

# KINGDOM.

# LESSON 4

<b>1</b>	<b>PRAYER</b>
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*Group leader. Pray* for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about preaching God's kingdom to the Lord.

<b>2</b>	<b>SHARING</b> (20 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[QUIET TIMES]</b> <b>EXODUS 18, 20, 32, 33</b></span>
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*Take turns and share (or read* from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet time with God out of the assigned Bible passages (Exodus chapters 18, 20, 32, 33). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

<b>3</b>	<b>MEMORISATION</b> (5 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[THE KINGDOM OF GOD]</b> <b>(4) LUKE 9:62</b></span>
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*Review* two by two.

**(4) Never look back from serving in the kingdom. Luke 9:62.** No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

<b>4</b>	<b>BIBLE STUDY</b> (85 minutes) <span style="float: right;"><b>[THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS]</b> <b>ROMANS 1:18-32</b></span>
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*Introduce.* Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study **Romans 1:18-32** together.

In Romans 1:1-17 Paul introduced the gospel. The gospel is God's powerful means to save people. It is God's Good news that he imputes (reckons, ascribes) the righteousness of Christ to everyone who believes in Christ'.

In Romans 1:18-32, Paul's purpose is to prove the doctrine that "righteousness is (imputed) by faith only and not by (religious or good) works of the law." To do this it was necessary to first show that no person possesses the required righteousness God demands (that would save him). And because all people are without any righteousness of their own, they are exposed to God's condemnation and doom. He does this in reference to the Gentiles in Romans 1:18-32 and in reference to the Jews in Romans 2:1 to 3:8.

<b>STEP 1. READ.</b>	<b>GOD'S WORD</b>
LET US READ Romans 1:18-32 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

<b>STEP 2. DISCOVER.</b>	<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

## **1:18-23**

### **Discovery 1. The consequences of a godless character.**

God is holy and righteous in his divine being, character and behaviour. Therefore God is completely just and fair when he condemns people who are unholy in character and unrighteous in behaviour. A person that can be charged for being godless or wicked is therefore justly exposed to God's righteous indignation. He cannot claim God's love and favour on the ground of his human descent, his own character or religious affiliation and behaviour!

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul first proves that the Gentiles are completely unrighteous. In fact, they are godless and wicked (Romans 1:18). Therefore, if non-Christians want to be saved, they would need the righteousness of the God of the Bible. Without God's righteousness, people would certainly perish! In Romans 1:18-23 Paul describes the *godless character* of the Gentiles and in Romans 1:24-32 he describes their *wicked behaviour*.

God has revealed his divine being, character and powerful conduct very clearly through his works in creation. The Gentiles have always been able to know enough of God's divine existence, character and deeds. They have always been able to know that there is a divine being and that he is very powerful. Therefore the godless character and wicked behaviour of the Gentiles is completely inexcusable (Romans 1:19-20)!

Although the Gentiles have an opportunity to know God, they do not worship or serve God. Instead they not only *suppress the truth* about the living God (Romans 1:18), but also *exchange the truth* about the living God for their own invented lies (philosophical, religious and so-called scientific lies)(Romans 1:25)! As a result, they give themselves up to all forms of idolatry ("Idolatry" is to worship another "god" than the God of the Bible)! The uneducated Gentiles make idols of stone. They exchange the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and animals (Romans 1:21-23). But the educated Gentiles invent "their own idea of god, their own religion and their own religious book". They create "a god" in their own (sinful) likeness, because then they can worship their god without the need to change their godless character or wicked behaviour!<sup>1</sup> However, if anyone desires to worship the living God, the God of the Bible, then his nature, character and behaviour must change! Then he must be transformed! Then he must be born again! Jesus says, "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:7)!

The consequences of a godless character are terrible! Everything they think with their minds becomes futile, absolutely useless in God's eyes. And everything that comes out of their hearts is only darkness (Romans 1:21). "Every inclination of the thoughts of their heart is only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5). "Out of their heart come only evil thoughts" (Matthew 15:19). The Gentiles show that in their inner being and in their religion they have become darkened and are not able to worship the holy and righteous God of the Bible and are also no able to do what is right in the eyes of the God of the Bible!

