

Paul's message to the Roman World: Rome and the Roman Empire

1. The state of the Rome from a Christian's perspective:

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Romans 1:21

A recent study in the U.S.

“ In total almost nine out of 10 U.S. adults (88%) have an impure, unrecognizable worldview that is a blending of ideas from multiple perspectives.”

Rather than developing an internally consistent and philosophically coherent perspective on life, Americans embrace points of view or actions that feel comfortable or seem most convenient. Those beliefs and behaviors are often inconsistent, or even contradictory, but few Americans seemed troubled by those failings.

American Worldview Inventory 2021 Release #1: America's Dominant Worldview Syncretism Dr. George Barna, Director of Research, Cultural Research Center Release Date: April 13, 2021

They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. ²⁶ That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷ And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. Romans 1:25-30

²⁴ But that does not mean we want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm. 1 Corinthians 1:24

2. The Gospel → God's position on sin and how He will deal with it

² And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. Romans 2:2

⁴ Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? ⁵ But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed Romans 2:4-5

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. Romans 3: 20-24

Freed From Sin

¹² Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires...¹⁶ Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. ¹⁷ Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. ¹⁸ Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living...²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. ²² But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God... Romans 6:12-22

And made friends of God by God's actions

⁶ When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. ¹⁰ For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. Romans 5:6-11

He does it through our faith

² I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. ³ For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. Romans 10: 2-3

¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. Romans 10:10

3. Declaring your Faith → imitating Jesus

¹³ Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires. Romans 13:13-14

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God

transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:1

⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross Philippians 2:5-8

Same thing in fewer words from Jesus

³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. Matthew 10:39

4. Encouragements from Paul

To know God better

⁶ And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ⁷ Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. ⁸ Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. Colossians 2:6-8

Ways to learn about God:

1. Reading about him (the bible)
2. Talking to him (praying, need to know about God to be able to pray to God)
3. Walking with him (knowing what he wants you to do and then doing it)

To walk with God today

¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Ephesians 2:10

²³ Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Colossians 3:23

To be prepared for the struggle

¹⁶ "Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware! For you will be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the synagogues. ¹⁸ You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me. Matthew 10:16-18

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted **mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness**, and **patience**. Make allowance for each other's faults, and **forgive** anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:12-13

We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us 2 Corinthians 1:7

³ We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation Romans 5:3-4

God gave them this light in a very dark world

Not to rule the world but to show the light of the world so that others may know too

For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6