives a list of vices

#### General sins

29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.

#### Sins which affect human relationships

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.

#### Assortment of sinful conduct

They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful,

30 inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

It’s not just the big sins that are offensive to God

Notice the “little” things included

All sins are condemnable

All sins are forgivable

Any sin makes one a sinner

Not all sins are equal

Some sins have greater consequences on us and on others

The “set up”

Paul is addressing Gentiles, pagans in 1:19-32. Identifying their idolatry, immorality and wickedness. Idolatry was common and homosexuality was not uncommon in the pagan Gentile world, but were not prevalent in first century Jewish culture.

And that is part of the point of Paul’s writing, as he pulls the Jews among his readership into a condemnation of the pagans, he will turn on them and also condemn them of their wickedness; showing that all are sinners and in need of a Savior. As Jews read chapter 2, they become convicted not only of those areas, but realize they are not exempt from the criticisms of chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas J Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000). p. 62-63.

So we too, as we read these chapters on sin, need to understand their application to us, not just how they condemn a sinful world.

In 1:19-32 we see a focus on idolatry and homosexuality which we would say we don't participate in and even condemn. And it is easy to see this passage as speaking to others. But looking at the root of the sin, not just the fruit (consequences), helps us see the immediate relevance to us and to our society.

## Key Point

The folly of worshipping something other than God  
The folly of seeking fulfillment in unnatural relations

These are heart issues

Accepting the lies

Cultural lies about what is good and right

Wanting to have something other than God as the center leads to other sin

Notice the flow

God's wrath is revealed against all people (18a).

His wrath is revealed because they suppress the truth (18b).

[And we know that they really do suppress the truth],  
because they know God (19a).

The reason they know God is because he made himself known to them through the creation of the world (19b–20a).

As a result they have no excuse for suppressing the truth (20b).

For they knew God (21a),

but they did not honor and glorify him as God (21b).

Instead their thinking became confused and foolish (21c–22),

in the specific sense that they ceased worshiping the true God and turned to worshiping idols (23).<sup>9</sup>

God gave people over to sexual sin (24),

because they abandoned the true God and worshiped idols (25).

Therefore, God gave people over to homosexual desires (26–27).<sup>10</sup>

## About God

He is not just loving but ungodliness can evoke wrath

He reveals Himself in nature

He decrees—has clear rules for conduct and consequences

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<sup>9</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 83.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 90.



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## Calvary Church: Coordinated Curriculum 2007-2009

### Romans: The Transforming Power of the Righteousness of God

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**Main idea:** God has made Himself known through creation and conscience

**Objectives:** The student will be able, by the end of this lesson, to:

1. Understand what can be known about God from nature
2. Understand the consequences of rejecting that revelation

What do I want them to know?

The basic problem of humanity is the rejection of the One who is truth

Why do I want them to know it?

So that they understand the dire condition of mankind

What do I want them to do?

Understand the root of sin and the fruit of sin

Why do I want them to do it?

So that, they seek God humbly and value obedience

### **Key Question:**

How do you respond to this claim?

“The basic problem of the human race is not ignorance of the truth but rebellion against the One who is the truth.”

### **Review and Introduction** (5 minutes)

Having just revealed the wonder of the gospel—the power of God for salvation revealing the righteousness of God—Paul turns to why this salvation is needed.

### **Resources:**

Handout and overheads:

Textual rewrite and final pages of this document (charts)

Calvary Church statements on:

The Untold

Human Sexuality

### **Outline:** (See *Romans Expository Notes* for outline)

Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed      1:18–11:36

The Need of It    1:18–3:20      *What a Mess!*

Condemnation of Pagan (Unrighteous): The Panorama of Sin Described      1:18-32

Reason for Condemnation 1:18-23

The Revelation of the Wrath of God      1:18

The Revelation of the Knowledge of God: General Revelation      1:19-20

The Rejection of the Knowledge of God: Idolatry      1:21-23

Result of Condemnation: The Revolt against the Character of God—Immorality 1:24-32

Given over to impurity: Heterosexual Impurity    1:24-25

Given over to immorality: Homosexual Immorality    1:26-27

Given over to depravity (depraved lifestyle): Hating God (Summary)    1:28-32

### **Textual Rewrite**

Observations, specific issues to be aware of (see commentary), Clarification, Key Point, About God

See previous notes

## Introduction

Adults learn what they want to learn or, stated another way, they learn in areas of felt needs.

In this section it is important to not only deal with the theological truths that all are condemned but the reality that though we may not consider ourselves “idolaters” or “immoral” our heart condition apart from constant submission to the Holy Spirit, is prone to evil.

