



FAITH

& LOVE

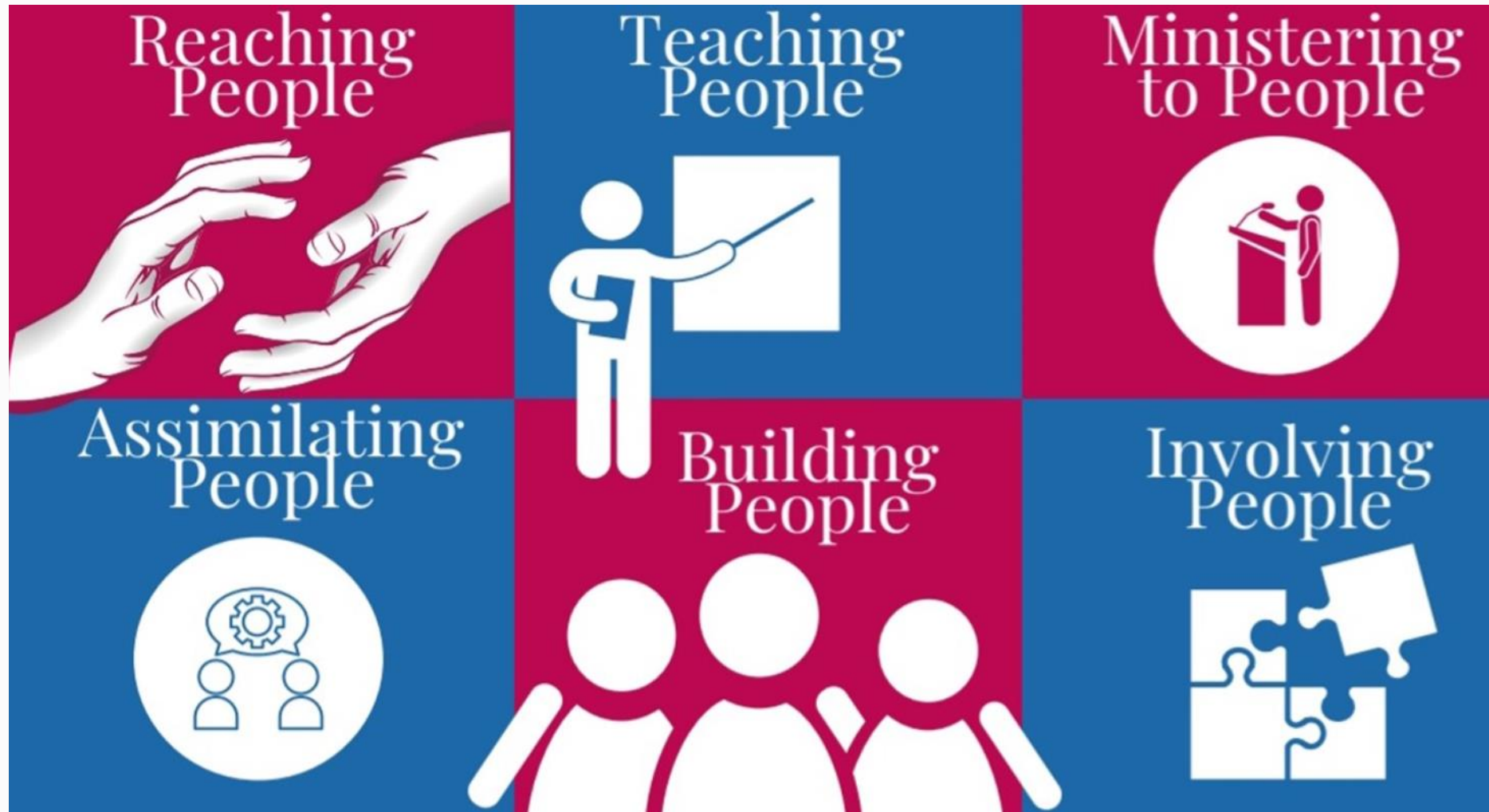
Church of God in Christ

**Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C
Sunday School**

Lesson 4 June 28, 2026

**IGNORING GOD'S PLAIN
TRUTH**

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

School/Class: But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

Superintendent/Teacher: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

School/Class: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

ALL:

