

Romans 1:13-25

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Lesson: Warping what is plain

Romans 1:13–17 (KJV)

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Romans 1:18–20 (KJV)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Romans 1:21–25 (KJV)

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul is not talking about people who were ignorant, or uninformed, of God. He's talking about people that know, and yet willingly refuse to honor God – and they fill their minds with empty reasoning until their heart is darkened. They congratulate themselves as being wise, when they are foolish, and they exchange the glory of God, which is outside their control, into something they believe is theirs to control. They exchange the truth of God for lies stacked upon lies.

We look around today and we see a sickening number of people doing this, but it has been our curse almost from the beginning.

God gave Adam and Eve everything a person could want. They walked in a garden that fed them without sweat or toil. Every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food was theirs, with one clear word: of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they were not to eat, for in the day they ate of it they would surely die.

The garden reinforced the goodness of the One who made it. They knew God. They walked with Him.

The first sin did not begin with ignorance. It began with an **intentional** effort to twist truth.

The serpent did not invent a new garden. He took what God had said and what the woman could see and bent both.

Genesis 3:1, 4–5 (KJV)

3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, **Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**

3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die:**

3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and **ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.**

The woman looked again. The tree was good for food. It was pleasant to the eyes. It was a tree to be desired to make one wise. What God had spoken as death she now received as wisdom and life. What the garden had displayed as gift she now treated as restriction. They took the lie and used it to build a reality in which they could be wise apart from God.

Their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked. They hid. The world they preferred could not survive contact with the God they had known.

Paul describes similar outcomes in Romans 1. Men knew God. They glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful. They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image, and they changed the truth of God into a lie.

The pattern is not new. Take what any reasonable person can see - God's word, God's world, the plain character of events and motives - and warp it until it matches the story you want to live in. Call the warp wisdom. Live inside it until the heart is dark enough that the lie feels like home.

That is what happened in the garden. That is what Paul saw in his time, and what we still see today – every bit as intentional and dangerous to the lives of men and women as it ever was.

God gave men and women marriage. Look how man has taken God's clear gift and worked and worked to bend it until it is unrecognizable. God gave people the means to be fruitful and fill the Earth. He gave us the miracle of reproduction, blending the genes of man and woman to create children.

From two genetic sets, He created the means to create children that are not exact duplicates of either parent, building in – from the start, the mixing through apparent randomization that would ensure that thousands of generations later, no disease or virus could destroy what He created. A virus that might be the perfect killer for a parent, would not burn through civilization destroying everyone – it would eventually run into a

genetic combination that is immune to its destructive attack. People have survived thousands of such attacks.

Meanwhile men, like Anthony Fauci, look at God's design, and see tools they can use to create viruses that combine the rapid transmission of highly contagious viruses with more devastating destruction. The common cold is highly contagious, but weak and men can survive. Ebola and Marburg are devastatingly deadly blood diseases without airborne transmission, and men can survive by containing their spread. And men like Fauci, arrogantly thinking himself wise, work to combine what was never meant to be combined in nature, with men still working today to create horrific viruses that are so easily transmitted that men will not be able to contain them.

Why? What possible purpose is in the heart of such people?

Fauci's explanation was the least believable lie anyone could imagine. They claimed to be using gain of function approaches to build more deadly viruses so that they could develop cures for these viruses, even though there was no indication that viruses would evolve in those directions even if given thousands of years to mutate.

Fauci took God's design, and the world that God gave us, and bent it into a nightmare supported by lies that any reasonable person would immediately see were lies, and many people chose to believe Fauci. We can see even today that there are thousands of people that worship Fauci, the very person working to kill them, instead of God – the one who gave us everything, even eternal life.

Look how easily people bought into Fauci's lies? Did the gospel ever have such an easy path into men's hearts?

Matthew 7:13–14 (KJV)

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The people around us believe in everything but truth.

God: Man and woman are the design for reproduction.

Man: Men should have sex with other men, and women with other women. We see that evil people are not content that we tolerate their choices, even though we know that God gave men free will. We can easily back away and leave them to those choices. That is not enough they say, they insist that we accept and repeat that their choices are BETTER.

The Atlantic (2013), Liza Mundy, "The Gay Guide to Wedded Bliss": ["Research finds that same-sex unions are happier than heterosexual marriages. What can gay and lesbian couples teach straight ones about living in harmony?"](#)

Politico (2015) ["Gay Marriages Are Better Than Straight Marriages."](#) The piece says recent research suggests same-sex marriages ["aren't just equal to straight marriages: in important regards they are superior."](#) It credits same-sex couples with better conflict handling and more egalitarian households because they are ["the very thing straight relationships are not: a union of two people of the same sex."](#)

Jane Ward, The Tragedy of Heterosexuality (NYU Press): [heterosexuality itself is framed as a failed, unhappy arrangement; "queer people have escaped this prison"; "straight people have to learn from queer relationships"; men should learn from lesbians "how to desire and have sex with women and love them as true equals."](#) That is not ["tolerate our choice."](#) It is ["your design is defective; ours is the deeper one."](#)

University of Queensland: [gay and lesbian couples "tend to have higher-quality relationships than their heterosexual counterparts"](#) (higher in Australia; as high in the UK), tied to more equitable housework and less defined gender roles.

NPR interview with Robert-Jay Green: [same-sex couples are "dramatically more equal" in decision-making, money, housework, and childcare; less anger and aggression; more humor; better at de-escalating](#) because ["you can't get away with pulling power techniques on each other."](#)

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Q: What are some other clear gifts that God provided us that men have twisted?
<Pause for responses>

What about children?

For the past several weeks we've heard about Lindsay Clancy, the woman that strangled her three children with exercise ropes.

The Bible calls children a heritage of the Lord, a reward. The invented belief is that a child is first a project, a lifestyle option, or an obstacle to the self. Abortion is the solution to a baby's threat to autonomy. The gift is recast as a burden. Children become inconveniences, to be put off as long as possible, until in many cases, it becomes too late. People convince themselves that children will get in the way of their ability to pursue their own dreams and goals.

Fitness/Eating

God gave a body to be disciplined, and offered. The invented belief is that the body is clay for the will - cut, starve, inflate, sterilize, or chemically reset whenever the inner story requires it. Stewardship becomes ownership without limit. "My body" becomes a creed, and people spend their lives working out, running, cycling, or conversely eating so much that they become unable to do anything productive. God gave us freedom to decide the way we will live, and we use that freedom in ways that actually rob us of choices.

Work

God put man in the garden to dress it and keep it. Work predates the fall of Adam; sweat and hard work are from the curse, but man's work should be fulfilling. Look what work has become. Pushing paper, doing drudgery for the sake of automation or supposedly better results. Have electronic medical records made healthcare better or worse? We read about people who get the wrong

treatment every week. In the healthcare system, we are told that electronic medical records allow our multiple doctors to provide more coordinated care, and yet Lindsay Clancy's doctors prescribed one medicine after another, with each of them later admitting that they didn't take the time even to check to see what the other was prescribing – so she received conflicting prescriptions that none of them would have chosen had they known.

We don't relish the idea of working in the hot sun, or in freezing temperatures, so we look for indoor jobs – only to find being away from God's natural world to be unsatisfying, and the work itself to be without any meaning.

Again and again the pattern is the same. God gives a good gift that is outside our control. We become vain in our imaginations until we have a version we can manage. We call that version wisdom. Then we demand that everyone else live inside it.