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### 1:24-32

#### **Discovery 2. The consequences of a wicked behaviour.**

Paul describes the wicked behaviour of the Gentiles and its terrible consequences. The Gentiles do not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, which they receive either out of God's works in creation or out of God's moral laws that are written on their hearts (Romans 1:19-20,28; 2:14-15). They not only continue to *do* every kind of wickedness themselves, but also *approve* every kind of wickedness that is done by others (Romans 1:32).

The consequences of a wicked behaviour are terrible! God gives the wicked people over to their own wickedness! They reap exactly what they sow (Galatians 6:7)! They foster sinful desires like pornography and commit all kinds of sexual immoral acts. So God *gives them over* to a life of shameful pornography and degrading sexual immorality (Romans 1:24). He gives them over to shameful and ungovernable lusts (Romans 1:26) and to a depraved mind (Romans 1:28). God *abandons* people that invent, do or promote wickedness to a life of continued wickedness. They sink further and further into depravity and crimes and especially into sexual immorality. The evidence of such moral corruption is the vast sexual promiscuity, gross homosexuality and consequent terrible sexual diseases among both men and women (Romans 1:26-27). The Gentiles prove that they are completely unrighteous by doing every kind of wickedness in the world (Romans 1:29-31). *In their outward behaviour*, the Gentiles have demonstrated their terrible depravity and have lost the ability to do anything that is righteous!

#### **STEP 3. QUESTION.**

#### **EXPLANATIONS**

**Consider.** WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 1:18-32 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

**Record.** Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

**Share.** (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

**Discuss.** (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

### 1:18

#### **Question 1. Why is God angry with people?**

**Notes.** God is not only a *loving* God, but also a *holy and righteous* God!

##### **(1) God's wrath is an expression of his holy and righteous nature.**

The punitive justice of God is an essential attribute of God's divine nature. God's holy righteousness renders the punishment of sin necessary. If God did not judge and punish, he would not be holy and righteous! God's holy

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a terrorist devises a god who demands "holy wars". A sexual immoral person believes that his god keeps several goddesses himself or officially condones polygamy. A godless person has a god who gives revelations that condones his wicked life. Thus, he receives a revelation to illegally take a woman, to declare sick people healed, to promise revival, to declare him self to be a spiritual leader (prophet, apostle, bishop), etc. Psalm 115:8 says, "Those who make idols or who trust in idols become like their idol!"

righteousness is also the foundation of man's need of a vicarious atonement to pardon his sins. This principle is the basis of Paul's explanation of *the doctrine of justification*. "God's wrath" is God's righteous and holy anger against the sin of people and his righteous determination to punish sin. God's wrath is revealed *from heaven*, because that is where God dwells. God's wrath is *revealed* or manifested by the actual punishment of sin in many ways. For example, God punished sin through the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra and the ten plagues in Egypt (cf. Ezekiel 14:21).

**(2) God's wrath is an expression of his just and fair punishment.**

"Godlessness" means a wrong or inappropriate attitude towards the God of the Bible. "Wickedness" means a wrong or inappropriate attitude towards other people. God's wrath is against people who *suppress* (push away, reject) the truth and who *exchange* the truth (for lies)! "The truth" is whatever is right, holy and true, not in our human eyes, but in God's divine eyes. The truth is especially the religious and moral truth that God has revealed in the Bible (John 3:21; 8:32; 17:17; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:12). God's truth in the Bible reveals the only true religion in the world and the only true morality in the world! People repress or hinder God's truth by means of their wickedness.

How do people suppress the truth? Although they have enough knowledge or awareness that God is a holy, righteous and a powerful God (Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-15), they lack reverence for God himself and for God's laws, which regulate people's lives in relationship to God and other people. They know the truth, but push it away from their thoughts, consciousness and practical life. Therefore, God punishes people for their lack of reverence for him and his laws.

How do people exchange the truth? They not only push God's truth out of their lives, but also replace God's truth with their own devised (philosophic, religious or scientific) lies. They replace the living God with a "god" they themselves devised or made. Teachers of non-Christian religions and cults exchange the teachings of the Bible with their warped man-made teachings and produce their own "Holy Book". God will certainly punish people who believe in all kinds of false religions and practise their lies. The non-Christian religions are NOT the truth, because they suppress the truth of the Bible and exchange it for their lies!