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18

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- Bible Basis: Romans 1:18-23, 28-32
- Bible Truth: Paul recounts how people will disobey God and take pride in filling their lives with actions that oppose Him.
- Memory Verse: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20)
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: KNOW Paul’s plaintive story of God’s magnificent creation choosing to wreck itself with sin; FEEL that humans really do have the freedom to be disobedient but will suffer God’s punishment; and DO God’s will instead of sinning.
- Background Scriptures: [Psalm 8](#); [Psalm 52](#); [Romans 1:18-32](#) – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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Romans 1:18-23, 28-32 KJV

- 18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19** Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
- 20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
- 21** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22** Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
- 23** And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

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Romans 1:18-23, 28-32 KJV

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

LIGHT ON THE WORD

Idolatry. Idolatry was widespread when Paul was writing to the Romans. The primary focus of worship for most people in the Roman empire was the Roman state and its rulers. "Emperor worship" was common. For example, Caligula, emperor from AD 37-41, declared himself a god and commanded the Romans to worship him. Although Paul probably wrote to Rome in a time of relative peace toward the beginning of Nero's reign, under Claudius (41-54 AD), some of the members of the church at Rome had been forced to leave due to persecution of the Jews and had only recently returned ([Acts 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-4](#)).

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Roman degradation. The Roman world evidenced the kind of godless characteristics that Paul listed in verses 28-32. The Roman Empire was known for its brutality against the powerless, and persecution of Jews, as well as anyone in the churches since churches consisted of Jews and Gentiles, became more and more common in the second half of the first century AD. In addition, wealthy and powerful Roman men were known for sexual licentiousness both with women prostitutes and with their male servants and other males in relatively powerless positions. The Romans also enjoyed their arena conquests, men fighting to the death against each other or wild animals. This love of spectacle and cruelty grew to the point that defenseless people, including children, were thrown to wild animals as an attempt to purge the Christians during the great persecutions. Although there were many philosophical and religious groups who supported morality and the common good in the Roman Empire, as with many empires, often those in power abused their authority, and frequently the powerless and the synagogues and churches were victims of such abuse.

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LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will know that some people do what they believe is right, while others constantly do what is wrong.

INTRODUCTION

The Sinfulness of Humanity

In the introduction of Romans, Paul starts with the purpose of his writing and essentially the purpose of his life: the Gospel. He lets the Romans know that he longs to come to them and build them up spiritually, for the Gospel's sake. He is a debtor to the Jews and Gentiles, the two ethnic groups that made up the Roman church, to deliver this message.

INTRODUCTION

The Sinfulness of Humanity

As Paul lays the foundation for the whole book, he addresses the sinfulness of humanity in general and the Gentiles in particular. The first thing he talks about is idolatry, a sin particularly repugnant to the monotheistic Jews. By addressing idolatry first, the Jews in the Roman church would have assumed Paul was going to attack the Gentiles. This passage is a setup for a wider argument that not only the Gentiles but also the Jews were in sinful rebellion against God.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will understand that some people know God, but choose to live their lives opposite of His love, mercy, and justice.

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I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST TRUTH

Romans 1:18-20

Paul said that God is wrathful toward ungodliness and unrighteousness. His wrath is against those who reject the truth of His existence. God's wrath, unlike ours, is not capricious or selfish but holy in His desire to see us living rightly. Paul said that the existence of God is clearly manifested, or obvious, to those who will look at creation.

I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST TRUTH

Romans 1:18-20

These verses are part of the answer to the age-old question, "What about those people who have never heard?" Paul said that they are without excuse. Creation in its beauty, power, complexity, and harmony shows clear evidence of the Creator. More than just His existence is evident – Paul said creation reveals His character as well.

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I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST TRUTH

Romans 1:18-20

In this letter to the saints in Rome, Paul expounds for his largely Gentile audience the core of the epistle's message – that all have sinned and need saving, but this saving is only possible by grace through faith. All here really does mean all, including both the Gentiles (exemplified in this letter by the Greeks) and the Jews. He states that Gentiles have sinned and are worthy of punishment. Then, Paul goes on to explain how the Gentiles have sinned when they have not had access to the Law for them to understand their condition. Thus, while Paul in this letter focuses on the righteousness of God, he has to show that where that righteousness is not practiced, God's wrath is unleashed.

