

## Uncharted Territory: Taking Life Where You've Never Been

---

### Week Five: *How Did We Get in This Mess Anyway?*

Starting with the foundation of **Romans 8:1**—that *“there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”*—it is worthwhile to step back and look at how human beings descend into bondage to sin and condemnation. **Romans 1:16-32** reveals to us both God’s power to deliver us (**Romans 1:16-17**) and the pathway into sin, brokenness, and bondage for every human being (**Romans 1:18-32**). This pathway to brokenness has a common theme: the abandonment of God and the exaltation of humanism.

**We should then consider four decisions that we need to make:** 1) Accept that God has designed everything with a natural course of outcomes (*consequences*) that flow freely as natural law; 2) Recognize how disbelief in God (*or lack of awareness / focus*) will lead us to idolize humanity (*humanism*) as the best thing there is to live for; 3) Examine where we may have created idols in human experience as a replacement for what God is supposed to be in our lives; 4) Return to God with all our heart; see Him as worthwhile and the fulfillment of everything we truly desire.

**This week**, make a commitment to *invest three blocks of time* to meditate on God’s Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leanings of your own heart, and surrender to God for His help.

### Day One – *Your chosen sainthood and God’s power*

---

**Read carefully and slowly: Romans 1:1-17.** Consider how God choosing (*calling*) you to be a saint (*set-apart for God*) means that His power can speak that identity into instant reality in your life (see also **Romans 4:17**).

#### **Consider and pray to God about (*ask Him for His wisdom*):**

- Do I believe that God has uniquely and specifically called me to anything? Am I appointed by Him to some reality, some outcome, some position that is of value to Him? Why or why not?
- If the Gospel is God’s power to transform, how has He transformed me thus far because of my faith in Jesus? What transformation needs to yet occur?

## Day Two – *The causes and consequences of ignoring God*

---

**Read carefully and slowly: Romans 1:18-31.** Consider the Greek meanings for:

*The **wrath** of God is being **revealed** from heaven against all the **godlessness** and **wickedness** of men who **suppress** the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

*For although they knew God, they neither **glorified** him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their **thinking** became **futile** and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they **claimed** to be **wise**, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*

*Therefore God **gave them over** in the **sinful desires** of their hearts to sexual impurity for the **degrading** of their bodies with one another. They **exchanged** the truth of God for a **lie**, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.*

*Because of this, God **gave them over** to **shameful** lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also **abandoned** natural relations with women and were inflamed with **lust** for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the **due penalty** for their **perversion**.*

*Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to **retain** the **knowledge** of God, he **gave them over** to a **depraved** mind, to do what ought not to be done. 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.*

**Romans 1:18-31**

#### **Consider and pray to God about (*ask Him for His wisdom*):**

- Do I believe that God has designed everything with a natural course of outcomes (*consequences*) that flow freely as a “natural law”? Why or why not?
- Can I recognize any place within myself where disbelief in God—or lack of awareness or focus—has led me to idolize humanity (*or human experiences*) as the best thing there is to live for?
- Are there any places in my life where I have created idols in human experiences as a replacement for what God is supposed to be in my life?

When we explore the Greek meanings for these highlighted words, and then read the whole text with these meanings in mind, does it create a fresh understanding of this passage? How does the nuance of language shift how you see God and His will—and even His goodness—in these matters?

Vs. 18 –

- **Wrath** = from root word “eagerly desire”; Aristotle: “desire mixed with grief”
- **Revealed** = “removing a veil; exposing that which was previously hidden”
- **Godlessness** = “without worship; neglect of duty towards God”
- **Wickedness** = “injustice; that which ought not be”
- **Suppress** = “take possession and seize”

Vs. 21 –

- **Glorified** = “to recognize; honor”
- **Thinking** = “reasoning; rationalization”
- **Futile** = “destitute of real reason”

Vs. 22 –

- **Claimed** = “to assert”
- **Wise** = “one who knows how to regulate his course”

Vs. 24 –

- **Therefore** = “consequently”
- **Gave them over** = “to surrender; yield”
- **Sinful desires** = “desire that flows from the diseased condition of the soul”
- **Degrading** = “to render infamous by contempt or maltreatment”

Vs. 25 –

- **Exchanged** = “to convert from one stage of mind or condition to another”
- **Lie** = “falsehood”

Vs. 26 –

- **Gave them over** = “to surrender; yield”
- **Shameful** = “without honor; dishonorable”

Vs. 27 –

- **Abandoned** = “to send away; dismiss”
- **Lust** = “appetite; reaching out to draw it to oneself and appropriate it”
- **Due** = “unavoidable; the nature of things”
- **Penalty** = “anti-reward” (i.e. the opposite of reward)
- **Perversion** = “roving imposter; fraudulence”

Vs 28 –

- **Retain** = “to hold onto; to wear”
- **Knowledge** = “participatory / experiential knowledge”
- **Gave them over** = “to surrender; yield”
- **Depraved** = “not worthy; cast away”

## Day Three – Are we accepting society’s humanistic ideology?

---

Modern American culture and society has defined certain behaviors and human identities as sacrosanct and demanding of our unconditional acceptance, respect, and affirmation. To do anything less than be entirely supportive of these behaviors and identities is to be considered bigoted, hateful, unenlightened, and mean-spirited. The goal of these demands in American society may indeed **seem to be a worthy one**: that we love everyone regardless of their behavior, beliefs, identities, and interests; and that everyone feels empowered to be their fullest self without shame or criticism within our culture.

The problem is that many of these behaviors and identities are revealed in scripture to be the net result of people ignoring or rejecting God (see **Romans 1:18-30**). If we step back from the **perceived offense** of what God is revealing here, it makes perfect sense. If we ignore the reality and existence of God—or if God indeed does not exist—then human experiences really are all there is to live for. So why would we not abandon all concern for limitations to our identity? Why not embrace humanistic and even hedonistic behaviors if there is no deity with whom we should concern ourselves?

In the modern American Church, many believers are struggling with what to accept and embrace from within society’s humanistic ideology, much of which is in direct contradiction to God’s perfect revelation found in scripture.

**Read carefully and slowly: Romans 1:32.** Consider this verse within the whole context of **Romans 1:16-32**, especially **verse 25**. What do you see described in this text of scripture that is similar to what is occurring in American culture?

**Consider and pray to God about (ask Him for His wisdom):**

- Do I believe the Bible is the clear, inerrant, and perfect revelation of Truth from God? Is it fully authoritative to define the truth and wisdom of all human thought? Or is it merely suggestive? Or perhaps outdated and antiquated? Why do I believe what I believe about the scriptures?
- Have I believed that society’s ideology—which contradicts God’s revelation in scripture—is more truthful, more loving, more authoritative over how we should view our world? Why or why not?
- If I do accept God’s revelation in scripture to be entirely true, how can I love others who embrace unbiblical ideologies? Can I demonstrate love and acceptance of them without compromising my faith? How?