

All Fall Short 1

We've Rejected God

Romans 1:18-32

Memory Verses: Romans 1:21

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

I've rejected God. Many times in fact. Though I was raised a Christian and knew about God at a very early age, when the world came knocking, I answered. Though I knew about God, I chose to follow my own passions and ignore his calling. I was in rebellion. In fact, **Romans 1:21-22** pinpoints exactly where I was and who I was.

We've all been there haven't we? Some of us came to Christ at an early age and rarely rebelled. Some of us were pagans until recently. Regardless, that sinful desire to reject God was there before and it remains after. The question is, will we give in to our desires or stand firm in our faith.

We live in a world that desperately wants grace without guilt, forgiveness without repentance, heaven without holiness, and Jesus without lordship. We want to be able to live like hell with no recourse for our actions. Why? Because we are missing one very important piece of the puzzle. Our sin condemns us. If we live in our sin we will die. We will fall short. Why? Because sin is rebellion to God... it is a rejection of his Lordship, and God cannot be a just and holy God and allow sin to go unpunished. There is no getting around this... **Romans 3:23** is clear, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

And so, for the next five weeks we will be looking at just how far we have fallen short of the glory of God and what that means for our us now and forever.

And of course today we start with one simple truth. We all fall short because we have all rejected God through our sinfulness. And just in case you didn't fully understand what I just said there, let me make it a bit more obvious. One of the greatest lies that Satan has ever conned the world into believing is that those who haven't surrendered their lives to the Lordship of Christ simply are ignorant or misguided. If some one would simply explain it to them in a way that connected to their cultural context then they would probably see the light. False! That is not true in the slightest. In fact, the Bible tells us the complete opposite. Those who have not come to Christ have done so with the full knowledge that they are choosing to intentionally and deliberately reject God. Look again at **Romans 1:18-22**.

It's not that they don't know the truth... it's that they have deliberately suppressed the truth. It's not that God hasn't spoken to

them, it's that they didn't like what he had to say. It's not confusion. It's not weakness. It's not ignorance. It's rebellion. We've rejected God... wholesale. Paul is going to show us that **humanity's biggest problem isn't that we don't know the truth... but that we've knowingly rejected the truth.** We didn't meander into sin while God casually slipped away from us. No, we looked at the truth of God's creation, revelation, and salvation, and said no thanks and decided to choose something else. Understand this....

We didn't lose God. We told him to get lost! Today I want to quickly give you three ways we've rejected God and three ways he responds to our rejection.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

Look with me at verses **1:23-25**. You will notice that the key word here is exchange. In an exchange, the parties exchanging things, are willing participants in the exchange. It is an intentional and deliberate action. An exchange without agreement is theft. So, again, the decision to worship idols, created out of wood, iron, and gold, was not an innate inclination that anyone would naturally gravitate towards. No, this was a choice. And the choice would go like this. There is a God, that much is clear, but I'm not sure I want to be under his authority. Wouldn't it be much easier to create my own god so I can do whatever I want? You see, **humanity doesn't stop worshipping. We just change what we worship.** Instead of the glory of the immortal God, we'd much rather settle for reflections of ourselves and our world. Instead of giving our worship to something greater than ourselves, we in fact give it to something lesser than ourselves. We move worship from up to down.

We've rejected God by choosing created things over the creator. And when we do that... things do not go well. **When We Reject the Creator for Creation, God Gives Us Over to A Defiled Culture.** When we reject God he always responds accordingly. The word "therefore" shows us that this is not an impulse but a thought out and deliberate response from God. He hands us over. In the Greek it is the word "paredoken" which literally means a judicial act. We didn't "lose" God. We rejected him, told him to get lost and then he looses us to our own desires. God says, "you want life without me, then live with the consequences of that choice."

And what is that consequence. Impurity, defilement, the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. Now, on the surface this seems to be referencing sexual paganism and the consequences which are associated with that... and that is very possible. Clearly the next passage deals directly with this. **But the phrase here in the Greek is intentionally broad. "In the body," could be referring to a corporate body... like a community. And the Greek phrase "en autois" could mean, among themselves, within themselves, or in their community. Based upon the context I suggest the latter as a probable interpretation. A very probable interpretation then would**

be that when we reject the creator he gives us over to our own idolatry, sexual perversions, and in the end we destroy our culture. God removes his restraint over our uncontrollable sinfulness and allows us to destroy ourselves.

