



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

### 3. God's righteous wrath against our unrighteousness

#### Read Romans 1:18-32

We know God from creation but suppress the truth

1. There is a story about Bertrand Russell giving a public lecture somewhere or other, defending his atheism. A furious woman stood up at the end of the lecture and asked: "And Lord Russell, what will you say when you stand in front of the throne of God on judgment day?" Russell replied: "I will say: 'I'm terribly sorry, but you didn't give us enough evidence.'" **Looking closely at verse 19-20 discuss what you would say to someone who said something like this. What examples would you use?**

We know God but exchange Him for idols

2. **What are the two things we should do in the light of creation's clear testimony to God in verse 21? What did people do instead according to verse 21-23?**
3. **How does these verses help you answer someone who says "I prefer to think of God as... "?**

We know God's law but we sin against God, against each other and against ourselves

4. **According to verse 24-25 what is one of the clearest symptoms of making a creature more important than the Creator?**
5. **Looking closely at verse 26-27, if you're not going to worship and serve the Creator – and everyone worships something – then what will you end up worshipping? And what will that lead to?**
6. The main stream media love to portray Christians as homophobic because it is in their interest to dismiss our claims as backward and bigoted. **What are other sins that have the same root cause as homosexuality in verse 28-31. Any surprises? Is there anyone you know who hasn't committed many of these sins?**
7. **If God gave us what we deserve, what would it be according to verse 18 and 32? Why do you think people struggle to accept this?**
8. Obviously this passage is hard-hitting and pretty sombre. **Spend a moment or two discussing in your own words what God's loving solution to all this is.**

## Leaders Notes

1. Verse 19-20 are clear: the Invisible God has clearly shown that He is powerful that He is God by what He has made. All of creation screams at us: there is a God. This question is quite open-ended because the aim is to get participants to think through their personal experience of creation and speak about how it convinces the open-minded that there is a God. Part of the Growth Group experience is getting people to practice how to speak about God to others. In other words, encourage Growth Group members to share experiences such as child-birth or a trip to somewhere beautiful where they were so convinced about God's existence. Obviously it will be different for different people. These experiences are very encouraging for other Christians.
2. Verse 20 tells us that no one has any excuse. Everyone knows there is a God from creation. But instead of honouring Him, being thankful – the two things we should do – we become futile in our thinking etc. It is worth pointing out that all sin begins in the same way; not honouring God and not being thankful.
3. The point of this question is to stop us thinking that idolatry is something only 'unadvanced' cultures do. To think like this is arrogance. We all manufacture idols. The sophisticated way of doing it is as the question suggests. The way to respond to someone who speaks like that is to ask them how that is different to making an idol of God that looks like a chicken etc. it still comes out of a human mind and it is still idolatrous. (Maybe as a follow up question ask, 'And what's so bad about idolatry?' The answer is that it is always wrong and always sells God short. God is always better than we think He is. Or that we could possibly think He is.)
4. The answer in two words is 'anything goes'. Once the creature becomes the thing you serve more than the Creator, then obviously there are no more standards. If 'man is the measure of all things' there is no longer any measurement. If the creature is the standard, there are no more standards. Logically. And so we dishonour our own bodies. We sin against ourselves!
5. The answer is 'passion'. Worship is the feeling of adoration – yes, more than just feeling, but certainly feeling too. Desire. Worship is a holy desire. So when you don't worship God, you end up still having feeling, or desires. But they become distorted and twisted. The answer in 4. is also relevant here.
6. The aim of this question is to get people to understand that we are as sinful as homosexual people. The church has often said unwise things and done unwise things that make it look as if this sin is singled out. Paul doesn't have a 'thing' about homosexuality. But it is the most glaringly obvious example of things going horribly wrong. Homosexuality is an obvious symptom of when someone worships desire above God. But all these sins have the same root cause: serving the creature instead of the Creator. Don't downplay the list. Go through it. That's what the 'surprise' question is for. Even 'foolishness' can be a sin! Wow – we really are all in trouble!
7. We deserve God's wrath and we deserve death – not just a once-off physical death (which we also deserve) – but eternal dying, which is what death means in Romans. People who can't accept an angry God, or who can't accept Hell, usually struggle to accept how sinful we actually are. God is not going over the top when He sends people to Hell. It is not a case of 'the punishment far outweighs the crime' rather, the crime is far worse than we think it is.
8. Up to the Growth Group but here's hoping someone somewhere will speak of the cross!!!