Turn to the person next to you and share your response to this claim:

“The basic problem of the human race is not ignorance of the truth but rebellion against the One who is the truth.”

OR

Sin is its own worst punishment? (*i.e.* God gave them over—allows sinners freedom to sin, leading to greater consequences.

## Exposition: Engaging activity that extends the thinking



Think about it

In Romans 1:18-32, Paul moves from declaring that in the Gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, to declaring that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness. In order to show how wonderful the transforming power of the righteousness of God is and how needed it is, Paul will first show the dire state of humanity.

There are a number of theological and practical issues raised in this passage, but none more important than the role of God's self-revelation and man's suppression of truth.

Thinking theologically always starts with thinking about God. Every area of theology is affected by our view of God and our view of man. Getting our theology of God right is the first step toward orthodoxy. And this passage shows that it is the first step to orthopraxy as well.



Talk about it

On who is God's wrath displayed? Why?

General revelation

What is knowable about God in this passage? How is it knowable?

What do human beings in this passage do with the knowledge of God?

How does God respond?



What do we learn about God

Reveals Himself in nature

God is not just a loving God, ungodliness can evoke His wrath

Decrees—has clear rules for conduct and consequences



Act on it

What do we know about God that we don't respond to, that we don't do/obey?

## **Doctrinal Policy Statement**

### **Section 4: Human Sexuality**

Calvary Church believes God's Word teaches clearly about the topic of human sexuality. As such, Calvary Church upholds the following biblical principles as the basis for our teaching and counsel on human sexuality. These biblical principles also form the standard by which personnel and church discipline decisions are made. Calvary Church also affirms that God's grace is greater than any form of sexual sin. Those who repent and confess their sin, seeking God's forgiveness are fully forgiven and restored in their relationship with God. (2Timothy 3:16; Psalm 32 & 51; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 John 1:9)

God created male and female. As such, human sexuality was a part of God's righteous and good design before sin entered the world. It is to be honored and celebrated when used as God intended. God created sex for the purposes of procreation, mutual pleasure, and as a deep expression of knowledge, intimacy, love and oneness between a husband and wife. These purposes can be rightly fulfilled only in the context of the life-long covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:20-25; 4:1; Proverbs 5; Song of Solomon 2:3-17; 4:1-7; Hebrews 13:4)

When sin entered the world, mankind distorted and misused God's plan for sex. God clearly prohibits sex before marriage, adultery, homosexuality, incest and bestiality. These behaviors are against God's design for human sexuality, do damage to those who participate in them, and are clearly prohibited by Scripture. (Matthew 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; Leviticus 20:10-16; Romans 1:24-27)

Scripture also makes it clear that believers are to live pure and holy lives. Believers are not to be obsessed with sex. Purity begins in the mind. Therefore, coveting another's spouse, lusting after another person or using pornography in any form are sinful and damaging to those who practice them. (Job 31:1; Proverbs 6:24-25; Matthew 5:27-28; Ephesians 5:1-4; Colossians 3:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:11-12)

A husband and wife are to desire each other and be satisfied with each other. God's command is that a husband and wife seek to fulfill their spouses sexually and not deprive each other. Sex is not to be demanded selfishly or forced, but given as an expression of love, commitment, and unity, so that mankind has the greatest potential to experience deeper meaning and sexual fulfillment as God intended. As Scripture teaches, whatever we do, including our sexual obedience and purity, is to be done to the honor and glory of God. (Proverbs 5:15-21; Song of Solomon 2:3-17; 4:1-7; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:28-32; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

