

Ignoring God's Plain Truth, Lesson 4, June 28, 2026, Romans 1:18-23, 28-32

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: *"²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes 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: To help learners understand that the gospel reveals God's righteousness, exposes humanity's need for salvation, and calls believers to live unashamed of Christ.

Key Takeaways:

1. Be **unashamed of the gospel** — it is God's power to save.
2. Recognize the seriousness of sin and the need for repentance.
3. Live as a witness of God's righteousness in a world that desperately needs truth.

Names that Matter:

Paul: (Author) AKA "Saul" – is his Jewish name. A former Pharisee, and accuser of the brethren. A member of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Paul's family belonged; but following his conversion he was known as "Paul"

Written: c. A.D. 56-57

Home: Born at Tarsus, brought up in Jerusalem, Settled in Antioch of Syria.

Profession: Tentmaker, A great leader in the church, Evangelist, Apostle to the Gentiles

Life Changing experiences: A vision of Christ on the Damascus road, which led to his conversion and call as an apostle.

Background:

Romans was written to a church that Paul did not start and had not yet visited. He wrote the letter to give an account of his gospel in preparation for a personal visit. (1:11) He wrote from Corinth, where he was completing the collection of money from the Macedonian and Achaian Christians for the "poor saints" in Jerusalem.

The theme of Romans is **"God's power to save"**

Paul opens his letter to the Romans by first identifying himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God. Then he proceeds with a

series of questions and answers to challenge those who have yet to believe. He uses the word “Power” when addressing the Romans, as he knew his audience. Roman ruled supreme and understood what power meant and what it felt like.

Audience: Romans 1:18–32 is directed at Gentiles, but Paul is setting a trap — a rhetorical setup — to show that Jews are just as guilty, and that *everyone* needs the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel.

The Lesson:

I People Resist Manifest Truth (Romans 1:18-20) (NKJV)

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.

²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Fill in the gaps. (vv. 1-17)

- Paul identifies himself as a servant and apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.
- The gospel was promised beforehand through the prophets and fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- Paul’s mission is to bring obedience of faith among all nations.
- The gospel reveals **the righteousness of God** — not earned by works but received by faith.

What’s happening here: (vv. 18-20)

1. The immediate audience in this section is Gentiles.

Romans 1:18–32 describes:

- idolatry
- pagan worship
- exchanging the glory of God for images
- sexual immorality tied to idol practices

- a long list of sins common in Greco-Roman culture

These are **markers of Gentile society**, not Jewish life.

Paul is describing the **moral collapse of the Gentile world**.

1. God’s Wrath Is Being Revealed (v. 18)

Paul says “**the wrath of God is revealed from heaven**” — meaning God is actively responding to human sin.

This isn’t explosive anger; it’s God’s **holy, righteous opposition** to everything that destroys His creation.

Two groups are in view:

- **Ungodliness** — sin against God
- **Unrighteousness** — sin against others

And Paul says people “**suppress the truth**” — meaning they push down, resist, or refuse what they know is true about God.

Key idea:

Humanity’s problem isn’t ignorance — it’s resistance.

2. People Know God, but Reject Him (v. 19)

Paul says what can be known about God is “**manifest in them**” — meaning God has placed an inner awareness of Himself in every human heart.

Two witnesses testify:

- **Internal witness:** conscience, moral awareness, spiritual intuition
- **External witness:** creation itself

God has made Himself obvious or recognizable.

3. Creation Reveals God Clearly (v. 20)

Paul says God’s **invisible attributes** — His eternal power and divine nature — are **clearly seen** through what He has made.

Creation is a sermon that never stops preaching.

- The order of the universe
- The beauty of nature
- The complexity of life
- The vastness of the heavens

All points to a Creator.

Result:

Humanity is “**without excuse.**”

No one can claim they had no evidence of God.

 **What Paul Is Building Toward**

Romans 1:18–20 is the beginning of Paul’s argument that:

- All people know enough about God to seek Him
- But instead of worshiping Him, they reject Him
- This rejection leads to moral and spiritual collapse
- Therefore, **all humanity needs the gospel**

II People Turn To False Gods (vv.21-23)

²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

²²Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

What’s happening here? (vv. 21-23)

 **1. They Knew God — But Refused to Honor Him (v. 21)**

Paul says people “**knew God**” — not savingly, but through creation and conscience. They had enough revelation to recognize Him as Creator.

