

# *Right in God's Sight*

## Studies from the Book of Romans

### Lesson 2

#### Romans 1:18–32

#### **Romans 1:18–23**      God's Wrath is Revealed

Paul has introduced the theme of Romans to his readers: God acts through the preaching of the gospel to put people into a right relationship with Him. Meaning, in other words, that anyone—Jew or Gentile—can be saved by putting their faith in Christ. Paul has more to share about this Good News but, before he does, he will elaborate at length for several chapters on the “bad news,” knowing that the answer to man’s dilemma will not fully be appreciated until the problem is first understood. He begins first with the Gentiles.

Read Romans 1:18–32.

At the basis of man’s problem is the truth that everyone apart from God’s grace stands justly condemned under a death sentence for sin. Convincing people of their lost condition is the prerequisite for helping them to realize their need for a Savior.

1.      What is the response of a holy God against wickedness and evil? v. 18
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2.      According to the following verses, why is God so angry about sin?
  - v.18
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - v.19
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - v. 20
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - v. 21

Man’s attempts to *suppress the truth in unrighteousness* can be traced all the way back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden who, when confronted with their sin, attempted to deny and excuse it before a holy God. That same predisposition to cover up and excuse away is still very much in evidence today. Nothing except the power of God working through the gospel is capable of making a difference!

### *For Group Discussion . . .*

- ❖ Looking from your perspective, share an example of how God's truth is being suppressed in today's world.

### *Look Closer . . .*

Left up to human beings, the truth would continually be suppressed; but God reveals His truth to some—like Paul—setting them apart to send them out in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach to others. How does Paul express this in 1 Corinthians 2:4–5, and Titus 1:1–3?

- ❖ Personalize this: Not all are called as evangelists or preachers; but every believer is called to share their faith with those around them. If you're a Christian, you have a unique testimony. How are *you* letting God use you to share His Good News to impact your world?
3. How has God plainly revealed himself to all people in the world? v. 20
    - a. Is anyone excused from knowing about Him? v. 20
    - b. How does Psalm 19:1–4 add to your understanding?
  4. What keeps people from recognizing who God is? v. 21
    - a. Thinking they were wise, what did they actually become? v. 22

### *Memory Verse:*

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them."* Romans 1:18–19

## Romans 1:24–27

## Exchanging the Truth for a Lie

Human beings are created—compelled by our very nature—to worship someone or something we attribute as greater than ourselves. But whenever the truth is suppressed and the fool says in his or her heart, “There is no God,” their heart becomes increasingly hardened over time. Then their worship will take some form of idolatry and often that downward spiral will manifest itself in immorality. The response of a holy God will be wrath, whether at present or sometime in the future on the Day of Judgment.

Read Romans 1:18–27.

1. What did God give these people over to, according to verse 24?

The NIV translation of verse 24 reads: “*Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.*” God let them go to follow their own desires, resulting in the misuse of their bodies, meaning that they engaged in perverted sexual acts with one another. Turning from God, they turned to *homosexuality*, and their own desires became the standard for their behavior.

2. What, specifically, did they turn *away from* and *turn toward*?

- v. 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- v. 26 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- v. 27 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What else does the Bible have to say about the sin of homosexuality?

- a. Leviticus 18:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- b. Leviticus 20:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- c. 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- d. 1 Timothy 1:8–11 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What happens to those who don’t apply their knowledge of God? v. 28

If you prefer to think that God would not give His people over to sin, the Bible has much to say on the matter. Grace can be misconstrued to mean to some that God doesn't care about sin, but that isn't what we read in Scripture. He is, rather, longsuffering and patient, but there will come a day when He is willing to give His people over to their own desires and choices because they belligerently persist in making them.

*Selah* . . . (Pause and consider.)

Look up Proverbs 1:20–31, taking some time to carefully read it through. Try to think about what God would have *you* to know and understand personally from this passage. Is He saying something to your heart? Please share your thoughts . . .

❖ *My Impressions:*

❖ *My Instructions:*

The *wrath of God* is His anger expressed in the form of judgment, which can come immediately or at some later time, but not without the conviction of the Holy Spirit to check and recheck. When people do not respond or heed His repeated warnings, then it is God's "letting go" that lovingly results in consequences that can speak louder at times than words do.

## **Romans 1:28–32**                      The Downward Spiral Into Sin

Read Romans 1:18–32.

