

The Cost of Idolatry
Romans 1:23-32

Getting Started

- ❖ One of our church's values is: **Living Authentically** - In a world of guilt and shame, we share together in the grace of God as we repent of our sins and heal from our wounds. How did this week's message and this value intersect? Did it bring a different perspective to you for God's design and intention in our sexuality?
- ❖ **Opening Prayer Time:** Break into groups of 2 that are sex-segregated. Spend time praying for each other's marriages, romantic relationships and/or relationship desires. Intercede for one another that God would give His power and grace so that we steward our sexuality in a manner that honors Him. Please be sensitive to your prayer partner's needs (e.g., widow, widower, divorced, looking for spouse, happily married/unmarried or unhappily married/unmarried). This is a time for us to love one another in an important area of life through honest communication and heart-felt prayer for each other.

Digging Deeper

- ❖ **Read Romans 1:18-32.**
 - Do you see the truths of these verse in your own life before you were a Christian? Do you see fragments of this attitude in your life now?
 - How does understanding the inconsistencies of truth-suppression help us to speak to nonbelievers about the Christian faith?
 - One of last week's questions dealt with thanklessness and how it serves as the entry-point to a form of functional atheism. This past week how did you give thanks and glory to God for your life in this world?
 - We defined idolatry from the New City Catechism as: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security? What are some examples of good things we turn into "god things". More specifically, are there certain idolatries you struggle with in your walk with God?
 - Churches and Christians respond differently to verses 26-27.
 - How might more liberally-minded Christians interpret and apply these verses? What do you believe motivates their application of these verses?
 - What about more conservatively-minded churches and Christians?
 - In what ways do you agree or disagree with each group? What are the "good points" and "bad points" of each group?
 - Where do you believe Covenant falls and how would you describe our beliefs and practices in regards to these verses?
 - Why is it important that Paul brings the long list of sinful behaviors into the mix in verses 28-32 after speaking so bluntly about sexual sins? What are the implications of these verses to all of us? What do you think the point is to include these verses?
 - How can you ensure that the sinfulness of the world drives you not to self-righteousness, but to the cross of mercy?

(Over)

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Think About It!

We are to read these verses in light of 1:16-17, knowing that we do not need to fear God's wrath because we have received His righteousness. This gives us both the freedom and the humility to ask, "What idols could be, or are already, jostling for position with my Creator in my heart and life." (Tim Keller)

Praying Together

Let's close this week with a style of prayer known as "pop-up" prayer. With this approach to prayer, we go around the group and those led to do so "pop-up" short 1-3 sentence prayers that are focused, informative to the rest of the group and intentional. Use the prompts below to guide your group's prayer time. Do not feel obligated to offer up a prayer in each category of prayer, but you are welcome to do if so led.

Category 1: Lost Friends/Family--- 321 List Members

Example--- Father, please use me to bring the gospel to my co-worker Jim. We work side by side each day and I know he doubts your existence, God. Give me the words and the grace I need to plant gospel seeds into his life. [Then the next person would pray]

Category 2: Our Church's Health and Impact

Example: Father, would you work through our _____ (ex: children's, student, groups, recovery, missions, worship, staff members, CCS, mercy, etc) ministry. Use it to...

Category 3: Open Our Eyes/Help Me with My Idolatry

Example: Father, when I am discouraged I turn to ____ for comfort. Forgive me of my idolatry and give me the grace and power to turn to you instead.

Example: Father I am struggling with _____. Give me eyes that can see a way out of this bondage so that I can have victory over this idolatry in my life.

(Note: In this year's study of Romans, our study questions are being inspired by or derived from books, commentaries and bible studies authored by: Max Lucado, John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, Jack Hayford and Tim Keller.)