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I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST TRUTH

Romans 1:18-20

The wrath of God is commonly spoken of in today's modern society. It is said that some cultures believe life is being shaped by a very active spirit-world – and these spirits (both good and evil) are closely involved in human life. Some believe that reigning over the spirits and all creation is a god who, through the spirits, controls the affairs of this world. They further believe that occasionally the spirits become displeased with the undertakings of human beings, and unleash their wrath on the human world. This misunderstood view regarding spirits is the enemy's attempt at negating the power and authority of the Lord. Jesus Himself gives the born-again believer power over all the power of the enemy, confirming that "nothing shall by any means hurt you ([Luke 10:19](#))." When cultures violate the Word of God to appease the wrath of the deity, they endanger themselves to the wrath and punishment of God the Creator.

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I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST TRUTH

Romans 1:18-20

For Malawians, for instance, when the spirits (generally of their ancestors) get angry – *mizimu yakwiya* – people must do everything in their power to appease them. God's wrath is not an impersonal process, but a deliberate judgment. It is not some irrational passion on the part of God, but rather of His righteous and wholly justified indignation against sinful belief and sinful behavior. It is the inevitable retributive response of the eternally Holy God against anything that violates His own being.

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**I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST
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18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Romans 1:18-20

After verse 17, where Paul writes about the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel, he suddenly drops his readers into the fearsome pit of God's wrath. The connection between verses 18 and 17 is obvious. While God's righteousness is revealed in the Gospel to humankind, His wrath is revealed from Heaven against ungodliness and wickedness. Thus Paul diverts from this theme of God's righteousness and dedicates the remainder of the chapter and the two subsequent chapters to the need to understand the only way to get right with God-by grace through repentance and faith. Here, he begins to explain what God's righteousness amounts to for those who have exchanged the truth about Him for a lie-His wrath.

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Romans 1:18-20

Paul is straight to the point: The Gentiles, just like all law-breakers who deserve a penalty, are under the wrath of God. Central to Paul's argument here is that even though the Gentiles have not received the Gospel yet, they have had a chance to know God's truth, but chose to ignore and suppress it. Therefore, they are equally deserving of judgment. Paul believes that sinful humanity universally represses the knowledge of God available to them and so is held accountable; thus, no one is condemned for not knowing God, but rather for suppressing and ignoring the knowledge of God available to them. The Gentiles are at fault.

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The wrath of God is being revealed from Heaven, not in the Gospel but in the facts of human experience – in the reality of punitive events of history. Thus, Paul is not talking about the wrath of God that will be revealed at the end of time ([cf. Revelation 19:15](#)). Paul is talking about God's wrath revealed in the punishments imposed by human governments, the accusations of conscience, the pain of childbirth, the necessity of toil as a result of a sin-cursed environment, and the inescapable penalty of death itself. Most significantly, the most obvious revelation of God's wrath is His "giving over" the Gentiles to the consequences their sinful desires and depraved lifestyles ([vv. 24,26, 28](#)). This wrath – the consuming fire of God – is His settled and perfectly righteous antagonism toward evil.

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This wrath, says Paul, is directed against those who "suppress (Gk. *katecho*, **ka-te-KOH** to hold down, even though the KJV translates it "hold") the truth by their wickedness." One would ask, "What truth?" And this is the question that Paul wrestles with in the verses that follow, coming to a crescendo in verse 25 where he reveals it to be God's truth. In saying that the Gentiles suppress the truth, Paul implies that the Gentiles already have the truth and know it is true. This is why the Gentiles are not exempt from God's wrath, and must need grace to be saved. They have no excuse at all. Their ignorance of the truth is not real; it is a false ignorance. It is only pretense intended to cover their neglect of the truth – the very act of suppressing the truth.

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**I. PEOPLE RESIST MANIFEST
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Romans 1:18-20

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

This group of verses is a continuation – and explanation – of what was said in the preceding verse. The wrath of God is being revealed because all people know God and His truth since He has shown or made it plain to them, but they have chosen to reject God and the truth that He reveals. In a nutshell, Paul is arguing that the Gentiles know the truth because God has revealed it to them through the created universe. What the Gentiles can know about God is plain for them to see. Paul's use of the word *phaneros* (Gk. *phaneros*, **fahneh-ROS**, evident or clearly visible) suggests that it cannot be missed at all. This act of God's deliberate self-disclosure to humankind, even today, grants people who have not heard the Gospel access to God's truth, communicated in and through the created universe.