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**1:19-20**

**Question 2. How does God reveal himself to the non-Jews (Gentiles)?**

*Notes.*

**(1) All people have received from God a general revelation.**

The God of the Bible has never left himself without a witness among his rational creatures on earth. He has given sufficient light about who he is and what he demands of his creatures through his works in creation (Romans 1:19-20) and through his moral laws written on the heart of people (Romans 2:14-15). God created all people with the ability to have some knowledge of God. Paul does not say that everything that may be known about God was revealed to the Gentiles. He simply says that the Gentiles have sufficient knowledge of the God of the Bible to render their godlessness and wickedness inexcusable! It is not just knowledge that God exists (that there is a God), but knowledge of God's nature and attributes, like his eternal power, divinity (Romans 1:20) and justice (Romans 1:32). According to other passages in the Bible, the Gentiles have knowledge of God's invisible qualities, like his goodness, wisdom, power and majesty expressed in his works (Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Isaiah 40:21-26; Acts 14:17; 17:24-27).

This knowledge concerning God was made plain *to* them or better, was made plain in (Greek: en) them (Romans 1:19). It is a revelation in their minds and in their hearts. God created them in his image so that their human being is evidence enough that God exists and that his attributes are perfect. Man is able to see God's manifestations in his creation with their human spirit. God has never left himself without a witness. His existence and perfect characteristics have always been so clear, that his rational creatures are bound to acknowledge and worship him as the True and Only God! That is why God's rational creatures are not merely material beings, but also spiritual and moral beings. As rational and moral beings, people have no excuse for their godlessness and wickedness (Romans 3:19-20).

However, this knowledge concerning God was suppressed and exchanged (Romans 1:18,25). Although all human beings have the ability to know that God exists and know his character in part, they "neither glorify nor give thanks" to God (Romans 1:21). This is inexcusable, because people do not act in accordance with their knowledge of the truth! Instead, they deliberately and wickedly suppress and exchange the truth.

Their sin against God (especially their idolatry) is not the result of their *ignorance*, but the fruit of their *voluntary depraved godlessness*! They know what is right towards God (Romans 1:32), but nevertheless do what is wrong towards God. They do not worship the living God of the Bible as their God and they do not acknowledge him as the Source of their life and blessings.

Likewise all the forms of their sins against people (including their sexual immorality in all its depraved manifestations) are not the result of their *ignorance or so-called inherent human nature*<sup>2</sup>, but the fruit of their *voluntary depraved*

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<sup>2</sup> All people have a *sinful nature* after the fall into sin and are prone to do evil. All Christians have a *new nature* after their rebirth (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christians are called to let sin no longer reign in their mortal bodies so that they obey its evil desires (Romans 6:11-14; Romans 8:11-14). The only unforgivable sin is to regard God as the opponent (Satan) (Matthew 12:31-32) and to continue to sin (present continuous tense) (1 John 3:6-8; 5:16-18).

wickedness. They know what is right in God's eyes (Romans 1:32), but nevertheless do what is wrong towards their neighbour. They do every kind of wickedness towards one another (Romans 1:29-31).

Even the most reprobate sinner knows within himself that he is guilty of suppressing the truth or exchanging the truth for a lie. He knows that he is justly exposed to the wrath of God. Romans 1:32 says that although people *know* God's righteous decree, that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very evil things but also approve of those who practice them. The conscience of man can never be entirely silenced!

**(2) All people need a special revelation of God.**

Although the revelation of God in his created works is sufficient to render people inexcusable with respect to God's judgement, it does not follow that this general revelation is sufficient to lead them to *salvation*. In order to be saved, people need more than a general revelation of God. They need a special revelation of God. The natural religious wisdom and feelings of people can never save them! The experience of the people of the whole world, under all the variety of circumstances in which they have existed, proves that the knowledge of God that they derived from God's works in nature and from God's moral laws on their heart has NOT led them to believe in Jesus Christ. The knowledge, which the Gentiles have about God in his created works, within their hearts as well as through their obscure traditions, does not lead them to the living God of the Bible. It also does not lead them to God's required righteousness and holiness. In order to be saved, the people in the world need a special revelation of God (Romans 1:21-23). That special revelation is given in the gospel (Romans 1:17; 3:21).

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**1:21-25**

**Question 3. Why does God give people over to their sinful desires and to a degenerate way of life?**

*Notes.*

**(1) God has established a definite relationship between religion and morality.**

Godlessness leads to wickedness. Religious error (spiritual corruption) leads to moral depravity. People, who do not want to acknowledge what the living God of the Bible has revealed about himself, will become more and more corrupt in their knowledge of God. The less a person relates to the God of the Bible, the more immoral and depraved he becomes in his mind and behaviour. For example, when a person does not thank or glorify God, he becomes a fool in his (rational, spiritual and scientific) thinking.

