

# ROMANS

From Wretchedness to Righteousness

## Study 2

The Pagans need the gospel (Romans 1:18-32)

The Wrath of God (Romans 1:18)

### Verse 18

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

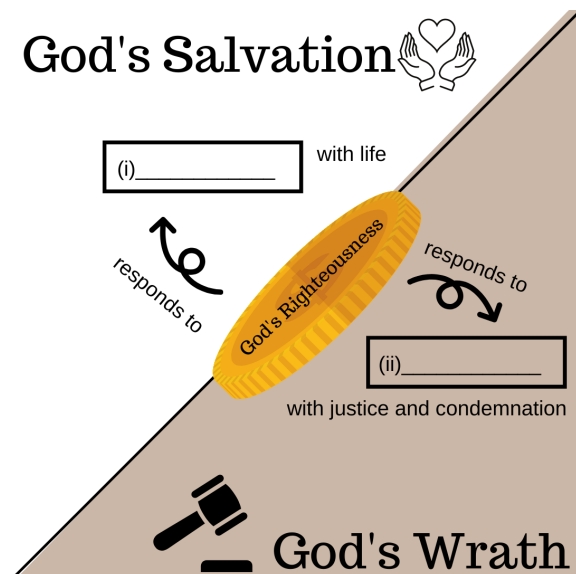
**1) a) Objective question, choose the most appropriate answer. God's wrath is:**

- A. same as human's wrath
- B. different from human's wrath
- C. Unreasonable, irrational, capricious
- D. Excessive, disproportionate

**b) Objective question, choose the answer(s), can be more than one. God's attribute of Righteousness can cause Him to express which of the following emotions?**

- A. Wrath (Anger)
- B. Indifference (Don't care/ Tidak apa attitude)
- C. Compassion (Grace)

**c) Objective question, choose the most appropriate answer to fill in the blanks.**



God's righteousness:

- responds to human's (i) \_\_\_\_\_ with life.
- responds to human's (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ with justice and condemnation.

- A. (i) suppression of truth ; (ii) living by faith
- B. (i) living by faith ; (ii) suppression of truth
- C. (i) good works ; (ii) idolatry
- D. (i) good works ; (ii) suppression of truth

## The Nature of Sin (Romans 1:19-25)

### Verse 19-25

Rom 1:19-25

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 people 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 a mortal human being 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 about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

**2) a) Objective question, choose the most appropriate answer. Who does 'them' and 'they' in the passage refer to?**

- A. Christians in Rome
- B. Moral Gentiles/Pagans
- C. Immoral Gentiles/Pagans
- D. Religious Jews
- E. Jewish Christians

### Background information

Just as a Jews call non-Jews as Gentiles, non-Christians are called Pagans.

**b) Objective question, choose the answer(s), can be more than one. In verse 19-20, what facts about God are plain knowledge?**

- A. Salvation
- B. The Trinity
- C. Eternal power
- D. Divine nature
- E. the Gospel

**c) Objective question, choose the answer(s), can be more than one. In verse 21-25, what examples of idols people worship instead of God?**

- A. Images of mortal human being
- B. Images of birds and animals and reptiles
- C. Created things

The Consequence of Sin (Romans 1:26-31)

**Verse 26-32**

Rom 1:26-32

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.

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. 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. 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.

**3) a) Objective question, choose the most appropriate answer. In verse 24, 26, and 28, “God gave them over”, because:**

- A. It is an act of judgement to allow their own sins to ruin them. <Metaphor: Like letting them eat all the sugar they want so they get diabetes and dental caries.>
- B. He doesn’t want to care about what evil they do anymore.

**b) Reflection question, in your own words, describe or give an example of the negative behaviours listed:**

Verse	NIV	ESV	Description or Examples
26	shameful lusts	dishonorable passions	
26	exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.	exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to	

		nature;	
28	they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God	they did not see fit to acknowledge God	
29	filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity	filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.	
29	full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice	full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.	
29-30	They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful	They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful,	
30	they invent ways of doing evil	inventors of evil	
30	they disobey their parents; (v.30c)	disobedient to parents	
31	they have no understanding,	foolish	
31	no fidelity,	faithless,	
31	no love,	heartless,	
31	no mercy.	ruthless.	

## Case Studies

### Case 1

Kenneth was inspired after studying Romans and decided to share the gospel widely with his friends but was sorely disappointed because many of them rejected the gospel. They threw up many objections in his face especially on the wrath of God, this made Kenneth confused.

4) a) Open discussion: How do you respond to a non-believer asking this question: “How can you say God is a ‘God of love’ when he is a wrathful God demanding vengeance on humans?”

### Case 1.1

One of his friends pointed out that when Steven Hawkings did his first thesis for his PHD he was open to the possibility that there is a God and later on he changed his mind and now believes there is no God. He said in an interview with El Mundo newspaper in a June 2015 interview *“before we understand science, it is perfectly natural to believe that God created the universe. But now science offers a more convincing explanation”*

b) Take a look at Romans 1:19-23 and explain why Professor Hawkings is suppressing the truth?

Romans 1:19-23

New International Version

19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 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.