Think about a river that provides water to a city. When the source of the water is clean, everything downstream flourishes and the city grows. But if the source were to become polluted, the poison would spread everywhere... into homes, schools, causing sickness, disease, and death. When the source of worship is corrupted, the culture downstream will suffer. **You can't downgrade God without degrading culture. We didn't lose God. We told him to get lost!**

Continue with me in verses **1:26-28**. First we reject God through idolatry, secondly we reject God through sexual immorality. As we said before, when we choose not to worship God we replace our worship with something else. Humanity often chooses possessions and pleasure over providence. Here we see that God has designed sex for a specific and beautiful purpose. One man, with one woman, within the confines of marriage. This is the natural order. But, as with most things, we've taken what God has given and distorted it. We've left the natural way for an unnatural way. It is completely unnatural, according to God's design for creation, to engage in and long for homosexual relationships.

And so God let them have their way. **When we reject the Designer for Desire, God Gives Us Over To a Depraved Mind.** Paul is showing that the mental collapse precedes the moral collapse. If we want to behave immorally then God will no longer restrain our desires... he will give us over to them. The cold hard truth is this... **when our desires become our truth... our minds will lose its grip on reality.** All of our cultural wars are centered around sexual immorality. Why is that? Because we've rejected God and he's handed us over to our depraved way of thinking. Homosexuality and sexual sins, transgenderism and all forms of unnatural sexual desires have become the norm in our culture. And there is something you must come to grips with, this isn't about love or who they were created to be. This is about a rejection of God. When culture rejects God to chase after their sexual immorality, God will let them. **We didn't lose God. We told him to get lost!**

Lastly, let's turn our attention back to **1:18** before we finish this chapter. For those who have rejected God, suppressed the truth and determined to live in denial, there is wrath stored up and revealed, ready to go to work. God's wrath isn't just for the future... it is present and active and against all ungodliness and unrighteousness that suppresses the truth. How is this judgment poured out in the present. Simple, through self-imposed and God allowed moral decay and destruction.

Lives lived in sin are lives lived in a culture of death. Look at **verses 29-31**. Their minds are filled with all manner of unrighteousness. They wanted depraved minds void of godliness, and this is the consequence in this life. A life of moral death. And then in the life to come... spiritual everlasting death.

When We Reject the Truth for Myth, God Gives Us Over to Death and Wrath. When truth is rejected sin becomes normal and evil becomes casual. And we end in **verse 32**. It's not simply that God has judged them worthy of death. They themselves know that their sin deserves death... and in their depravity they embrace it. This is one of the most damning verses in the bible. They know the truth, they persist in denial, and they celebrate sin. Their judgment is sealed not only by action, but by approval. No... **We didn't lose God. We told him to get lost!**

Application

So, what do we do with this? Well, for starters, we shouldn't point fingers. Rather we should look in mirrors. Because the most dangerous rejections of God is not out right rebellion. It's quiet exchange. It's the slow exchange of truth for feelings, a creator for idols, a designer for a depraved mindset, a savior for sexual immorality. Some of us have rejected God by denying him... but some of us have rejected God by editing him... by making him in our own image.

So stop rejecting him. Stop explaining away the truth that God has already made plain. Stop trusting your desires to define what is right. Facts trump feelings. And stop assuming judgment is only future. You may be under judgement right now and you don't even know it. God could simply be letting you live without Him... and that is a living hell. This passage wasn't written to crush you, it was written to corner you.... to point you the answer. And the answer is simple. If you don't reject God, you accept his Son.

Conclusion

Imagine a hospital with a wing reserved for highly contagious patients. The doors are clearly marked. The warnings are posted everywhere. And the doctors tell you plainly: "If you go in there without protection, you will die." But someone decides the warnings are exaggerated. They don't deny the hospital exists, they just don't trust the diagnosis. So they walk past the signs. They ignore the alarms. They enter unprotected. The hospital didn't kill them. The doctors didn't trap them. They weren't pushed. They simply rejected the truth and the consequence did the rest.

Church, we didn't lose God... we didn't misplace him or misunderstand him... we rejected him. And until we admit that, we will never know the need for a savior. We all fall short of the glory of God because of our sin, because of our rejection. And the only answer is to accept his son as our savior.