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Romans

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,... Romans 1:24

“Therefore...” When you see this word in a passage, go back and see what it is there for. An argument has been submitted and now comes the conclusion. In this case, “therefore” is referring to verses 18-23. Because of these things that Paul has spoken of “God also gave them up to uncleanness.” They have turned from Him and now He gives them up. The 14th Psalm, speaking of the atheist, gives insights into this condition –

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

Psalm 14:1-3

It's important to understand that this is not a universal condition as some theologians claim. Calvinism uses a portion of this psalm, quoted by Paul in chapter 3 of Romans, to make an all-encompassing claim on the state of man. However, when Paul cites a verse, its context must be taken into consideration.

David was a man who sought after God and he wrote the Psalm. Therefore, it would be a pretext to claim a universal application to “none who does good” instead of applying it to those who deny the existence of God.

This is therefore speaking of those who turn from God as Paul describes, moving from one level of depravity to another as their foolish hearts are darkened. As they progress into a more and more depraved state, God gives “them up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves.”

In their rejection of God, they become mere sensual beings without rational thought. Remember though, some of those who appear most intelligent are those who are “professing to be wise” and yet they fall into this category. Their supposed wisdom is directed by the “lusts of their hearts.” The Greek word is *epithumiais* and indicates a desire of some sort. In Paul’s context the word “lust” is spot on. They are filled with an animal instinct which directs their thoughts and hearts, even to the point of dishonoring “their bodies among themselves.”

Life application: The more we turn to idolatry, intentionally or unintentionally, the more we separate ourselves from God. Not walking under a ladder is a smart way of not having a hammer fall on your head, but if your intent is to avoid bad luck then it is a step in the wrong direction. Each step of life takes you either forward or backward in your spiritual walk. Step carefully and with thoughtful consideration.

...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Romans 1:25

Today’s thought shows the continued progression of the idolatrous heart as it continues down the spiral of depravity. God has given these people up because of their rejection of Him. And the way they did it is to exchange “the truth of God for the lie.” The particular structure of this phrase, reflecting the Hebrew mind of Paul, means “the true God.” When two nouns come together, one is used in the

form of an adjective and thus qualifies the other. They have made an exchange – something of no value for that which is of infinite value. They have sold their birthright for a bowl of soup. They have accepted the lie and shunned the Truth. The word for “lie” is pseudei – it is a falsehood; a pseudo god and not the true God.

In so doing, they have now “worshiped and serve the creature rather than the Creator.” This is any form of bondage in sin. Perhaps it is addiction to alcohol, perhaps drugs, or perhaps it is something seemingly as innocuous as vegetarianism. What was supposed to bring freedom has now enslaved them. Once caught in this bondage, it seems to be the only right course of action. Vegetarianism is mentioned simply because it is contrary to God’s law. Man was given authority over the creatures of the earth. In Genesis 9:3, after the Flood of Noah, God said this to him, “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.”

At the time of Moses, certain dietary restrictions were introduced for a single group of people and for a specific purpose. This group was Israel and the purpose was the Law. Jesus fulfilled the Law on our behalf (Matthew 5:17) and therefore all men of Christian faith (including Jews) were told that there were no longer any dietary restrictions for those who have called on Him –

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.” Acts 15:28, 29

However, when incorrect thinking about who God is steps into the equation, animals are elevated above humans. Invariably, when questioned about whether human abortion is acceptable, PETA members will answer in the affirmative. And yet they will guard a nest of turtle eggs with their life. In their attempt to throw off God’s rule, they will have their agenda introduced into government legislation and thus bring others under their idolatrous practices. This is where Europe and America are both heading because of the far-left agenda. It is a two headed

monster – a throwing off of God’s rule and then replacing it with a humanistic attempt to subordinate man to the creation.

But sin is sin and it will find its form in whatever means is comfortable for the individual. Some will bow to gods of stone or wood, some will bow to the opposite sex in reverence, and some will bow to their own sex in ungodly lust. Others will find their god in heroin or the pursuit of gold. The creature now is served “rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

What Paul means by introducing this phrase is that when all of these created things have perished, God will still remain – holy, unstained, and perfect. He is “blessed forever.” Thus, our temporary idolatry will be seen in the true light which it always was. He is the Fountain of all existence, all life, and all goodness and therefore instead of shunning Him we should all proclaim to Him “Amen. The truth of God endures and we give You our worship. So be it and Amen.”

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Romans 1:26

Paul uses the term that God “gave them up” for a second time and this is the second instance where sexual sin is involved. When we reject God, a spiral of depravity results which leads inevitably to a state of sexual perversion – from one form to another, each building upon resentment for God and what He has ordained. Paul shows us that this inevitably leads to lesbianism and (as we will see tomorrow) homosexuality. Paul calls this particular sin “vile passions” because the “women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.” In the Greek of this verse, Paul uses the term theleiai for “women,” or literally “females.” In Matthew 19:4, 5 Jesus says the following –

“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”

In these verses, he uses thely for “female” and switches to gyniaki for “wife.” She is a woman in right standing with the natural order in her union to the man. However, Paul doesn’t use this concept when speaking of the lesbian union in Romans 1:26. They are females exercising vile passions with females and are therefore working against the natural order.

He speaks of the women before speaking of the men. This is to highlight the immensity of the breakdown in what is right. Women are the bearer of the child in the womb and the home keepers as children are raised. Therefore, their degenerate attitude is noted first.

Paul’s words then ask us to realize that what he is speaking of is perversion. It deemphasizes what is intellectually correct, what is spiritually noble, and what is emotionally pure. It emphasizes what is mentally twisted, spiritually ungodly, and emotionally obsessive and damaged. Paul will use similar wording in the next verse when speaking of such conduct between males.

Life application: Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:18, 19 to, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” Be willing to stand on moral purity and reject what is sexually immoral. If you are struggling with this in your life, ask the Lord to strengthen you.