

God Gave Them Over

Romans October 11, 2026

I. Opening Prayer

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help your group learn and hear what He would teach and encourage your group with today

II. Weekly Sermon Discussion (20-40 minutes)

- Read the scriptures, and discuss what stood out to you.
- Don't rush. It's not intended that you get through everything. Spend time in what speaks best to your group today.
- Example insights and questions are provided to help generate discussion if needed.
- Focus your conversation on the scripture and how it applies to you. Be careful of straying off the topic. If someone begins to stray, ask "How does this scripture / topic apply?"

Wrath vs Discipline

Read: Romans 1:18, 21, 25 Hebrews 12:10-11

The gospel can offend because it reveals that mankind justly deserves God's wrath. This wrath is God's settled, righteous opposition to sin, not an uncontrolled emotional reaction. We often view God's wrath simply as future eternal judgment, but Romans 1 teaches that God gives over the ungodly and unrighteous to a present progressive wrath through experiencing the bitter, degrading consequences of sin. This wrath is both just and gracious. It is just because humanity is reaping exactly what it chooses. It is gracious because God intends that through experiencing the pain of sin, unbelievers will humble themselves, repent, and believe the gospel.

The gospel is the power of God that saves us from wrath. As believers, we have been saved from wrath, both eternal and temporal. But, we can still experience the consequence of willful sin when God disciplines us. Consider this distinction:

As a consequence of sin, God gives over:

- **Unbelievers to judicial, temporal wrath:** leaving them at a crossroads—either harden their hearts in final rebellion, or repent through the gospel and be saved from God's eternal wrath.
 - **Believers to a Father's discipline:** ensuring that through the Holy Spirit, they will ultimately soften their hearts in repentance and be restored to the fellowship the gospel has established.
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- How does it change your perspective to consider wrath as God "giving over" to the painful consequences of sinful decisions rather than a "lightning bolt of vengeance"?
 - Why is getting what we want apart from God's wrath or discipline actually the most dangerous place we can be?
 - Can you look back at a time when God gave you over to something sinful you wanted, only for it to bring emptiness and pain? How do you see His grace in that consequence now?

- How can knowing that God is actively working through His wrath prove to be a comfort as we consider unbelieving loved ones; or that He is actively working through discipline to our Christian loved ones who are struggling in their walk?
- How is God actively working in your life to give you over to sinful consequences such that you might repent?

Sexual Immorality

Read: Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

The foundational argument of Romans 1 is that human brokenness is not primarily a behavioral problem, but a worship problem. Idolatry is the root sin from which other sin flows. Idolatry is taking a "good thing" God gave us (like a romantic relationship, a career, financial comfort, or control) and turning it into a "god-thing." To help identify this in our daily lives, evaluate your **MVPS**.

An idol is anything other than God where you instinctively look to find:

- **Meaning** (What gives my life significance?)
- **Value** (Where do I get my sense of worth?)
- **Pleasure** (What is the ultimate source of my joy and satisfaction?)
- **Security** (What makes me feel safe and protected?)

When we demand that a creation fulfill these needs, we are suppressing the truth of God and demanding that something finite do a job only the infinite Creator can do. One of the idols that we most often fall into, is the idolatry of romantic and sexual relationships.

- We create idols when we look to a romantic partner rather than the Creator for our MVPS. Which of the four areas of MVPS do you find yourself most tempted to seek from a romantic / sexual relationship instead of God?
- At the root of our sexual sin is misdirected worship / idolatry. How can your understanding of your MVPS in the above question help you to escape sexual sin and redirect the true needs of your heart toward God?
- If the pain of our consequences is actually a lifeline meant to bring us to repentance, how can we help each other identify when our suffering is a direct result of "being given over" to our own desires? How do we respond with confession instead of bitterness toward God or a romantic / sexual partner?
- When discussing sensitive cultural topics like sexual immorality, homosexuality, or transgenderism, it's easy for the church to fall into two ditches: Liberty (affirming sin) or Legalism (shaming and denying grace). Which ditch do you struggle with more, and how can we speak truth while extending the grace of the gospel?
- Sexual brokenness is an evidence of the wrath or discipline of God such that we might repent and experience the wondrous grace of our Savior's loving forgiveness and the power of His transformative grace. How can the power of the gospel and His gracious healing for sexual brokenness be an area that your group confesses and supports one another in?

