

DISCUSSION GUIDE: ROMANS 1:26-32

February 26, 2017

Introduction:

In Romans 1:26-32, Paul continues his explanation of why God is just in pouring out his wrath on humanity. All mankind has suppressed the truth and traded in God for idols. In this text, he zeroes in particularly on the sin of homosexuality as a poignant example of man's rejection of God. Clearly, this is a controversial issue. But, the Bible is clear that homosexuality is a sin and contrary to nature. As Christians, we need to be equipped to speak biblically, clearly, and compassionately to a lost world that is massively confused about this topic.

1. A major part of Paul's logic is the obvious complimentary design of men and women that we see in nature. Just as the male and female body compliment one another anatomically, men and women are to compliment one another spiritually.

—Take some time to read Genesis 2:18-24 and Ephesians 5:21-33. Beyond just anatomically, how are men and women to relate to one another?

—How does the relationship between a husband and wife point to the relationship between Christ and his bride, the Church?

2. In Matthew 19:1-12, Jesus speaks about marriage as between one man and one women. Any expression of sexuality outside of this marital union (adultery, fornication, homosexuality) is sin. The only other biblical option is celibacy which is exemplified in this text by eunuchs. Later, in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul refers to celibacy as a gift that God gives to some so that they may be able to devote their lives to God.

—Consider how our culture (even in Christians circles) is prone to make an idol out of sexuality. We act as if sexual expression is the height of human experience. Yet, Jesus was the most fulfilled human who ever lived and he never had sex. Discuss this issue.

—Discuss singleness. The Bible presents it as calling for some. How can the church encourage and support single people in a more biblical way? (Encourage the group not to think in terms of starting a singles ministry, but rather in esteeming a person in their singleness, not as an incomplete person until they get married).

—How can making an idol out of sexual expression and marriage undercut the church's ability to minister to same-sex attracted Christians who are striving to take God's side against their sin and live a celibate and godly life?

3. We live in a world and culture that considers the biblical view of marriage and sexuality as a hate crime. Increasingly, a Christian world view is mocked and scorned.

—Read 1 Peter 2:9-11. How does this text instruct us to live in our current cultural climate?

—Some Christians are prone to get very pessimistic about the state of our society. Certainly it should burden us. But we must remember that God is sovereign, and nothing happens apart from his sovereign plan. Read Jesus' promise about the Church in Matthew 16:13-20 and take time to encourage one another in the final and full victory of Christ and his people.