

WEEK 4 | ROMANS 1:24-32

ROMANS | THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S POWER

OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

The following passages may be helpful to you as you consider this text.

- Psalm 135:15-18 – This passage highlights the futility of idolatry.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 – God's will for his children is holiness, especially in regard to sexual sin.

THEMES.

The overarching theme of Romans is the gospel—salvation through Jesus Christ. That is important to remember and keep in front of your group, because the letter is a theological masterpiece. But as with any work of art, each brush stroke's true beauty is best seen when the piece as a whole is realized. To that end, we will deal with many sub-themes, but remember that each one weaves together to give the “fullest, plainest and grandest statement of the gospel in the New Testament.”¹

1. Yahweh, the one true God, is Creator of all, and designed his creation to function in accordance with his holy will. (Rom. 1:24-25, 32; Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 19:1-6; Job 38:1-39:30)
2. Sin corrupts the human nature and is evident by mankind's habitual perversion and pollution of God's intended design and function. (Rom. 1:26-32; Gen. 6:11-12; Deut. 4:15-20; Mark 7:20-23; 2 Chron. 6:37-39; Ps. 79; Prov. 2:6-15; Titus 1:15-16)
3. God's wrath—present and future—is his holy and just punishment of sin. It expresses “his ‘deeply personal abhorrence’ of evil.”² (Rom. 1:18, 24-25; Deut. 9:6-8; Col. 3:6; Heb. 1:9)
4. All men and women are born with a sin nature, actively oppose God, and need salvation. (Rom. 1:19-32; Ps. 51:5; John 3:1-15; Rom. 3:23-24; Rom. 5:12-14; Eph. 2:1-3)

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week's Scriptures.

1. Did the Holy Spirit use last week's passage or sermon to convict, challenge, or encourage you in any way? Did he use it to confirm or answer a prayer in any way? If you're willing, share with the group.
2. Do you struggle with God's authority? Why or why not?
3. Paul begins verse 24 with the word, “*therefore*,” linking God's wrathful judgement in verses 24-25 to the reason for his wrath in the previous paragraph. According to verses 18-23, why do all people deserve wrath?

Hint: Look especially closely at verse 18.

4. Three times, the Bible says, “God gave them up...” (vv. 24, 26, 28) to their sin. In your opinion, how is allowing one to be immersed in his sin a punishment? And is there a hope in it? If so, how?

¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's good news for the world*. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 19.

² *Ibid.*

Note: In light of the NT instructions and reason for church discipline in 1 Corinthians 5, I'm compelled to believe the hope for *giving them over to their sin* is that "they will see their error and look to [God] for mercy and a better way."³

5. In vv. 24-25, Paul ties dishonorable conduct to idolatry. In other words, what we worship impacts how we live.
- How does this relate to Paul's example of homosexuality in verses 26-27?

Hint #1: Look at Paul's use of the word, *exchange*, found in verses 25 and 26. In verse 25, he writes that idolaters *exchange* the truth of God for a lie. Similarly, in verse 26, he explains that the practice of homosexuality is an *exchange* between natural sexual activity and unnatural. According to one commentator, "swapping gods leads to swapping (sexual) moralities. Thus, the solution to immorality is not just to address people's behavior. You also have to address what they worship."⁴

- Paul goes on to list 21 additional examples of sinful conduct in verses 28-31. Are there any that stand out? How have you experienced the devastating effects or consequences of sin in your life?
 - Take vv. 26-31 together. In your opinion, who/what was the god worshiped by many in Rome? How about in our present culture?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What is the end for people who refuse to repent and continue in sin? What is the promise for all who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ?
7. Have you turned from your sin? If so, what was it like to be convicted of your sin? What was it like to repent and trust in Jesus?

PRAY TO CLOSE.

Here are a few prayer points to posture your heart as you close.

- Allow a place for confession in the group, and pray for one another.
 - It's probably good to do this in a gender-specific groups.
- Thank God for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the clearest display of God's love and justice intertwined.
- Ask the Lord to answer your prayer requests. Do you need healing? Ask. Do you need wisdom? Ask.

³ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; InterVarsity Press, 1988), 88.

⁴ Michael Kruger, *Study Romans*, The Gospel Coalition., Retrieved from <https://cdn.rts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Sermon-Notes-Romans-L5.pdf>.