

I. Introduction

A. Addressing the room

1. Same sex attracted, parents/grandparents/family/friends of ...
 - a. God loves you and I love you. (You may say, I already know God loves me. I just want to let you know that I know He does)
 - b. I will be honest and kind to you and faithful to Jesus my Savior, King, and Lord
 - c. I know God has a design for all of us/each of you and an invitation to join Him and trust Him with everything.
2. People who are afraid of worldly agendas and concerned that we/I don't talk enough about the sins that are most important to you.
 - a. God loves you and I love you.
 - b. I will be and have been honest and kind to you and faithful to Jesus my Savior, King, and Lord
 - c. I know God has a design for all of us/each of you and an invitation to join Him and trust Him with everything.
3. During the exposition of Scripture this morning, there will likely be moments that most of you will be uncomfortable. That makes sense because God's intent as the Spirit guided Paul was to help us see how far from God we are when we believe The Lie. There's a lot here and we are going to get dropped off at a fairly difficult place. So I'd just ask that you hear the whole message this morning, place it in the context of last week, and give me next week before making any premature conclusions.

B. Chart

II. Respected self-determination

A. The exchange: review

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:24-25)

1. Humanity (including you and I) turned away from the truth that God gave us and went toward our own gods and sinful ways.
2. God's response was to grant them freedom to proceed with that exchange.
3. God confirms people in their decisions they have made and turns them over to the consequences of these decisions—but He does not give up on them and He pursues them.
4. *The basic sin resulting from The Lie is idolatry. They denied God as Creator, even to the extent that He didn't exist, and they worshiped whatever they wanted to.

B. Example: when people in a culture flee from God to go their own way, when they deny Him as Creator and as their ultimate good

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

natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

1. If there is no Creator, then there is no intended design, so do what you want.
*Homosexual behavior is an example of what results from rejecting God and the truth, replacing it with The Lie.
2. How does this happen?
 - a. "For this reason ..." = believing The Lie, fleeing from God and worshiping the creation rather than the Creator
 - b. "God gave them over ..." = judicial sense to this, they were handed over to the custody of their gods and their desires. God did not force them to worship Him.
3. Natural for the unnatural
 - a. Genesis 1 & 2 = God's (the Creator's) design and purpose for man and woman, specifically regarding sexual intimacy
The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:20-24)
 - b. "Contrary to nature"
 - 1) Para phusis
 - 2) The way God intended, by virtue of His design, for human sexuality to operate, i.e. "natural". *Desire does not determine design - in any context. Only in the case of being the Creator does desire mean something actionable
 - 3) Same gender, sexually intimate relationships are, from the Creators perspective, clearly an unnatural use of our bodies.
 - c. *The presence of this behavior is **one** sign that the culture as a whole has been worshiping idols and that God-given order is being fractured as a result.

C. Signs of the exchange

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (Romans 1:28-31)

*Did not change direction, would not acknowledge God, so God honored their decision.

1. "Filled with all" – what they contain, thus what comes out
 - a. Unrighteousness: man's vain attempts to be good; self over God
 - b. Evil: perverting of virtue and moral principles to evil ends

- c. Covetousness: desire for something at any cost; excessive desire for more and more (often wealth)
 - d. Malice: hateful toward others; ill will; intention to do evil
- 2. "Full of" – the extent with which they are filled
 - a. Envy: spite and resentment towards success or possessions of another
 - b. Murder
 - c. Strife: bitter conflict; heated, often violent discussion
 - d. Deceit: skilled in deception; passive-aggressive
 - e. Maliciousness: desire to see others suffer
- 3. "They are" – that which characterizes them
 - a. Gossips: sharing secrets about others in order to manipulate; without the ability to defend
 - b. Slanderers: Attack on another; like gossip but in front of the person
 - c. Haters of God: hate but also exclude God from their thinking
 - d. Insolent: disrespectful acts, statements, outrageously forward or bold; superior to others and cruel
 - e. Haughty: unwarranted importance from overbearing pride; others do wrong but not me
 - f. Boastful: self-absorbed conceit with one's own superiority; achievements are their own doing
 - g. Inverters of evil
 - h. Disobedient to parents: the ones who nurture and raise in righteousness: teach, train, mold, love, support, encourage; also, the environment that parents set to nurture obedience or nurture disobedience
 - i. Foolish: lack of being able to understand the importance of something
 - j. Faithless: outside the covenant; often double dealing; untrustworthy
 - k. Heartless: lacking affection, especially natural toward family; extended to the family of God
 - l. Ruthless: having no mercy or not showing mercy
- D. Depth of depravity/distance from God

Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:32)

 - 1. We are imprinted with an understanding that running from God, believing and perpetuating The Lie results in death
 - 2. Approval of sinful behavior reveals the extent to which people have become outright rebels against God's righteous Kingdom
 - 3. *We have created an antagonistic, unfriendly kingdom of our own, and one of these two kingdoms must fall.
- III. What do I do with this?
 - A. Fallen views make sense in a world with no divine reference.
 - 1. To those called into the light, the unnatural becomes clearer.
 - 2. God allows the denial of His existence to play out to its natural consequence.

3. *The question Paul is answering is this, "What sort of conclusions flow logically and inevitably from a worldview in which all of nature is disassociated from its Creator?"
- B. Why begin with homosexuality?
1. Clear example and connection when we reject the Creator—not worse or culmination of all the other examples. *When this example is elevated above the other examples, it is most often to alleviate our own guilt.
 2. The Creator designed male and female with a specific design and function. Any other use is unnatural.
 3. To this example, the moral Jews and moral pagans would say, "Amen! Preach it Paul! These people are immoral and guilty of sin."
 4. Then, Paul directed by the Holy Spirit, says, "Hold on a minute. I'm not finished."
 - a. Paul then communicates the rest of the behaviors that are signs of an idolatrous, God-denying people.
 - b. Thus, a new question for those who point fingers, "If these are the outworking of a God-denying worldview, and their existence is a sign of God's judgment, then how do I account for those things in my life in spite of my claim to know God?"
- C. This is what God wants every person reading this letter to consider. Reading Romans 1 is, by design, troubling and jarring for every one of us.
1. Those who acknowledge God regularly live like those who refuse to acknowledge God.
 2. If reading Romans 1 leaves you feeling anything short of uncomfortable, humbled, and convicted, then you are in desperate need of mercy and you are likely not reading it correctly.
 3. *Romans 1 is a mirror, not a window. We see ourselves first, not others.
- D. Posture: respectful fear and gratitude for mercy personally and toward others
1. *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. (Romans 2:1)*
 2. This is a hard place to stop but it is an important place to stop and listen, not collaborate.
 3. Remember that the thought here and the goodness of God that He reveals are not complete yet. We will cover that next week. For now, I believe that the Holy Spirit will faithfully help you wrestle with what you need to do in light of this text. It is at this dark juncture that God chose and Jesus obeyed so that we could have forgiveness and life. Do I respond in humble gratitude or defiant anger?
- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*