21 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. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

## **Case 2**

**Hillary has a very laid back approach towards faith and God and says:** *“I live a good moral life. I don’t lie or cheat or hurt others. I am married to one man and have 3 kids and we contribute significantly to our community. My husband is a public servant serving in the MPSJ council and works hard and honestly for Subang Jaya. Why should God interfere with me, I did not do anything wrong against Him directly. Why can’t he leave me alone?”*

### **5) a) Discussion question. How do you respond to Hillary?**

#### **Background information**

D.M.Lloyd-Jones writes:

“According to the Bible every human being is in one of two positions, either under sin or under grace... The Bible does not say, ‘is he a good man?’... We must always think of ourselves not primarily in terms of actions — it is our whole condition that matters. If you visited a foreign country, the first thing they would want to know about you is not the color of your eyes, your bank balance, or whether you are a nice person — but to what country you belong. In the same way, the Christian gospel does not start with details. You may live a very good life and not be a Christian at all... all, both Jews and Gentiles are under sin... and belong to that realm.

[Many] fail to realize this about sin. They will persist in thinking of it in terms of sins — particular sins and actions... [Sin] means you live in such a way that you do not often think of God, and if you do, you think of Him in terms of what He could and should do for you... [Sin is an entire] outlook of self-centeredness and human-centeredness. Our very outlook, the very way we organize our lives and our thinking — opposes God.”

### **Case 3**

**Robert works for a Chinese firm that develops a piece of land in Putrajaya. He is an engineer and a high flyer, rapidly climbing the corporate ladder. However, once in this company, he finds things very different and encounters a lot of difficulties with his bosses. They make him work more than 100 hours a week, even on weekends. They tender very low prices compared to the local developers and purchase very substandard materials. Their Chinese workers are imported and work practically round the clock and are paid very low salaries. They stay in the development site and live in very primitive makeshift tents and are given very poor meals and are not allowed to travel beyond the compound. The Chinese bosses however are free to go as they like and every weekend treat themselves to very expensive meals in KL Hilton and have purchased millions of ringgit worth of property. Their wives tout the latest Louis Vuitton bags and travel overseas every month. When Robert brings up the matter of building standards and worker welfare the bosses refuse to listen or make any changes. Robert is contemplating leaving the company but the money is very good for him and his own family who live in his Damansara mansion and his three kids are all in the top schools in KL. He weighed all his options and decided not to move.**

**6) a) Discussion Question. Why do you think Robert won't move? (Use Romans 1:18-31 help you answer this)**

**b) Discussion Question. Do you think Robert is the same as his bosses?**

### Case 3.1

Here is some data from the New York Times on people's perception of being rich



c) Discussion question. "The more you have, the more you think you should have." Do you think this is a clear sign of addiction?

d) Reflection question. What are the personal idols we can see in ourselves? Look at the idols below and rate from 0-10 how you are doing on each and feel free to share.

Personal Idols	0- Denial. "I still don't see why this is wrong."	5- "Struggling to improve."	10- Doing okay or this isn't an idol I struggle with.
A. Workaholism. Work becomes the thing you live for — to be productive and useful.	0 ————— 5 ————— 10		
B. Codependent "enabling." Needing to feel needed is what you live for.	0 ————— 5 ————— 10		





c) Reflection question. Objective question, choose the answer(s), can be more than one. Here are some idols in our community, describe in your own words or give an example of how it happens.

Idols in Our Community	Examples or Description
<p>A. Fascism. Make an idol of one's race or nationality. "I am acceptable because I am a _____" rather than getting identity as a child of God.</p>	
<p>B. Communism. Make an idol of the state. Government, not God, will solve all problems. Marx said everything is political, and all problems are political/economic ones, rather than spiritual ones.</p>	
<p>C. Populism. Making an idol out of public opinion or majority rule, rather than what God says is right.</p>	
<p>D. Capitalism. Making an idol out of the market. Like communism, seeing all our problems as economic ones.</p>	
<p>E. Rigid multi-culturalism. One's ethnic group or culture is sovereign. No one can criticize it — it is absolute, rather than the Word of God.</p>	
<p>F. Enlightenment humanism. Makes an idol of reason and scientific investigation. Science has an answer for everything and reason will open all doors.</p>	

#### **Case 4**

**One of the consequences of our rebellion against God is the practice of homosexuality. One of Kenneth's friends noted that the verse says "For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another (Romans 1:26-27 ESV)**

**If modern medicine has discovered that homosexuals are born with a natural attraction towards people of the same sex then this verse does not apply to them. They argue: "Most homosexuals live in monogamous happy relationships doing what comes naturally. Why should the church interfere?"**

**7) a) Discussion question. How should Kenneth counter their use of the word "natural"?**

#### **Quick Verse Reference**

##### **Romans 1:26 (ESV)**

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;















#### **Background information**

Mendel's Laws of Heredity

: a principle in genetics: hereditary units occur in pairs that separate during gamete formation so that every gamete receives but one member of a pair

— called also law of segregation

# MENDEL'S LAW OF INHERITANCE

Seed		Flower	Pod		Stem	
Form	Cotyledons	Color	Form	Color	Place	Size
 Grey & Round	 Yellow	 White	 Full	 Yellow	 Axial pods, Flowers along	 Long (6-7ft)
 White & Wrinkled	 Green	 Violet	 Constricted	 Green	 Terminal pods, Flowers top	 Short ( $\frac{3}{4}$ -1ft)
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

b) How is homosexuality a reflection of worship of the creature rather than creator?