## **Doctrinal Policy Statement**

### **Section 6: Statement of The Untold – *What About Those Who Never Hear of Jesus?***

#### ***Key Truths:***

1. Ever since sin entered the world through Adam, all people are in a natural fallen state, having inherited from their parents a sinful nature resulting in a predisposition to sinful thoughts, words, and deeds (Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23, 5:12, 19a, 21a).
2. As a result of this inherited sinful nature, all people are apart from salvation:
  - In spiritual darkness and sin (Romans 3:9-18, 23, Ephesians 4:18-19),
  - Separated from God (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21), and
  - Destined for eternal punishment (Psalm 9:17, John 3:18, John 3:36, Matthew 7:13-14, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Revelation 20:11-15).
3. God has revealed Himself throughout His creation, giving a universal witness to all people of His power and divine nature so that no person has a legitimate excuse for not knowing about God (Romans 1:18-20, Psalm 19:1-6, Romans 2:14-15).
4. Knowing all mankind to be “dead in trespasses and sin” (Ephesians 2:1), and “by nature children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3) deserving of judgment, God, “who is rich in mercy” and grace (Ephesians 2:4-7), has in His eternal plan provided a way of salvation. God’s intent has been to bring glory to Himself by redeeming for Himself people from all the tribes, languages, and people groups of the world (Genesis 12:3, Romans 1:5, Revelation 7:9).
5. Jesus’ work of redemption on the cross is sufficient for the sins of the entire human race (Hebrews 2:9, 1 Timothy 4:10, 1 John 2:2). Christ’s atonement on the cross was required for all people (Hebrews 9:12, 14, 22-27).
6. Personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ are required for reconciliation with God (John 5:24, Romans 3:22, 24-26, 10:13-15, Ephesians 2:8-9) and He alone provides for such reconciliation (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:5).
7. People only can express that repentance and faith in response to hearing and understanding the message of the gospel as contained in the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
8. Because God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), God has given to His church the responsibility to proclaim the truth of the gospel to all peoples of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14-15, 2 Corinthians 5:19-20).
9. God is just and can be depended upon to do right in judging every person (Genesis 18:25, Acts 17:31, Romans 3:6, 9:20-21). In a way not fully explained, but in full accord with His Holy and Just nature, God’s judgment will be proportional to the amount of light received and rejected (Luke 10:8-16, 12:47-48).

#### ***Implications:***

1. We believe that this (#9 above) applies to those who die either “in utero” or in infancy, the mentally challenged, and others who in God’s determination have not reached a state of moral responsibility (Genesis 18:25, John 10:14, 15).
2. People are lost and condemned not because they have never heard of Jesus or rejected His Gospel. They are lost and condemned because they are sinners by nature and in practice.
3. All people need to be presented with an opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ and the salvation made possible by Him. If there is an alternative, God has not told us about it.
4. Those yet living apart from this knowledge are presently condemned and bound for destruction. Their life in this world is also inferior to what God intends for them.
5. It is of the highest urgency that the church place great priority on making Jesus Christ known among those peoples who have yet to hear of Him, with a level of understanding so that they could respond.

## **Romans 1:18-32**

- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven  
against  
    all ungodliness  
    and unrighteousness of men,  
        who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them,  
because God has shown it to them.
- 20 For his invisible attributes,  
    namely,  
        his eternal power  
        and divine nature,  
    have been clearly perceived,  
        ever since the creation of the world,  
        in the things that have been made.  
    So they are without excuse.
- 21 For although they knew God,  
    they did not honor him as God  
    or give thanks to him,  
        but they became futile in their thinking,  
        and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- 22 Claiming to be wise,  
    they became fools,
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God  
    for images  
        resembling mortal man and birds  
        and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them up  
in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,  
to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,  
25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie  
and worshiped and served the creature  
rather than the Creator,  
who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions.  
For their women exchanged natural relations  
for those that are contrary to nature;  
27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women  
and were consumed with passion for one another,  
men committing shameless acts with men  
and receiving in themselves  
the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God,  
God gave them up to a debased mind  
to do what ought not to be done.

29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil,  
covetousness, malice.  
They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.  
They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent,  
haughty, boastful,  
30 inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,  
31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

32 Though they know God's decree  
that those who practice such things deserve to die,  
they not only do them  
but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

### Overview—Romans 1:18—3:20

	1:18-32	2:1-16	2:17—3:8	3:9-20
<b>Who is Paul addressing?</b>	Pagan	Moralist	Jew	World (everyone)
<b>How do they relate to God?</b>	Disregard God	Try to distract God	Brag about relationship	No one seeks God
<b>What is their problem?</b>	Knowingly reject God Idolatry / Immorality	Judgmental	Self-righteousness hypocrisy	Sin
<b>Favorite Phrase?</b>	Live it up	Straighten up	You get to work	(Cursing and Bitterness)
<b>Goal?</b>	Satisfy own passions	Monitor their neighbor	Measure their merit	Autonomy
<b>View of Sin?</b>	No one is guilty	They are guilty, not me	Privileged not guilty I'm guilty but privileged overcome	No regard (no fear)
<b>Boundaries?</b>	If it feels good, do it.	If they feel good, note it.	If it feels good, stop it.	None
<b>Paul's Judgment?</b>	You have no excuse for the things you do	You have no authority for the judgments you make	You have no solution for the problem you have	You have no hope in yourself
<b>Key Verse</b>	1:24	2:1	2:23 4:5	3:9-11
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Condemnation: The Universal Need for God's Righteousness</b>			

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