

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012

Passage: Romans 1:18-23

Memory Passage: Romans 8:1-2 (Review)

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom 1:18-23 six times in a row.** Now as you read this passage a 7<sup>th</sup> time, summarize the teaching of each verse with a short, pithy sentence. For example, I summarized v. 18: “Wrath revealed against unrighteous truth suppressors.”

(b) How does this passage relate to what has come before it? After it? How does each of the 6 verses in our passage relate to the verse before and after it (i.e., “How does Paul use each verse to further his thought from and prepare us for what’s next?”)?

(c) How do you describe the wrath of God? How is God’s wrath different from/the same as human wrath? Why is God not sinning in His wrath?

(d) The section of Romans into which we now enter contains some difficult, frank, and challenging subject matter. Spend some time today in prayer asking God to prepare your heart for the rather dark material Paul will cover, and for the grace to see the glory of Christ even in God’s wrath revealed against men. Also ask him to reveal your heart with regard to your own salvation & sanctification, and your willingness to receive His grace as you examine your heart through the Scriptures.

(e) *Family:* Review last week’s memory verses, Romans 1:16-17 both individually & as a group. Then give a brief review of their meaning, reminding your family of all you learned last week. Then ask, “Why is it necessary for God to reveal His righteousness in the gospel of Christ?” Then **Read Rom. 1:18** and teach them that we are in need of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel because without it, we would not be able to stand before God on judgment day without being condemned for our sin. God is holy, and He must, by virtue of His nature, strongly opposes, express anger toward, and punish sin (i.e. exercise His wrath). All men and women are sinners (Rom. 3:23) in need of the salvation offered in Christ, who died in our place and who provided the righteousness we need in order to stand before God and be counted righteous.

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Psalm 78:1-72.** Study this Psalm and answer the following questions: (1) Why was God’s wrath kindled against His people? (2) In what ways did God give mercy and longsuffering to His people? (3) What was His people’s response to this mercy? (4) What did God’s wrath look like when He released it on His people? (5) Was God just in releasing His wrath? Why or why not? (6) Would it have been acceptable for a human ruler to treat his people the way God did? Why/why not? (7) Is God justified in showing mercy to His people on some occasions and exercising wrath against them on others? Why/why not?

(b) *Family:* Remind your family of what you learned last night. Then ask your family: “Since we need a Savior to deliver us from the penalty and power of sin, what is sin?” Have them work through a definition and write it on the board. Your definition should include things like breaking God’s law, acting or thinking in ways that violate His character, and that sin can be either omission (not doing what we should do) or commission (doing what we should not do). Sin is referred to in at least 11 different ways in Scripture (doing evil, disobedience, lawlessness, wickedness, transgression, etc.), but tonight **Read 1 Pet. 4:18, 1 John 1:9, and Rom. 1:18** and focus on “ungodliness” & “unrighteousness” in relation to God’s wrath toward sin.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 1:18-23 & Rom. 15.** This passage, as well as many others in Romans, uses terms & imagery that would be used in courts of law. Who are the defendants in these verses (i.e. to whom is Paul referring in these verses: Jews, Gentiles, or both)? What charge is brought against them (i.e. what has their unrighteousness caused them to do [v. 18])? What specific truth are they suppressing (v. 19), and who has revealed this truth to them?

(b) What evidence does the prosecutor bring against them (i.e. what specific truth are they suppressing [v. 19], who revealed this truth [v. 19], what specifically should be known about God and how should this be known [v. 20])?

(c) The final charge made in v. 20 is that “they are without excuse.” The word “excuse” translates the Greek word from which we derive the English “apology,” which means “a defense,” so Paul is saying that these people are “without a defense” before God’s judicial bench. What “defense” could they have had? What does this have to do with the truths found in v. 17? Spend some time right now writing a psalm of thanksgiving to God for revealing His righteousness to you in Christ, applying it to your life, and revealing His wrath against His Son on the cross instead of you. Jesus will be your defense, and you will be found innocent at God’s judicial bench because of His righteousness credited to your account! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

(d) *Family:* Before this lesson, spend some time writing a short play for your family to act out. This play should be set in a courtroom with the characters of a judge, a defendant, and a prosecutor. Using **Rom. 1:18-23** and the role/evidence/charge descriptions in Day 3 above and Day 4 below, write a dialogue which includes the words of Scripture, as well as other dialogue to help your play “work.” Have your family act out the play, and then **Read Rom 1:18-23** and explain our passage.

**DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 1** (this is the next chapter in our successive reading so re-read the chapter and focus especially on vs. 21-23). What 3 things did the defendant do instead of honoring & giving thanks to God? Does a person progress from futile thinking to becoming a fool, or are these three ways of stating the same thing? Give examples of what each of these indictments look like in the life of someone who suppresses the truth of God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(b) What was the proof that the defendant had become a fool (v. 23)? What is the importance of the distinction between “mortal” and “immortal” in this verse? How does one exchange God’s glory for an image, and why is this wrong?

(c) **Read Ex. 32** and answer the following questions: (1) Does Paul’s description of the idolater in Rom. 1 fit with the actions of God’s people at the foot of Mt. Sinai? How so? (2) How would you evaluate Aaron’s defense (vs. 22-24)? Did God find him to be “without excuse” or did his defense stand in God’s court?

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 1:18-23*, and explain that the unrighteous defendant suppressed the truth, clearly revealed in creation, that God existed and because of His power and divinity He deserved to be honored and thanked. This unrighteous act led to futile thinking, a darkened & foolish heart, and idolatry, which demonstrated his status as a fool. Then **Read Ex. 32** You would be well served to stop and summarize/explain every few verses so your family stays focused. Make sure you focus on the process described in Rom. 1 and Aaron’s “defense” in vs. 22-24. Be a good storyteller and bring this to life!

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 1:18-23 & Rom. 2**. We learned this week about General Revelation (sometimes called Natural Revelation because it is the revelation God gives of Himself revealed in nature), which is different from Special Revelation, the revelation that God gives of Himself that leads to salvation through repentance and faith. Given what you learned, how would you answer someone who asks, “What happens to the person living, let’s say, in the middle of the jungle who has never heard about Jesus?”

(b) Another aspect of our learning this week included idolatry (exchanging the glory of God for anything else), what leads to it (suppressing the truth about God), and what results from it (God’s wrath being revealed against the unrighteousness of idolatry). Though you might not be fabricating golden calves, what people, passions, desires, hobbies, etc. are present in your life that surpass God’s glory in your priorities? One way to identify these areas of idolatry is to ask, “If God entered my life and verbally asked me about these people/activities/passions, would I respond, ‘Yes, God, I honor you in these areas and give you thanks for them daily so they bring you glory and don’t exchange your glory!’” or would you respond, ‘I didn’t mean to, God, I was just living my life and “out popped this calf!”’”? Ask God to show you how to engage with these people/activities/passions in a way that brings Him glory instead of exchanges His glory.

(c) *Family: Lead your family through Day 5 (a) & (b) above. Use your own life as an example to describe areas in which you are tempted toward idolatry and explain how you overcome these temptations through the gospel. Then help your family do the same with specific areas of their own life.*

**DATE: February 12, 2012**

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*Truth Suppressors Are Without Excuse*