People in society institute civil laws but they do not set the standard for God's laws; only God's Word can do that. Paul is writing about people who sat in judgment about God; they decided whether or not He fit into their standards. When He did not, they turned away from Him and rejected Him. Three times in our text Paul uses the words, "*God gave them over.*" Notice the truth and consequence laid out in the chart below.

<u>Truth</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
They knew the truth about God but they suppressed it (v. 18).	<i>God gave them over</i> to unclean lusts to dishonor their bodies (v. 24).
They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped the creature instead of the Creator (v. 25).	<i>God gave them over</i> to shameful lusts and vile passions (v. 26).
They had the knowledge about God but they didn't want to apply it (v. 28).	<i>God gave them over</i> to a debased mind , to do things <i>that ought not to be done</i> (v. 28).

Do you see the progression? No one would deliberately make the decision to walk down the path into depravity; rather there is a gradual digression or deviation from what is right into what is wrong. It begins with a single choice—a momentary turning away from God that leads to questions and doubts about whether He is who He says He is.

Over time the boundaries between right and wrong become blurred, making it easier to turn away from God. When that happens, God will let that person go if it is their deliberate choice to do so. People who do make that choice in an effort to exercise their own independence eventually wind up making themselves slaves to sin!

The remainder of your study will be an exercise that you will either find enlightening or disturbing—or perhaps a little of both! As you research the *Word Wealth* and write a brief description, you will see the graphic depiction of the pathway to evil.

### *Word Wealth:*

Use the resources you have on hand to briefly write a definition of each word left blank. Some of the words have been filled in for you; be sure to read them over to understand the point Paul is trying to make. (Words and phrases are taken from the NIV.)

**Evil** – *What is sinister, menacing and vile.*

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**Greed** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Depravity** – *The state of being morally corrupt, wicked or perverted.*

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**Envy** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Murder** – *The taking of a life that results from greed, envy or strife that remains unchecked in the heart.*

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**Strife** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Deceit** – *Intentional concealment of the truth; lying for the purpose of misleading.*

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**Malice** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Gossips** – *Talebearers; those who create problems or start rumors by idling talking about the private affairs of others.*

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**Slanderers** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**God-haters** – *Extreme aversion or hostility toward God by those who kindle the same feelings in others.*

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**Insolent** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Arrogant and boastful** – *Openly making exaggerated claims from an over-inflated sense of self-importance.*

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**Invent ways of doing evil** – Try out new forms of perverted sexual practices.

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**Disobey their parents** – Children who disobey often learn from the example of parents who have turned away from God's authority in their lives.

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**Senseless** – The inability to discern spiritual and moral issues; stupid; foolish.

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**Faithless** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Heartless** – \_\_\_\_\_

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**Ruthless** – \_\_\_\_\_

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Take a look back at the list you just completed. If you found yourself fitting into one or more of the categories, *now* would be the time to *turn to God* and ask Him to change that behavioral tendency by the power of His Spirit in you.

Paul paints a very dark and bleak picture in order to graphically depict the condition of those who turn away from God; but he does so because the Good News of salvation cannot fully be appreciated unless it is placed up against the black backdrop of sin. After all, life without God is not really *life* at all; it is a walking death sentence!

### *Look Closer . . .*

In verse 29, Paul clearly states the people he is writing about are *filled to overflowing* with each of the traits listed. His point is that unchecked sin not only hardens the heart, it leads people further into more sin, resulting in God's judgment upon them.

- ❖ How is the seriousness of Paul's point emphasized in verse 32?

The Book of Romans is full of hope, which we will see as we take a closer look in the days ahead. For now, as you close your study, spend a little time in the verses below. Let them minister to you about the hope for anyone who turns away from a life of sin and turns to God.

- Romans 6:15–23

- Isaiah 55:6–7

- ❖ Personal: Which passage is a comfort to you today—why?

# *My Romans Road*

Listen . . . Learn . . . Live . . . God's Truth!

Take a look back at this week's lesson. Briefly recap what you learned this week and how you intend to live it out.

1. What lesson in your study became real to you this week?

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2. How do you intend to apply this lesson to your daily life?

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## *Memory Verse:*

Write down what you learned about God from this week's memory verse.

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Write out the verse from memory.

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## *Prayer Request:*

Write out your most earnest prayer request and lift it to the Lord.

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