

Gospel Centered Living: A Study of the Book of Romans
Downward Spiral vs. Upward Spiral
Romans 1:18-25
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As we trust Jesus Christ for our salvation, we recognize there is tremendous power in centering our lives in His gospel which is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans will teach us our need for this transforming power and how to access it by grace for the challenges we face. This study will show us how to be right with God, ourselves, and others. The great reformer, Martin Luther shares: "Romans is a feast for one's soul." Jack Kuhatschek adds, "If a person understands it, he has a sure road opened for him to the understanding of the whole Scripture." We are going to have some sweet Bible times at church and at our small groups this season. But watch out! Those who study Romans are rarely the same afterward. As you study Paul's letter, may you be challenged by the new life and the new lifestyle we have in Christ! Enjoying the Journey, Pastor John

The Passage:

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

Big Idea: Our relationship to Jesus Christ and His truth, will determine whether our lives are spiritually in an upward or downward spiral. Our response to His truth is the key to our growth.

I. _____ the truth produces a downward spiral.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

Trench comments, "a wrath of God who would not love good unless He hated evil, the two being inseparable, that He must do both or neither."

Vincent describes "wrath as God's personal emotion with regard to sin. It represents God's abhorrence and hatred of sin."

Reflective Question: Study the wrath of God. 3 types:

1. Natural/consequential wrath- see Galatians 6:7-9.

2. God's personal intervention wrath- Genesis 6- flood, Genesis 19-Sodom and Gomorrah, Acts 5 Ananias and Saphira.

3. wrath of abandonment- Psalm 81:11-12, Romans 1:24 & 26. See more verses on wrath: Romans 2:5, 3:5, 5:9, Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 3:6, I Thessalonians 1:10, Romans 12:19. Why must God punish sin? Consider how Jesus experienced God's wrath for believers on the cross for our sins? (See I Peter 3:18, Galatians 3:13).

"Whatever is not under heaven and not under the Gospel is under this wrath." Bengel

Without Jesus Christ, I have no protection from God's wrath.

1Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

“We will never come to grips with the importance of the Gospel, or be motivated that we should proclaim it, until this sad truth has been fully integrated into our worldview.” Douglas Moo

- **godlessness**- refers to the sins of a religious nature. (first four commandments in Exodus 20)
- **wickedness**- speaks of sins of a moral nature. (second six commandments in Exodus 20)

A. God's truth has been _____ to everyone.

Romans 1:19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. (Psalm 19:1-4)

B. Man is _____ to God for suppressing His truth.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (See Romans 3:9)

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. (14:12)

II. Beachball theology (rejecting the truth) has _____.

Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

A. Life becomes _____ . 1:21

Psalms 94:11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are futile.

a. Life becomes _____ . 1:21

Ephesians 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

b. God shows us our _____ . 1:22

Romans 1:22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

c. God gives us over to our _____ desires. 1:24

Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

Only Jesus Christ can deliver me from the downward spiral.

B. _____ Jesus Christ as the truth puts me in an upward spiral.

Romans 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

a. Ask God to _____ His truth. (John 14:6)

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

b. _____ this truth in the deepest part of your soul.

Psalm 51:6 Surely you desire **truth** in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. 2 Thessalonians 2:15

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

c. Serve the _____ more than _____ things. 1:25

Romans 1:25b and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 16:13a But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

John 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

John 8:32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

My response to God's truth will determine my spiritual spiral.