

## Wrath—or a Heckuva Deal

### Week 2 - Romans 1:18 - 32

#### Objectives:

- To discuss the wrath of God against people's sinfulness.
- To take away that there is absolutely NO way for us to be saved except through God.

**Leader note:** Leaders, this study has some potential thorny parts and rabbit trails. Be mindful of your group dynamic, and redirect people who want to zero in on things such as specific sins or homosexuality. Instead, point people to the fact that things that don't draw us TO God often are pulling us AWAY from God. Choosing temptations in our comfort zone instead of choosing God can lead to our downfall. Please take time to read the whole study and come up with your own answers to the personal questions to help discussion along if it seems like it will stall.

? Have you ever made a good deal? Was it a bad deal for the other person? How about the converse—a bad deal for you that was a good deal for someone else?

#### I'd Wrath-er Not Experience This!

**Recap:** What did we study last week? Last week we studied the first half of Romans 1. We are called to serve God by spreading the gospel and living in a righteous and faithful way.

#### Read Romans 1:18–23 NIV:

<sup>18</sup>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup>since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup>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.

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

? Take a moment to look over the passage. What stands out about it to you?

? What is God's wrath? Why was God wrathful?

*Possible answers: God's wrath is His anger and fury, a response to our disobedience. God was so angry because people were doing wicked things and suppressing the truth by their wickedness.*

? Since God's nature is evident, He was more angry at those hiding the truth than if they just didn't know (vs. 19–20). Have you ever been in a situation where someone lying made you more angry than if they had just told the truth?

*Possible answers: People will list their own situations. It would be helpful to think of your own as a leader, whether a parent/sibling/child/friend/colleague decided to lie to get something they wanted. Lying often makes things worse emotionally, as well as muddying the waters of what happened.*

? Verse 23 says, "[They] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles." Does this seem like a good deal to you? This does not seem like a good exchange. Why do you think people did this? (Cross-reference with Exodus 32, where the Israelites—even though God had literally led them out of Egypt mere days before through a series of more than ten miracles!—rejected God and made a golden calf to worship.)

*Possible answers: This doesn't seem like a good deal at all! But people get tired of God telling them to do things they don't want to do, or of having to wait for God's timing, or of not being able to show a visible God to other people, among other reasons.*

? When are you tempted to eschew God and follow something else in your life?

*Possible answers: These will be personal. People may say when they're tired or angry, or don't want to wait, or embarrassed by peers or family, or when they don't feel emotionally close to God, or when God asks them to do something they don't want to do.*

## Plunging into Sin

### Read Romans 1:24–32 NIV:

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup> they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. <sup>32</sup> 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.

? Take a moment to look over the passage. What stands out about it to you?

**Leader note: It is important here not to get wrapped up in the nitty-gritty of the listed individual behavior and sins. The point of this list is NOT any of the wrong things listed within it. Instead, the point is that, when people turn away from God, they turn away from all the good and right and wonderful things He fills them with and try to fill themselves with unsatisfying, empty, bad things that will only leave them enslaved to sin and worse off than before. Use grace and gentleness when talking about this section, and do not be harsh to group members sharing their thoughts and feelings!**

? Verse 32 says, "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." Why do you think that happens? What is the motivation of those people?

*Possible answers: As the popular saying goes, "Misery loves company." People don't like feeling that they're alone in their behaviors. There's another joke that people repeat, that they look forward to partying in hell with all the interesting people. They are wanting that company, that group, that also chooses to look and walk away from God and choose their own selfish desires. In the end, they will never have the satisfaction they seek.*

? How can you resist the temptation to give in to behaviors that pull you away from God?

*Possible answers: These are personal, and will vary from person to person.*

### For Discussion and Accountability

? What part or parts of this passage have made you feel convicted? In what way?

? What do you need to specifically resist this week? How can we be encouraging one another to seek God this week?