

3. Learning How Man Defiled His Spirit

In our last topic, we saw that Paul said that we want to show our physical and spiritual children that we are a debtor to share the Gospel, because of the fact that Christ has shown His love to us by choosing us to be His children. This great privilege to be chosen by Christ gives us the opportunity to be a love slave for Christ and show His love to others as we share the message of the Gospel. The world around us greatly needs that message because we are going to see in this topic and the following topics that all mankind is defiled by sin. In this topic, we will see how every person defiles his or her human spirit.

Romans 1:18-19 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.” The word that is translated “wrath” in this verse speaks about the anger of God against sin. That anger is shown in several different ways. The greatest example of the wrath of God is given in Romans 5:9 where we read, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Here, we see that all of us who have placed our faith in Christ have been saved from the wrath of God by the payment that Christ made for sin with His blood.

God chose to send Christ to pay for sin so that all those who repent of their sin and place their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ will have their sins forgiven because Christ experienced the anger of God against sin on the cross for us. God sent Christ to make that payment for us because God has a great anger against sin but He loves the sinner. By sending Christ to make the payment for sin, God can be both holy and just. He is holy so sin must be judged. He is just because He is satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and in our place. Here, in Romans one, though, we see a different way that God shows His anger against sin. In this chapter, we see that God shows His anger against sin by allowing mankind the freedom to let people see the consequences of their sins by giving them the freedom to violate every part of their human spirit.

God continues to reveal this form of wrath against sin by allowing mankind to continue to rebel and sin against Him. Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” As a result, mankind continues to practice ungodliness by showing no reverence for God. Mankind does this by suppressing the truth and practicing every form of sin and unrighteousness. God has chosen to place certain things within every person so that we can know that God exists and is concerned about each one of us in our lives.

Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Here, we see that every person from the time of the creation of the world has at least two ways they could know that God exists. Although these two things are not visible, they can be clearly understood by looking at God’s creation. First, by looking at the things that God has created, every person can know the eternal power of God. God showed His power when He created the universe. He continues to show His eternal power by causing the universe to function

without destroying itself.

Second, by looking at the things that God has created, every person can recognize the Godhead. Paul told the people of Lystra in Acts 14:16-17, “Who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” Even though the nations have walked in their sinful ways, God continues to show His divine nature by doing good and providing the sun needed to produce crops that supply us with food and gladness. As a result, all people are without excuse because God is continually revealing Himself to all of us.

God has put in our human spirit five ways that we can know about God. First, as we have seen in the previous verses. He has given us natural light. We can know that God exists from His creation. However, most people choose to ignore the natural light that causes us to know that God exists. We will see in the following verses that mankind has also chosen to reject the other ways that our human spirit can know God. In addition to natural light, God also gave us a conscience, wisdom, sensitivity and creativity. Notice how the following verses show that mankind has also violated every other part of our human spirit.

Second, we have rejected our conscience. Romans 1:21 says, “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” God placed a conscience within every human spirit so that we can know right and wrong. Instead of being thankful and giving glory to God for this conscience, God said that people become futile in their thoughts. The word that is translated “futile” means *empty, vain or foolish in their thoughts*. In 1 Timothy 4:2 we read, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” As people begin to think empty, foolish thoughts, they reject their conscience until their sins no longer bother them.

Third, we have rejected the wisdom of God by turning from godly wisdom to worldly wisdom. Romans 1:22 says, “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” A fool is defined in Psalm 14:1 as one who says that there is no God. James 3:14-17 shows the difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom when those verses say, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” The choice to turn from godly wisdom to worldly wisdom is the reason why people experience much confusion and many conflicts in their lives.

Fourth, we have replaced the sensitivity to God with sensitivity to self. Romans 1:23 says, “And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” Instead of worshiping God any longer, mankind began to worship images of people, birds, animals and creeping things. Here, we see that when people reject the glory of God, they begin to create idols or other things that they begin to worship

instead of the Creator. We want to help our children understand that the reason that people have created various things to worship is due to the fact that their human spirit feels the need to worship something. When the Creator is rejected, this causes people to substitute some other object to worship.

Instead of remembering that we are created in the image of God, such individuals try to create a new god in their own image. This leads these people to develop a false religion that pleases them. Paul explained this to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 where we read, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” Here, we see people look for false teaching that will let them continue to practice their own desires.

Fifth, we have replaced the creativity that God gave us to worship Him and serve others with creativity that is self-centered, because it is now used to try and get our own needs met. Romans 1:24-25 says, “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Because of the rebellion of mankind against God, we see that God gave mankind up to uncleanness.

The word that is translated “uncleanness” is used to speak of sinful lusts that drive a person to commit sinful actions. Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Here, we see the actions a person commits when their spirit is controlled by uncleanness.

When a person is controlled by uncleanness, that person will follow his or her own lusts. They will bring shame on themselves by the way that they mistreat their bodies. Here, we see that instead of using their creativity to serve the Lord, they use their creativity to think up new ways to sin and dishonor their bodies. They worship and serve themselves and their own evil desires. As a result, we see that because mankind turned away from God, the lives of people became filled with evil.

We want to help our children understand how people became so sinful in order that they understand the necessity of praying for people so that God will work in their hearts to turn them from sin and turn them back to God. We want to help our children realize that God will work in the hearts of others as we continually pray for them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how mankind defiled his spirit.