



# Leader's Guide

For September 16, 2007

LESSON 2

Dr. Jerry Nelson

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## **Romans 1:18-32**

### **God's Wrath Against Sin: The Bad News**

#### **Key Points**

The Apostle Paul moves from the wonderful news of salvation to the ugly and embarrassing issue of sin. We need to fully understand the “bad news” before we get to the “good news.” There are a number of key points to consider:

- God's wrath is revealed and it is earned
- Truth has been suppressed and replaced with falsehood
- The progression and consequences of sin
- The impact of sin on us, and on others
- Our response

#### **Personal Reflection**

This lesson could be very difficult for some of the people in your group. They may be weighed down with the load of their sin, or they may be suffering the consequences of sin. As you prepare for this lesson, acknowledgement and confession of your own sin, resulting in gratitude to God, will grant you a humble posture from which to teach. Ask for the leading of the Holy Spirit, especially for wisdom and discernment, as it relates to the people in your group. Think about and pray for each member of your group sometime during the week before you teach. May God enable you, by his Spirit, to speak the truth and teach with boldness. The team will be praying for you this week.

## Discussion Questions

1. “God’s wrath is the necessary reaction of a holy God to sin.”<sup>1</sup> Consider how we react, as sinful as we are, to the consequences of someone’s sin against another person. While our reaction is anger (human emotion) God’s response is wrath; justifiable. Does God’s wrath seem unjust at times? Why or why not?
2. God’s wrath falls on those who “suppress the truth.” One can only suppress something of which one has knowledge.”<sup>2</sup> Is anyone truly innocent? Can someone say that God never revealed himself to them?
3. There is a cycle of sin. The more we sin, the more evil our sin becomes. As a result, God allows people to suffer the consequences of their sin. In this passage, the Apostle Paul begins with the sin of idolatry. Why is this significant? (Deuteronomy 10:12-22)
4. What are the consequences of idolatry? (*sexual impurity and sexual perversion*<sup>3</sup>). What are the relational consequences of these sins?
5. The next progression of sin is delusional thinking. We are often deceive by half-truths, which are deadly. What influences of the culture are you tempted to believe that are not true?
6. So much of the way the world believes makes the truth of the gospel and the Word of God difficult to believe, even for believers. How do we encounter and counter this?
7. Verses 29-32 list a number of sins. In order to convey many different forms of sin, the Apostle Paul wants his readers to realize that at least one of these sins will hit home to his readers<sup>4</sup>. The point is, none of us are innocent. We are guilty even if we condone sin—even if we do not partake (vs. 32). This list forces us to look head-on at the ugliness and humiliation of sin. We face it every day of our lives, both personally and as we engage other people. What is your response to the people in your life that live in the sins described in this passage? What is your response to your own sinfulness?

8. This passage does not address God's mercy and grace, so it might be good to read Ephesians 2:1-9. Discuss God's great love and provision and our response.
9. You might want to end your discussion with a time of confession, then of simple affirmations of who God is and what he has done.

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<sup>1</sup> *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 60

<sup>2</sup> *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 60

<sup>3</sup> *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 61, 62

<sup>4</sup> *The NIV Application Commentary*, pg. 63