But instead of responding with:

- **glory** (worship)
- **gratitude** (thankfulness)

they chose **indifference and rebellion**. (slow response)

This is the root of all sin:

knowing God is real but refusing to acknowledge Him as God.

★ 2. Their Thinking Became Empty and Their Hearts Darkened (v. 21)

Because they rejected God:

- their thoughts became **futile** (empty, pointless, confused)
- their hearts became **darkened** (unable to perceive truth)

This is spiritual degeneration — the mind and heart lose clarity when separated from God.

Teaching Point: Rejection of God doesn't lead to freedom; it leads to confusion.

★ 3. Claiming Wisdom, They Became Fools (v. 22)

Paul is describing a tragic irony:

People who reject God often see themselves as enlightened, progressive, or intellectually superior.

But Scripture says the opposite:

“The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” (Psalm 14:1)

Teaching Point: Human wisdom without God becomes self-deception.

★ 4. They Exchanged God's Glory for Idols (v. 23)

This is the climax of the downward spiral:

- They traded the glory of the incorruptible God

- For images of humans, birds, animals, and creeping things

This mirrors the idolatry of the ancient world — statues, carved images, animal-shaped gods.

But the principle is timeless:

When people reject God, they don't stop worshiping — they just worship something else.

Idolatry today may look like:

- self
- success
- pleasure
- money
- relationships
- status
- ideology

The human heart is always worshiping something.

III People Then Are Consigned To Depravity (vv. 28-32)

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

²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers,

³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Fill in the missing pieces:

Romans 1:24–27 shows that when people reject God, He allows them to follow their desires — and those desires lead to deeper moral and relational brokenness. Idolatry always leads to immorality — because when you worship something less than God, you begin to live less than what God created you to be. His point is not to shame individuals but to show the **depth of human brokenness** when God is removed from the center of life.

★ **1. God Gave Them Over to Impurity (v. 24)**

★ **2. They Exchanged the Truth for a Lie (v. 25)**

★ **3. God Gave Them Over to Dishonorable Passions (v. 26–27)**

What's Happening Here? (vv. 28-32)

★ **1. They Did Not Want to Keep God in Their Knowledge (v. 28)**

Paul says people “**did not like to retain God in their knowledge.**”

This means:

- They *knew* God was real
- They *knew* His standards
- They *chose* to push Him out of their thinking

This is deliberate rejection, not innocent ignorance.

★ **2. God “Gave Them Over” to a Debased Mind (v. 28)**

This is the third time Paul uses this phrase (vv. 24, 26, 28).

It means God allowed them to follow the path they insisted on.

A **debased mind** is a mind that:

- no longer recognizes right from wrong
- cannot think clearly about moral truth
- approves what God condemns
- becomes spiritually dysfunctional

This is judgment — God letting people experience the consequences of rejecting Him.

★ 3. A Life Filled With Every Kind of Sin (vv. 29–31)

Paul lists the behaviors that flow from a God-rejecting mind. It's not just "big sins" — it's a full collapse of character.

Internal corruption

- unrighteousness
- sexual immorality
- wickedness
- covetousness
- maliciousness

Relational destruction

- envy
- murder
- strife
- deceit
- gossip
- slander
- disobedience to parents

Character breakdown

- undiscerning
- untrustworthy
- unloving
- unforgiving
- unmerciful

Paul is showing that sin affects **every part** of human life — thoughts, relationships, desires, and behavior.

★ 4. They Know God’s Judgment — But Approve Sin Anyway (v. 32)

This is the deepest level of rebellion:

- They know God’s standards
- They know sin deserves judgment
- They continue in it
- And they **celebrate** others who do the same

This is not just sin — it’s **endorsing** sin.

It’s calling evil “good” and good “evil.”

WHAT ROMANS 1 TEACHES US TODAY

Romans 1 isn’t just a history lesson.

It’s a mirror.

It shows us:

- why the world is broken
- why people are confused
- why sin spreads
- why culture drifts
- and why the gospel is absolutely essential

Paul’s message is clear:

Humanity is lost without God.

But God has revealed His righteousness through the gospel.

Romans 1 prepares us for the good news that comes later:

“All have sinned...”

“But God demonstrates His love...”

“There is therefore now no condemnation...”

The darkness of Romans 1 makes the light of the gospel shine even brighter.