

## **When God Gives Up (*Part 1*)** ***Romans 1:24-32***

***Sermon-in-a-Sentence:*** When individuals or a society persist in rejecting God and suppressing the truth of His Word, God allows them to fully indulge their evil desires and then suffer the full consequences of their sin.

This passage is one of the most dark, depressing and discouraging passages in all the Bible! Nevertheless, it is also one of the most necessary passages in terms of understanding our need, as human beings, for a Savior. It is a very stark and candid assessment of Man's rebellion against God and the judgment of God that comes upon him as a result. It reveals to us, in no uncertain terms, the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all the rebellion and sinfulness of Man.

**I. The Reality of God's Wrath (1:18a)** – God's wrath is a present reality for those who are rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

**II. The Recipients of God's Wrath (1:18b)** – God is pouring out His wrath on those who refuse to submit to His truth and who pursue a lifestyle of wickedness and sin.

**III. The Reason for God's Wrath (1:18c)** – God is pouring out His wrath on those who deliberately and systematically seek to remove Him from every aspect of their lives and society.

**IV. The Reasonableness of God's Wrath (1:19-20)** – God's wrath is reasonable and Man is without excuse because he has willfully rejected the clear and understandable revelation of God's existence, power and nature.

**1:21-23** – Man's rejection of God and His truth leads invariably to spiritual blindness and moral depravity. When Man rejects the true God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe, he creates false gods made in his own likeness and the image of created beings.

**V. The Revelation of God's Wrath (1:24-32)** – The rejection of God and His truth results in an inevitable downward spiral, a devolution of the individual and the society, that concludes in total moral depravity and spiritual death.

### **What happens when God gives Man over to his sin?**

Romans 1: 24 – "So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired." (*NLT*)

- He turns people over to their sins and allows them to experience the full consequences of their rebellion; the sin and its consequences become the judgment of God!
- Does God ever actually give up on people so that they do not have the opportunity to repent and turn from their sin? (2 Peter 3:9)
  - "God [does] not give up on humanity, but He [does] allow them to go deeper and deeper into sin. He gives us an opportunity to see how evil sin really is and how desperately wicked people can become." (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 1880*)

- There is a real danger that people can reject God and become so entrenched in their sin, so enslaved to it, that they cannot turn from it.
- When people willfully and persistently reject God and refuse to submit to His Word, God gives them up, gives them over, abandons them to the bondage and enslavement of their own sin.
- Like the loving father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, God gives us over to our sin; He allows us to rebel against Him, to sin to the max, and then experience the full consequences of our sin so that we might come to our senses, repent and return to Him. (Luke 15:17)
- 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 – Paul recommended putting the man out of the fellowship of the church until he came to his senses and repented of his sin. (Cp. 2 Cor. 2:3-11)
- 1 Timothy 1:18-20 – The handing over is with the intent of producing repentance; but, if not, then judgment and destruction at the hands of Satan.
- Acts 7:39-42 – An illustration of Romans 1:18-25. Rebellion against God, rejection of His truth, led to spiritual idolatry, the worship of false gods, and sexual immorality. (Cp. Exod. 32; 1 Cor. 10:6-8)
- A very sobering truth: When God turns someone *over* to their sin, He also turns *away*.

#### **A. To sexual impurity resulting in degradation and idolatry (1:24-25)**

- When people reject God and His truth, He allows them to indulge the “sinful desires of their hearts” which manifest themselves in sexual impurity.
- “The word *impurity* refers to all sexual activities that are condemned by God. Physical intimacy between one man and one woman in marriage is the only sexual relationship that has divine approval (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:4-6).” (*Swindoll, Coming to Terms, p. 18*)
- Our bodies were designed by God for sexual intimacy within the confines of marriage and He intended it to be a beautiful thing. Sex and human sexuality are wonderful gifts from God!
  - ❖ Genesis 1:26-27 – Man, male and female together, is the image of God.
    - That’s why sexual sins, and especially homosexuality, are such an abomination to God—it is an attack on the image of God; it destroys the image of God as He originally designed it.
    - God’s original design was *two genders*, male and female.
  - ❖ God’s original design for marriage was and is one man and one woman.
  - ❖ God is the Creator of sex and human sexuality (gender identity) and He intended it to be “very good” and it is when we follow His design! (Gen. 2:31)
  - ❖ When we rebel against God’s design and give in to temptation and follow the “sinful desires of our hearts” (Rom. 1:24), there are terrible consequences!
  - ❖ God designed the woman to be a coequal companion for the man, to perfectly complete and complement him. (Genesis 2:18ff)
    - Complement = “something that completes, makes up a whole, or brings to perfection.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary*) E.g. pieces in a jigsaw puzzle.

- The woman supplied what was lacking in the man and vice-versa.
- Genesis 2:23-24 – “i.e., one unit (an [inseparable] union of man and woman, consummat-ed in sexual intercourse)... It is also important to observe that God creates only one Eve for Adam, not several Eves or another Adam. This points to heterosexual monogamy as the divine pattern for marriage that God established at creation.” (*ESV Study Bible, p. 54*)
- When Man rejects God and His truth, it results in sexual perversion and spiritual idolatry.

The lie is the lie of false gods, gods of man’s own creation, man becoming his own god, characterized by everything that is contrary to the character and nature of the one true God of the Bible, false gods that are characterized by sinful desires, sexual impurity and unimaginable perversions of the vilest sort.

### **How should we respond? How can we become a part of the solution?**

1. We can become acquiescent – throw up our hands in despair, wave the white flag and give up. Give in and give up. But if we do, we will never change anything, least of all ourselves. We just allow human depravity to overtake and consume us.
2. We can become anxious – we can fret and stew and become so anxious about all the sin and depravity that we see in and around us that we just crawl into a hole and hope it all goes away.
3. We can become available – we can submit ourselves to God, become soldiers in His army, to be used by Him to fight against all the evil that we see in our world. This response requires at least four things:
  - a. Regular prayer
  - b. Personal pursuit of holiness
  - c. Evangelistic outreach
  - d. Personal involvement in public affairs