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Verse 20 continues to explain Paul's argument that the Gentiles have access to the truth of God even though they have not heard the Gospel yet. How is this possible? The answer is simple: since the creation of the world, certain invisible attributes of God – like His eternal (Gk. *aidios*, **EYE-dee-oss**, everlasting) power and divine nature – have been clearly seen through the created universe. In other words, the creation is the visible disclosure of the invisible God. Looking at the vastness of the universe draws us to ponder the Creator of this universe. When we see the cycles of the seasons and how every animal is suited to its habitat, we can see the wisdom of this Creator. As we even take note of our own human qualities of kindness and love for our loved ones and especially children, we see the love and care of the Creator for His creation.

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This is how the visible creation testifies to the existence of an invisible Creator and our accountability to Him. This is what scholars have called general revelation – the type of revelation that is made to everyone everywhere. The Gentiles are left without an excuse as there can be no pre-tense of ignorance. Creation's general revelation in itself gives sufficient knowledge to all human beings whereby every person can be judged.

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Paul explains that the Gentiles had enough knowledge about God to offer Him their due thanks and praise, but did not. They neither glorified God nor gave thanks, instead directing their "natural instinct" for praise and honor to false gods like the sun, the moon, and other created animals, and in so doing, they were taken over by falsehood. This unwillingness to honor the true God with praise and gratitude led to further corruption and idolatry. These Gentiles became vain in their imaginations, or "futile in their thoughts" ([from v. 21, NKJV](#)). They became foolish and useless in their thoughts and reasonings. They darkened their hearts so they would not perceive or comprehend the truth.

II. PEOPLE TURN TO FALSE GODS

Romans 1:21-23

Paul is speaking of idolatry when he speaks of turning the image of God into the image of creatures (v. 23). However, this same accusation is directed toward those today who worship anything other than God. Science, wealth, social standing, our children-nothing can replace God as the object of our worship.

II. PEOPLE TURN TO FALSE GODS

Romans 1:21-23

Paul began this section by saying that these people knew God before turning away from Him. Humankind is glad enough to receive God's gifts, but not willing to recognize God or thank Him for those gifts, so their foolishness results in blindness (vv. 21-22). Since they cannot see God, they replace Him with something they can see. Idols become their corrupted substitution.

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II. PEOPLE TURN TO FALSE GODS

The Foolishness of the Gentiles

Romans 1:21-23

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

These Gentiles believed themselves to be wise. Some boasted to be the *sophi* – wise men – but their rejecting God is evidence of their lack of wisdom. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God" ([Psalm 14:1](#)). They called themselves "philosophers" (translated "lovers of wisdom"), always thinking themselves wiser than believers. Of course, it is not unusual for people to confuse wisdom for foolishness, and vice versa ([1 Corinthians 1:18-2:8](#)).

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II. PEOPLE TURN TO FALSE GODS

The Foolishness of the Gentiles

Romans 1:21-23

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

The Gentiles "became fools" (Gk. *moraino*, **moe-RYE-no**, to be foolish or silly). Some Bibles say, "they made fools of themselves" (v. 22, [CEB](#) and [NIRV](#)), and became insipid in their imaginations, opinions, and conduct. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. They forsook the God of whom they had knowledge and offered the honor due to Him to idols. Trading the true God for impotent idols only demonstrates how foolish these people were. Paul, here, may have had in mind the forms of Greek worship he had seen on Mars Hill, which involved exquisite carvings and sculptures of the human form.

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**II. PEOPLE TURN TO FALSE
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The Foolishness of the Gentiles

Romans 1:21-23

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

Paul has already made his case, that the Gentiles know truth about God but have suppressed and rejected it and have freely chosen to serve idols instead. Thus God is completely justified in pouring out His wrath upon them.

III. PEOPLE THEN ARE COSIGNED TO DEPRAVITY

Romans 1:28-32

A moral decision is required to follow God. The people in the text did not like to remember God, and, "did not see fit to acknowledge God" ([v. 28, NASB](#)). Paul does not intend the list of depraved behavior that follows to be exhaustive, but illustrates how this mind works.

Possibly the saddest part in this passage is that these people know they are doing wrong, continue to do so, and encourage others who do the same (v. 32). This had become a concert of sin: they practiced, performed, and then applauded.

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**III. PEOPLE THEN ARE COSIGNED TO
DEPRAVITY**

The Gentiles had Forsaken God
Romans 1:28-32

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to are probate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.

