

**The Greatest Letter
Living In An Ungodly World
Romans 1:18-32**

Introduction: Designing Your Own God

Question: If you were to design your own God, what does the picture look like?

Last Week: *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” (Romans 1:17)*

Today: *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness... (Romans 1:18)*

Understanding the Wrath of God

Two Words For Anger

1. Thumos: Sudden, explosive anger
2. Orgos: Settled, controlled anger

Two Targets of God’s Wrath

1. Godlessness: Living as though God doesn’t exist.
2. Wickedness: Living without any rules.

The Guilt of Godlessness (vv. 19-23)

Guilty Because God Has Revealed Himself

1. It’s Unmistakable

... since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. (Romans 1:19)

2. It’s Universal

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 people are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

- **Note:** We learn God is eternal, He is powerful, and He is organized.

3. It’s Undeniable

Guilty Because of Our Human Response to God’s Revelation (vv. 18, 21-23)

1. Repress the Truth about God

2. Reject the Truth of God

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. (Romans 1:21)

- **Note:** This is seen through a refusal to give God His glory and a refusal to give thanks.

3. Replace the Truth

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. (Romans 1:22-23)

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Romans 1:25)

- **Note:** There are Crude Idols and Cultural Idols

The Guilt of Wickedness

When you repress, reject, and replace God, it automatically causes problems. When your vertical relationship isn't right, your horizontal relationships won't be right. Godlessness leads to wickedness. Godlessness is the root; wickedness is the fruit. Trying to live like there is no God causes all kinds of problems.

Important Phrase: God gave them over...

- God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts (v. 24).
- God gave them over to shameful lusts (v. 26).
- God gave them over to a depraved mind (v. 28)

Question: What does it mean when God gives somebody over?

- It doesn't mean they can't be saved or that God doesn't love them.
- It means He allows people to experience the results of their choices.

God gave them over to immoral passions (vv. 24-25)

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 about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Romans 8:24-25)

God gave them over to indecent perversions (vv. 26-27)

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual 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 shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

God gave them over to irrational practices (vv. 28-32)

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28)

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 have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. (Romans 1:29-31)

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

- **Note:** This may be the most depressing passage in the Bible. Thankfully, God refuses to leave us in that condition.

Conclusion: The Challenge of Living in an Ungodly World

God commissions us to shine His light. How do you live in this world?

- It's not imitation
- It's not isolation
- It's insulation

Question: Are you up to the challenge?