When a person believes in a false god or false (unbiblical) religious doctrines, he begins to live a sexual immoral life. The opposite is also true. When a person is living in sexual immorality, you may assume that he probably believes in false religious doctrines. He either does not believe in the God who revealed himself in the Bible, but believes in a false god (from another religion) or in himself as god. God has established an inseparable link between godlessness and sexual immorality!

Luckily, the opposite is also true. A person who repents and turns away from sexual immorality will again cherish the truth in the Bible. A person who walks with the living God of the Bible will hold on to the truths of the Bible and maintain a pure morality!

**(2) God often punishes human sin by giving the sinner over to more sin.**

That God rightly abandons a person who persists in doing sin, is consistent with God's holiness and with man's immoral action. God does not entice or impel people to do evil or to continue doing sin (James 1:13). He abandons people to their own evil. When God *gives people over* to degrading sexual impurity and shameful indecent acts among one another (1:24,26), he simply ceases to restrain their evil actions. When God gives people over to a depraved mind that can only invent every kind of wickedness (Romans 1:28-31), *he simply abandons them to their own sins*. God allows them to reap what they themselves have sown (Galatians 6:7). And when this kind of godlessness and wickedness persists, God not only *withholds his mercy and grace from them*, but *actually punishes their continual hardening of themselves* by their unbelief and disobedience with permanent hardening (cf. Romans 1:18,24-28; 9:18; 11:7-10; Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:11-15).

**(3) God shows great patience with the godless and wicked people on earth.**

God shows great patience before he gives someone over to his sinful desires and to a degrading way of life. For example, before Cain murdered his brother, God dealt tenderly with Cain. He invited Cain to do what is right. Then God would accept him (Genesis 4:6-7).

Before the flood, God waited patiently for a long time in the hope that the wicked people on earth would repent and not perish (Genesis 6:5; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:9).

God gave Jezebel, who promoted idolatry and sexual immorality in the church of Thyatira, time to repent from her spiritual and sexual immorality. But because she and her partners were unwilling, God brought intense suffering to them (Revelation 2:20-22).

**(4) God brings present judgements on people on earth  
in order to save them from eternal judgement in hell.**

God's present judgements in this life precede God's final judgement at the end of this world. God's present judgements consist of allowing certain judgements when people transgress the spiritual and moral laws which he built into creation. They reap what they sow (Galatians 6:7-8). Like the law of gravity in physics, so a person who sows laziness will reap poverty. A man who sows hatred will reap broken relationships. A man who sows tyranny will reap wars. A man who sows drugs reaps addiction.

God's present judgements also consist of bringing certain judgements when people persist in turning their backs to the God of the Bible. God withdraws his care and his protection from them and brings his present temporary judgements on them. For example, their harvests fail, wars tear their country apart, their people suffer great losses and there is no more satisfaction in anything on earth, etc. (Leviticus 26:14-25; Amos 4:6-12; Haggai 1:3-11; Matthew 24:4-14; Revelation 9:20-21; 16:9). God uses all kinds of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, draughts, hunger and epidemics throughout the history of man on earth to show to mankind that he is displeased with their sins and to warn them to repent and turn back to him (Ezekiel 14:21).

God brings his present temporal judgements on people in order to safeguard them from his future eternal judgement (damnation)! "When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:32). The purpose of God's present judgements is to discipline people, that is, to warn people, to expose their sins, to make them aware of their sins, to rebuke them for their sins and to call them to repentance.

God's goal is to do what is best for people NOW. "When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong" (Ecclesiastes 8:11; cf. Deuteronomy 13:11; Psalm 119:126; Isaiah 26:9; Amos 4:6-12; Haggai 1:5-11). God sounds his trumpets of judgement as a warning to repent (Revelation 9:20-21).

