

# How Things Gradually Get Worse

(Insights from Romans 1:18-32)

Pastor Bob Johnson, Grace Point Church, September 17th, 2017

## A Look At The Passage:

(1 Timothy 1:12-16)

### Steps to Gradual Cultural & Personal Decline:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ God's position. (v21)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ God's replacement. (v22-23)
3. Removing \_\_\_\_\_ . (v24-27)
4. Removing \_\_\_\_\_ . (v28-31)
5. Approving \_\_\_\_\_. (v32)

### Two (often missed) Truths To Take Home ...

1. What Paul describes is meant to show us ...

\_\_\_\_\_ .

2. Paul's solution to a broken culture is not ...

\_\_\_\_\_ .

It is to ...

## This Week's Discussion Guide:

**Welcome to "Week 2" of this season of our small groups at GPC!** Our small groups are where folks move from 'believers' to 'belongers'. May we receive lots of encouragement and support and deepening friendships in the weeks ahead as we meet together, pray together, and study God's Word together.

### Looking Back:

Each week we'll look and have an opportunity to share with our group how the week went and also share a few things to help us get to know each other better. What is something encouraging or not so encouraging that happened since our last meeting?

In the letter to the Christ followers in Rome, Paul shares his passion for sharing the Good News of what Jesus did in Romans 1:16. As we all want to have Paul's passion for the gospel, we all also have other passions or interests that make us unique. To help us get to know each other a little better, what are some of your passions and interests? Share one that might surprise us :).

Paul starts out this letter to the Romans by saying '*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*' in Romans 1:7. Can you think of a time recently where someone showed you grace (giving you something positive that you didn't deserve in the moment)?

Each week in 'looking back', we also want to give each other the opportunity to look back since our last meeting and have an opportunity to share how we applied something to our daily lives that we learned or discussed previously from God's Word.

Does anyone have an example of being 'doers of the Word' this past week?

## Looking Up:

As part of looking up and seeing what God can teach us this week, was there anything from last Sunday's message that particularly caught your attention, challenged or needs some clarification?

1. This week we saw that Paul's list written in Romans 1 isn't just about how others need Jesus, but rather how each of us needs Jesus. How do the following verses affirm our need for Jesus or show what that looks like and/or the positive result that follows?

2 Timothy 1:7, John 14:6, Galatians 2:20, Romans 5:8

2. One of Paul's purposes in writing Romans was to reach the people of Rome with the Good News of what Jesus has done for everyone. What do the following verses say about how to reach and introduce others to Jesus?

Matthew 5:14-16, Colossians 4:2-6, John 13:35

As we look forward to growing stronger in our walks with God this fall, is there a statement or idea from the verses above that you would like to remember to live out to help others have a clearer view of God's love? Is so, explain.

3. In Romans 1:21-22, Paul says that distance from God grows as we deny God's position as our primary influence and source of security and significance. When we deny God, we soon replace God with something or someone else that we begin focussing on and try to draw security and significance from. Ok ... we all struggle with keeping God on the throne of our lives. Getting a little personal here, what are some others "gods" that are out there that you are tempted to look to for a source of joy, satisfaction, fulfillment, identity etc. ?

4. God gives us boundaries for our lives and asks us to trust him to stay inside them. Boundaries are difficult at times to stay within especially when we want to do things our way. Read Romans 1:28-31. In this list are some examples of when we live outside of God's boundaries. After reading them, what are some boundaries (opposites of this list or something else you can think of) that God encourages us to pursue as He provides us the needed strength?

Even more personal, which boundary from the list seems a little more difficult for you to follow?

## Looking Forward:

This last section is based on passages like the one below.

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

James 1:22-25 (NLT)

Let's all take a few minutes to silently pray and reflect back on this last week's message and what we discussed in our group. As we reflect, let's all pray and ask God for a specific application that He might prompt us to live out this week.

To help us as we reflect, here are some possible applications to get us thinking ...

- Knowing that the Gospel is powerful to save, I want to memorize the five threads that were shared.
- I will ask God for an opportunity to share some or all of the gospel with someone this week.
- I will begin each day this week asking God to show me if there is anything or anyone that I am looking to as a source of security and significance other than Him.
- Rather than hoping a friend or family member that is not a Christ follower will change their behavior, I will pray for them every day asking God to reveal His love to them in a personal way.
- If I'm struggling with a particular God-given boundary, I will ask someone to pray for me personally that I would trust God more than my personal reasoning.

As we look forward to this week, let's pray for one another!