A Depraved Mind

Read: Romans 1:28-32, 2:1

Anticipating our natural tendency to self-righteously judge those caught in sexual immorality or homosexuality, Paul intentionally casts a massive net. He springs what theologians call a "rhetorical trap." By shifting from specific sins to a list of universal sin, Paul levels the playing field. He forces all of us to admit that we too have been given over to the fracturing consequences of sin. No one stands apart from a desperate need for the gospel!

As a consequence of sin, God gives over humanity to a debased mind, and the following sins serve as real-time evidence of that temporal, judicial wrath:

- **Unrighteousness & Wickedness:** Acting in direct opposition to God's character and law.
- **Greed:** An insatiable, ungodly desire to accumulate more and more things.
- **Evil:** The internal moral degeneracy from which all outward sins flow.
- **Envy:** Jealousy; wanting what others have and resenting them for having it
- **Murder:** Elevating self over others through hate, groundless anger, and taking life.
- **Strife:** Contentions, quarrels, fighting, and a spirit of constant arguing.
- **Deceit:** Hypocrisy, dual-mindedness, and acting like someone you are not.
- **Malice:** A mean, spiteful disposition that believes the worst of people.
- **Gossips:** Whisperers who destructively talk about people behind their backs.
- **Slanderers:** Openly speaking evil of others to destroy their reputation.
- **Haters of God:** A stubborn unwillingness to submit to His will, path, or commands.
- **Insolent:** The attitude of a bully who treats other human beings as beneath him.
- **Arrogant:** Inflated self-importance that sees no practical need for God.
- **Boastful:** Bragging and exaggerating about oneself to impress others.
- **Inventors of Evil:** Restless sinners who invent new, creative ways to sin.
- **Disobedient to Parents:** Rejection of foundational authority, reflecting rebellion against God.
- **Without Understanding:** A refusal to use one's God-given mind for common sense.
- **Untrustworthy:** Disloyal, unfaithful, and unwilling to keep one's word.
- **Unloving:** A lack of natural human affection, especially toward family members.
- **Unmerciful:** Callous, cold, and unfeeling toward the suffering of others.

Every single human being has rejected God in multiple areas of life. While not everything we do is completely sinful, nothing we do is completely untainted by sin.

For the **unbeliever**, this list is a mirror of judicial, temporal wrath meant to shatter pride and drive them to the gospel. For the **believer** who stumbles into these behaviors, the resulting relational and emotional pain serves as a Father's discipline: a severe grace designed to turn us away from what is worthless, cause us to rightly judge God as worthy, and drive us back into active fellowship with the One who is rich in grace.

- How does Paul strategically shift his focus to pull the self-righteous listener into his "rhetorical trap"? Why is it so easy for us to nod along with the first half of Romans 1, only to get caught by the second half?
- Look closely at the sins listed. Which of these are normalized or even praised by our culture today? Which ones do we tend to treat as "minor, respectable sins" compared to the high-profile sins mentioned earlier in the chapter?
- The goal of experiencing these consequences is to turn us away from what is worthless and drive us back to God. How does a regular, humble evaluation of this list protect a believer from becoming "insolent or arrogant" toward unbelievers who are still trapped under judicial wrath?
- These sins are actual evidence of God's present, temporal wrath (He "gives them over" to a debased mind). How does viewing an unmerciful, arrogant, or gossiping heart as a form of divine judgment change the way we look at our own daily struggles with sin?
- Discuss the statement: "While not everything we do is completely sinful, nothing we do is completely untainted by sin." How does this reality level the playing field between the "moral person" and the "outward rebel"? How does it prepare our hearts to receive the gospel?

III. Share & Prayer (20-40 minutes)

Time to 'take off the mask'! Jesus doesn't want us to be hypocrites who wear masks.

- A personal life update, your current spiritual condition. Use emotional language to be real!
- Challenges or victories that you are experiencing
- What's really going on in your life? How are you doing? How can your group pray for you?
- Are there applications from the Discussion that you need prayer support?
- How can your Group support you this week?

When sharing prayer requests, include your personal prayer needs. Example – rather than simply sharing "Please pray for my friend's cancer journey", include personal prayer: "Please pray as I'm struggling with my friend's cancer journey, and I need guidance on how to encourage her in this season".

Have someone, or everyone, close your time out in prayer for one another.