

In It But Not of It
“Features of A Crumbling Culture Part 1”

Romans 1:18-32

The Bible tells of the wonderful grace of God toward humankind. This grace was demonstrated when He repaired the broken relationship between man and Himself that was caused by man’s choice of sin over obedience. The Scripture is thus the story of a promise made to Adam and Eve to restore (put back to its original state) the most precious of all of God’s creation – an intimate relationship between man and God.

God has determined that the written Word is His revelation of Himself, His holiness, His truth about sin, and His love for mankind. The Lord has consistently been patient, kind, and longsuffering toward man, even in man’s most dreadful sinful condition. The onslaught of the lies and deception of Satan coupled with mankind’s sinful state has led to the sad reality that the human condition is in a state of consistent rebellion toward God

In the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the church at Rome, he describes what the Lord does when culture turns away from His truth. When we ask the questions of “what happens to a people...” we need to take an honest look at the scripture and ask the question, “*What does God do to a people who turn against Him and His Word?*”

What are the features of a crumbling culture? Paul communicates certain choices a culture makes when it turns its back on God. He also explains how God responds to man’s choice to reject Him.

1) REMOVING the absolute authority of God by DISRESPECTING His Word. (Romans 1:18-23)

The wrath of abandonment is the type of wrath exhibited by God when He turns His back on a society and removes His grace protection. He allows men and women to go their own way apart from His protection of grace. (cf. **Proverbs 1:20-33**)

2) REPLACING the truth of God for a lie by REDEFINING Biblical norms in order to justify sinful relationships. (Romans 1:24-27)

The first thing mentioned is “...***their bodies might be dishonored among them.***” One of the things that occur in idolatry is worship that involves the body. For example, in all ancient idolatrous worship, some type of sexual immorality took place during the worship service – both heterosexual and homosexual acts.

We live in a society that exalts the human body. In tragic irony, the same society that glorifies the body has no regard for the body; the same society that exalts man incessantly degrades him.

3) REJECTING the person of God, which results in the persistent PRACTICE of sin. (Romans 1:28-32)

The result of rejecting and turning from God is a society that is sinful in every aspect. Sin becomes justifiable and blatantly lived out without any reservation, shame, or concealment. The sin, not only in action but also in attitude, is pervasive.

The church is **in** the system of the world, but we are **not of** this system. Our lives are to demonstrate that we have been forgiven, washed, and set apart from sin. Although we are not sinless, we have the Spirit of God who is more than capable of setting us free from the pull and power of sin – Now. Today. In this moment. And every day of our lives.

APPLICATION

RESIST the cultural pull to justify sin. Be courageous to live the truth in love.
(cf. 1 Peter 2:9)

RENEW our thinking through the daily devotion to the Word of God.
(cf. Romans 12:2)

REACH out to those who are in need of Christ by being His heart, His hands, His feet, and His truth.
(cf. John 10:10)

REMEMBER God is in the business of grace, love, and redemption.
(cf. Psalm 81:11-16)