If God would simply tolerate their godlessness and wickedness to continue unchallenged, they would ultimately become slaves to their sins and God would consequently have to punish them with eternal death (hell) (Revelation 21:8). The purpose of God's present judgements is to cause people to turn from their godlessness and wickedness and instead share in God's holiness and righteousness (Hebrews 12:4-13). God punishes in order to heal (Isaiah 19:22). However, if God's patience is not answered by repentance, then in righteous and holy indignation God will finally abandon them to a condition in which they remain eternally separated from God's loving presence and care (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

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**1:26-27**

**Question 4. How does the Bible view homosexuality?**

*Notes.*

**(1) The marriage relationship.**

According to the plain teaching of the Bible, sexual intercourse was intended between a man and a woman within a marriage relationship and in no other relationship (Genesis 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; Hebrews 13:4)! Such sexual love between a man and his wife is beautiful and pleasing to God (Proverbs 5:15-21). The male and female body is designed and created by God and the marriage relationship as a relationship between one man and one woman is God's idea, ordination and blessing from the beginning and has never been an invention of man or any society of man (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31).

Illegal sexual relationships as prostitution, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, polygamy or polyandry and adultery are never approved in the Bible and are never regarded as "a marriage relationship". On the contrary, the Bible rejects these illegal forms of sex and threatens transgressors with serious consequences (Leviticus 18:6,20,22,23; Leviticus 20:10,13,15,19; Revelation 21:8). When a man and a woman marry, they acknowledge that it is God (and not one or another social institution) who unites them together for life (Matthew 19:6). They make a covenant with God and one another to be faithful to one another (Malachi 2:14-15). God requires that all people in all cultures and at all times in history must honour the biblical marriage relationship and must give sex a place only inside this biblical marriage relationship. "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer<sup>3</sup> and all the sexual immoral"<sup>4</sup> (Hebrews 13:4).

**(2) The homosexual relationship.**

The Bible does not make a statement about a person's sexual orientation or natural inclination or sexual feelings, whether it is heterosexual or homosexual. But the Bible does speak out about how a person gives expression to his sexual orientation, inclination and feelings.

The education by parents and what happens in society has great influence on the sexual development of men and women and their acceptance of being a man or a woman. The Bible does not explain the various possible causes why some people believe that they are homosexual or lesbian. But the Bible clearly teaches what a person may do or not do with his sexuality, irrespective of his orientation or inclination!

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<sup>3</sup> Greek: pornous, people who commit all forms of illicit sex (also outside biblical marriage)

<sup>4</sup> Greek: moichous, people who trespass the rules within biblical marriage

God created sex between one man and one woman in order that the man and the woman:

- stay bound to one another as a unity for life (Genesis 2:24)
- enjoy the sexual relationship (Song of Songs)
- reproduce the human race (Genesis 1:28).

But God forbids every kind of sexual relationship other than the sexual relationship between the husband and his wife inside the marriage relationship. All other kinds of sexual relationships are contrary to God's intention and expressed will.

In the Old Testament, God severely condemns sexual sins like incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality (Leviticus 18:6,20, 22,23; 20:10,13,15,17), promiscuity, infidelity, rape, prostitution (Deuteronomy 22:20-30; 23:17; 27:21) and paedophilia. Expressions of "sexual or erotic love" (Greek: *erós*) outside the will of God is NOT "Christian love" (Greek: *agapé*) and may not be regarded as "love". People who indulge in these expressions of sexual love will have to bear the consequences of their depravity and detestable practices (cf. Ezekiel 16:15-58). God will punish these expressions of sexual love (cf. Hosea 2:13; 4:12-14; 8:9).

In the New Testament, God severely condemns sexual offenders like people who indulge in pornography, people who break up their marriages by adultery, people who pose as male prostitutes and people who commit homosexual offences (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:3-5; 1 Peter 4:3-5). God makes no statement about a person's sexual orientation, inclination or feelings, just like he makes no statement about their inclination to get angry, to tell lies, to steal, to covet or to murder (Exodus 20:12-17). All people in the world have by nature a sinful orientation, a sinful inclination and sinful feelings! All people are called not to give in to their old sinful nature or to let sin reign in their mortal body so that they obey its evil desires (Romans 6:12-14; Romans 8:11-14; James 1:13-14). With God's help all believers can resist these temptations to give in to their inclinations (1 Corinthians 10:13). What God condemns is when people give expression to their old sinful nature by lying, stealing, coveting or murdering and by actually committing the above mentioned sexual sins. People who give themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion will suffer the punishment of eternal fire (Jude 1:7; Revelation 21:8). God will destroy those, who destroy their bodies (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Christians must regard Christian marriage as "pleasing to God" and "normal in God's eyes" and these expressions of sexual love as "detestable to God" and "abnormal in God's eyes". Christians must hold on to the biblical teachings/doctrine and promote these openly from the "pulpit", but provide pastoral care to (not condemn) in private "confession" those who struggle with illicit sexual practices and not make these sexual practices a topic of public discussion!