Paul is still talking about the Gentiles here. He has come to the root of their problem: they did not choose to acknowledge God. As he has argued before, the Gentiles had the knowledge of God but chose to forsake His glory to follow their own passions and lusts. They did not find it wise to follow God. They chose not to think of, nor serve or adore God. This is where they went wrong. They forsook God, so He gave them up to a reprobate mind – a mind destitute of judgment, an incompetent understanding. The Greek word for reprobate is *adokimos* (Gk. **ah-doe-KEE-mos**, useless, failing the test, unsatisfactory, or disreputable), which may be taken passively, for a mind disapproved by God, or actively, for a mind which disapproves of all good. As we read the text, it is important to note that God did not compel them nor refuse them knowledge; He did not abandon them at all. They chose to forsake God. And God gave them to their own worthless speculations. In the face of stubborn and obstinate refusal to honor God, people are left to their own twisted ways.

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**III. PEOPLE THEN ARE COSIGNED TO
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The Gentiles had Forsaken God
Romans 1:28-32

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These Gentiles were left to have corrupt judgment, or none at all. Any mind that thinks of God as worthless is itself worthless. Furthermore, this reprobate mind not only led to sexual immorality as seen in the previous verses, but also to a list of twenty-one problematic practices that Paul says "ought not to be done" (v. 28, [ESV](#) and [NIV](#)). Some translators have "which are not convenient" (e.g., KJV). These practices are not fit or proper for human society, but disgraceful and shameful.

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Romans 1:28-32

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Paul finishes this part of his argument on the moral deprivation of the Gentiles with the list of sins characteristic of those who choose to forsake God. Taken in the context of Paul's other lists elsewhere in his epistles, this list is not exhaustive. Some of the vices are listed in very general terms like wickedness, while others are quite specific like murder. Such lists were common even in secular literature at the time. Several such lists appear elsewhere in the New Testament, even though none of them are nearly as extensive as this one. Put together, these sins signify a societal meltdown, although this is not to say that all humanity or Gentiles are evil all the time. He goes on to further explain that general revelation revealed in nature and the conscience has been obeyed by some Gentiles as Paul later explains in [chapter 2](#).

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**III. PEOPLE THEN ARE COSIGNED TO
DEPRAVITY**

The Gentiles had Forsaken God

Romans 1:28-32

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

They know God's decree – that those who practice such things deserve to die – yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

In this final verse of the chapter, Paul draws his argument to a conclusion – that the Gentiles had enough knowledge of God and His truth to be judged. However, here, Paul adds a new dimension to the argument, saying that the Gentiles also had knowledge of God's judgment. They know that to practice the sins he had just outlined in the previous verses deserves death. Thus, they not only know the right thing to do in their conscience, they also know the penalty for not obeying that conscience. Paul will go into further detail regarding this knowledge of God being implanted in the conscience in chapter 2. Sadly, these Gentiles not only commit these sins, but take pleasure in those that do them. Committing these sins is in itself bad and worthy of judgment. However, Paul adds here that to applaud and celebrate those who commit these sins is just as bad, if not worse, than doing them.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

The Price of Idolatry

The worship of false gods – idolatry – only leads to further deception. Ingratitude toward God will always harden hearts and make them unresponsive to His self-revelation.

BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will learn that Christians must decide to follow God and not to choose wickedness or teachings that lead people away from Him.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

Most of us who attend Bible study have chosen God and His revelation. However, sometimes we act like we are functional atheists. We go through our days not giving God the thought and devotion He expects.

He told us that He would take care of us; do we wonder if He will come through? He told us not to worry about food and clothing, but how often do we? He told us everything we had lost for His sake would be restored; do we try to get even? We might not show the litany of traits listed in verses 29-31, but sometimes we also do not glorify Him as God or are ungrateful (v. 21). How differently will we live and act when we believe everything God has promised?

STUDENT RESPONSES

**AIM: We will commit to accepting and following after
God's decrees for our lives.**

STUDENT RESPONSES

So many today choose to willfully ignore God and His revelation of Himself. Many also want to aggressively prevent others from believing, too. Our challenge is to continue our hopeful work, expecting and planning for opposition and unbelief. We should prepare ourselves to stand strong in our faith, and especially for the dark days when "no one can work" ([John 9:4, NLT](#)).

Prayer

Jesus,

Thank You for dying for us, and forgiving us, and allowing us to rejoice in Your resurrection. The world is indebted to Your sacrifice for our sins. We bless You and honor You as we do Your will.

In Jesus' Name we pray.

Amen.

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Next Sunday

July 5, 2026

Lesson 5

“Ignoring God’s Truth Within Us”

Romans 2:17-29