**Lesson 3: Where Rejection Leads**

Text: Romans 1:18-32

**Introduction**

Before people can see their need to receive God’s righteousness, they must understand their own sinfulness. In this section of Romans, Paul describes the sinfulness of the human race. There was a time in which the human race knew the true and living God. We could certainly trace this back to the days of Adam and Eve and the time following the flood. From the days of Noah to the Tower of Babel, wickedness once again filled the earth. This gives evidence of the sinful nature that resides within every man. If man is to have righteousness, it must come from an outside source. We are incapable of producing it on our own. This passage makes it clear why Paul was so driven to proclaim the message of the gospel. The aim of this lesson is to challenge you to see the world through the same lens.

1. **Man has rejected the revelation of God. (v. 18-23)** 
   1. Man has rejected the revelation of God by suppressing the truth. (v. 18)
      1. The word *hold* means to suppress or hold down.
      2. They suppress the truth because they don’t want to be accountable to the truth.
      3. Can you think of examples in Scripture in which man has suppressed truth?
      4. Can you think of modern examples?
   2. Man has rejected the revelation of God by ignoring God’s revelation. (v. 19-20)
      1. God has revealed Himself to man. (v. 19)
      2. God’s power and nature are on display through His work in creation. (v. 20) The *invisible things* refer to His characteristics. They are understood by the things that are made.
      3. Creation leaves man without an excuse. They have sinned against the light that has been given to them.
   3. Man has rejected the revelation of God by replacing God. (v. 21-23)
      1. A lack of gratitude led them into a wrong way of thinking. (v. 21)
         1. “When truth is rejected, in time the ability to recognize and to receive truth is impaired.” (Bible Knowledge Commentary)
         2. They claimed to be wise, but really became fools. (v. 22)
      2. Instead of acknowledging that they were made by God and in His image, they attempted to make God in their own image. (v. 23)
2. **Man’s rejection of God has led him farther away from God. (v. 24-32)**
   1. This section lists the consequences of man’s sinful rejection of God.
   2. God gave them over to their own way. The verb “gave them up” appears in verses 24, 26, and 28. It means to *abandon* or *hand over*.
   3. The consequences have come in the form of a downward spiral:
      1. Their move away from the true God led them down a path of immorality. (v. 24)
      2. They exchanged truth for a lie and served the creature more than the Creator. (v. 25)
      3. Sexual indulgence led to sexual perversion. (v. 26) Homosexuality is against God’s created order. It is described in this passage as *vile* (disgraceful), *against nature*, and *unseemly* (indecent). Such deviant behavior is subject to God’s judgement. They must receive the *recompence* (penalty) for their sin.
      4. Because they did not like to retain God in their thoughts, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. (v. 28) The word *reprobate* refers to that which is not right, appropriate or fitting. Their depraved way of thinking leads to ways of living that are not *convenient* (proper, fitting).
   4. Warren Wiersbe said, “God’s description of sinners is not a pretty one, but we cannot avoid it. This section does not teach evolution (that humans started low and climbed high), but devolution: He started high and, because of sin, sank lower than the beasts. Four stages mark humankind’s tragic devolution: intelligence (v. 18-20), ignorance (v. 21-23), indulgence (v 24-27) and impenitence (v. 28-32).”
   5. This has a striking resemblance to the direction of our country. There was a time when the majority of the people living in our land recognized the Lord. Little by little, our nation has pushed God out of our national consciousness. It is obvious that we are living in days of indulgence and impenitence. The people living in our country will continue in their condemned state before God unless they hear and believe the gospel.
   6. When people push God out of their lives, their lives become filled with all sorts of wickedness. (v. 29-32)
      1. The list of wicked deeds not only describes human history, but also today.
      2. They are openly defiant toward God and condone the sinful behavior of others.
      3. They are marked for God’s judgment.
3. **Central Idea: Paul emphasized the need to preach the gospel because man’s rejection of God leads him farther away from God.**
4. **Application: The gospel must be preached today because the rejection of God leads people farther away from Him.** 
   1. The new birth is as essential, as Jesus said! (John 3:1-7)
   2. It is best to reach people during their childhood years. The sooner the person is able to hear the gospel, the better. (2 Timothy 3:15)
   3. This principle is true even in the life of a believer. Although a true believer is eternally secure, they can go deeper in the realms of sin. The more you reject God, the further you go from Him. This demonstrates why it is vital to have a vibrant walk with the Lord.
      1. Is there any way in which you are suppressing truth in your life?
      2. Is there any area in which you are ignoring God’s revelation?
      3. Are you focused on the creature or the Creator? With so many potential distractions we must be ever careful to set our affection on God, not just on His blessings. (Colossians 3:1-4)

**Conclusion**

The depths of our sin should cause us to be grateful for God’s mercy and grace in salvation. Are you viewing humanity through the lens of Scripture? Man is desperately lost without the light of the gospel. Paul was ready to preach the gospel to those who were in such a state. Are you?