Nevertheless, 1 Corinthians 6:11 teaches that anyone who has committed such sexual practices ("sin" as "missing God's purpose") can be saved, if he turns to Jesus Christ for forgiveness (justification) and submit himself to the work of the Holy Spirit for holy living (sanctification). God condemns homosexual practices, but those who have committed homosexual practices can be saved when they turn away from these practices to Jesus Christ. All people, regardless of their sexual orientation, inclination or feelings, must seek God's will as revealed in the Bible and do God's will!

#### **1:28-32**

#### **Question 5. How does God punish people who wilfully abandon knowledge of God and approve of people who do evil?**

*Notes.* God will give them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They will eventually be filled with every kind of wickedness and depravity. Although they know that people who do these things deserve (eternal) death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practise them.

#### **STEP 4. APPLY.**

#### **APPLICATIONS**

*Consider.* WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

*Share and record.* Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Romans 1:18-32.

*Consider.* WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

*Record.* Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

#### **1. Examples of possible applications from Romans 1:18-32.**

1:18. Never suppress the truth! The Bible teaches the truth (John 17:17).

1:19-20. Try to notice God's invisible qualities in his works in nature.

1:20. Never try to make excuses against the living God. No one can plead complete ignorance and thus innocence!

1:21. Thank God for all his blessings and glorify God in everything you are and do.

1:23,25. Never exchange the truth for a lie!

- 1:23-24. Be careful! False religion leads inevitably to immoral sexual behaviour. And sexual immorality inevitably leads to false beliefs!
- 1:24,26,28. Beware that God can give you over to your sinful habits if you do not repent from them.
- 1:27. Be warned! Homosexual offences (practices, not orientation) lead to terrible diseases.
- 1:28. It is absolutely worthwhile to retain the knowledge of the living God that you have received from the Bible.
- 1:28-29. Godlessness leads inevitably to every form of wickedness.
- 1:29-31. This is a practical list of things that God regards as sins.
- 1:32. No one can silence his conscience entirely!

## **2. Examples of personal applications from Romans 1:18-32.**

I acknowledge that when I was still a non-Christian (or unbeliever), I was godless and wicked. Also in my life, there were examples of showing no regard for God and of doing several kinds of evil things. I repented and turned to God's righteousness, only after I realised that there was no righteousness in myself, which could satisfy God's demand for righteousness. God's righteousness was given to me when I believed that Jesus Christ died for my sins and was resurrected to prove that God has accepted his sacrificial atonement of my sins!

I am very much aware that there is an unbreakable link between a person's religious belief and his moral life. Whoever is godless will begin to do wickedness. Whoever believes in a false religion, will eventually practise idolatry, murder, stealing, commit sexual immorality, lies and selfish desires. Therefore, it is very important for me to teach people the truth of the gospel, so that they may also be able to live the true moral life. I make it my aim to teach and train people in both Christian beliefs (doctrine) and Christian spiritual and moral conduct (ethics). "Doctrine" is the biblical truth that I must believe. "Ethics" is the biblical truth that I must apply.

### **STEP 5. PRAY.**

### **RESPONSE**

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Romans 1:18-32. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

**5**

**PRAYER** (8 minutes)

**[INTERCESSION]  
PRAY FOR OTHERS**

*Continue to pray* in groups of two's or three's. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

**6**

**PREPARATION** (2 minutes)

**[ASSIGNMENT]  
FOR NEXT LESSON**

*(Group leader.* Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples, build the Church and preach the kingdom.
2. **Preach, teach or study** Romans 1:18-32 with another person or group of people.
3. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of **Deuteronomy 4, 5, 6 and 7** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. **Memorisation. (5) The triumph of the kingdom: Daniel 2:44.**  
Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. **Teaching.** Prepare **the parable of "the wicked tenants"** contained in Matthew 21:33-39, Mark 12:1-12 and Luke 20:9-19. Make use of the six guidelines for interpreting parables.
6. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
7. **Update your notebook** on preaching God's kingdom. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.