

**ROMANS SERIES SIX
GOD'S WILL AND GRACE
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Romans 1:24-32**

In Romans 1:18-23 we saw the awful picture of mankind forsaking God. Paul described how God revealed Himself to all mankind: (1) Conscience; (2) Nature. But mankind took that knowledge and suppressed it. As a result of rebelling against their God-consciousness, they are without excuse.

Orge and thumos: the wrath of God is already being revealed in our society by the internal decay.

Our passage today is a continuation of last time. We will see the three-fold downward spiral in any society that refuses to recognize and receive God through Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 1:24-32

If we are not careful we will focus only on the second “gave them over” and see only the issue of homosexuality. If we are not careful, we will approach this passage with the wrong attitude. If we are not careful we will feel a sense of righteous judgment as we see sin and sinful people dealt with in this passage. For some of us it is time for us to get “off our high horses” and let God be the Judge—“Vengeance is mine,” says the Lord—not ours! When we see this passage in the right light it will break our hearts. We are called to help hurting people. We are also called to love and demonstrate a new set of values to a decaying culture.

Sketch: *MISJUDGED LOVE*

“GOD GAVE THEM OVER” (Romans 1:24, 26, 28)

Paradoken: “God gave them over” literally means, “to hand over to one’s own power.”

The word has no angry irritation in it. Its main note is a wistful, sorrowful regret.

But, the- word also connotes the grim fact that sin begets sin. The more a person sins the easier it is to sin.

It is not so much God punishing a person as it is the person punishing himself.

Oscar Wilde: “When the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers.”

Let man alone and his downward slide is just as natural as it can be. When we run away from God we think we will be going upward to better things. But the way is actually downhill. We are pulled down by the law of moral gravity—when God lets go.

“GOD GAVE THEM OVER” TO SEXUAL IMPURITY (Romans 1:24-25)

Epithumia: “sinful desires” really means a “reaching out after pleasure that defies all reason.” It is the way of life of people who have become so completely immersed in the world that they have ceased to be aware of God at all.

Why sex? When God could so easily have named so many other areas?

The body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Sex is the most intimate of encounters. God reserves our deepest intimacy for Himself. It is not possible to be misusing our bodies sexually and be intimate with God (See Ezekiel 23.).

Today we are witnessing a frantic pursuit of pleasure that is being called in our secular media, the “New Hedonism.” Casual sex and every other kind of casual pleasure is promulgated as the ideal that is now actualized by many.

When a person turns away from Christ and begins to focus on his or her body, he or she will often do whatever is necessary to satisfy those desires. Any hope of intimacy with God is destroyed.

“GOD GAVE THEM OVER” TO UNNATURAL SEXUAL BEHAVIORS (Romans 1:26-27)

Homosexuality is the second mark of a godless, wicked and abandoned society.

“Even the females (*θηλυς*)” and “even the males (*αρσεν*)” are not the normal Greek words for men and women.

Paul used the animal terms for “male” and “female”. We might expect the males to break out like this—but not the females—and the females are leading the pack!

The key word here is “natural” which is used in verse 27 and the opposite term, “unnatural” which is used here. In one sense, fornication and adultery are not “unnatural” sins—they are not against nature. Of course, they are true sins because they break God’s moral laws which are designed to foster intimacy with Him. However, at least they result from using the body in a natural way. On the other hand, this is not so with homosexuality. Homosexuality is using one’s body in an unnatural way—that is, against nature. In the first case, we need the Bible to tell us that natural sexual activity outside of marriage is wrong. In the second case we do not need the Bible to tell us that homosexuality is wrong—a look at one’s sexual apparatus should convince anyone that practices of this kind were not meant to be.

It is time now for a little understanding of the genetics of homosexuality.

Remember, it is just as much a sin and ruination of intimacy with God for two unmarried heterosexuals to sleep with each other as it is for people of the same sex to sleep together. Fortunately, we are not doomed to act on our impulses. “Due penalty for this perversion” means that sin does have its consequences and unnatural sins have unnatural consequences.

“GOD GAVE THEM OVER” TO DEPRAVED MINDS (Romans 1:28-31)

“Depraved mind” is hard to translate with one or two words. “Depraved mind” might be used to describe an abandoned building which soon becomes the home of rats and other rodents. A “depraved mind” is unfit to distinguish between right and wrong. It is a mind warped with regard to moral judgment. When God turns the human race over to a depraved mind, they immediately begin to do things which ought not to be done. In verses 29-31 we find The Characteristics Of Man’s True Nature. This is like lifting the lid on Hell. Here is the doctrine of original sin—total depravity.

HOW LOW CAN YOU GO (Romans 1:32)?

An easy attitude toward sin is the final climax in mankind’s separation from God. Not only does mankind enjoy these sins, they enjoy watching others do them. Over the last several years there is an increasing tendency to justify or at least explain mankind’s bestial behavior on the grounds that, after all, we are just animals. One of the most salient testimonies of the spiritually degrading power of sin is recorded in Matthew 8:28ff. As Jesus was about to exorcise the Gadarene Demoniac, the demons inside begin to scream: “Have mercy on us, Thou Son of God! Send us into that herd of swine!” Who can measure the depth and horror of those words? These demons were once angels who lived around the throne of God in Heaven! Think of it! From the throne to the hog pen – so much had sin degraded them!

GOD HAS NOT REALLY GIVEN UP!

In the midst of this abyss of iniquity God condescended to put on a body and be spit upon and ridiculed and killed—in the twin demonstrations that man has rejected God and is thus without excuse and that God is love. Christ came to give sinful man His righteousness and make him fit for Heaven if mankind will but believe in Jesus. No matter how deep the abyss, the love of God is stronger (Lamentations 3:20-22, 33).

TAKE AWAYS

*We are called to love and to demonstrate a new set of values to a decaying culture.
Protect the children.
Pray for repentance.*