

STUDY NOTES

A LETTER TO THE ROMANS
at NEW CITY CHURCH
www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “God’s Wrath” on 2/12/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 1:18-25

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

The Good News—the Gospel—reveals God’s righteousness to us. It is through faith that we receive the righteousness of God. God is characterized by righteousness, God is just; when we don’t acknowledge justice and goodness we mock God. God’s wrath is his divine displeasure with sin. If God responded to wickedness with no more than a benign tolerance, his righteousness could be called into question.

Divine wrath is not the same as human wrath.

- *How is God’s wrath different from human wrath? Why is it important to understand the difference?*
- *If God just looked over sin, how would that make you feel about his nature?*

REVEALING GOD

In verses 19-21, Paul talks about how the unrighteous can see God’s power and his nature in the things that he made. Although the created order cannot force a person to believe, it does leave the recipient responsible for not believing. The text says that people are without a defense for their unwillingness to believe.

- *What divine attributes do you personally see in creation?*

HUMAN ACTIONS AND DIVINE RESPONSES

Human Action: 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man** and birds and animals and creep-*ing* things.

Psalm 106:20 They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

- *It is easy to see the foolishness of worshiping an ox that eat grass, but what do we worship instead of an ox?*
- *Why is it more difficult for us to see the foolishness of what we worship rather than seeing the foolishness of what others worship?*

God’s Response: 24 Therefore God **gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!

Psalm 81:11 “But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. 12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.

God’s wrath here is not an active outpouring of divine displeasure but the removal of restraint that allows sinners to reap the just fruits of their rebellion. - *New American Commentary*

Sin inevitably creates its own penalty.

- *How does this definition of God’s wrath differ from how you usually think of God’s wrath?*
- *How have you seen sin left unrestrained in your own life create its own penalty?*

Human Action: God’s wrath is letting you do everything you want to you to do and act on your every thought. And what do we want? **Lust** - to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong.

God’s Response: Romans 5:6 - For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, **Christ died for us.** 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

- *How is the way that God deals with our sin and his wrath so counter-intuitive?*
- *What should our response be to God and to our neighbor?*