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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- 1 With Thanksgiving barely in the rear-view mirror and Christmas quickly approaching, we are reminded to be thankful for our many blessings. What's something you're thankful for—and why?
- 2 Tell about a time when **you** were on the **receiving end** of **ingratitude**. How did that make you **feel**?
- 3 How did you respond? In retrospect, do you think your response was appropriate? Why or why not?
- 4 Now read about a time when **God** responded to ingratitude (Romans 1:18-21). Compare and contrast your response and God's. In what respects were they similar? How were they different?
- 5 Now read the fuller passage, Romans 1:18-25. Circle the word **truth** in the first and final verses. Clearly we have a "complicated relationship" with truth! According to v. 18, what do we do with it? According to v. 25, what do people do with the truth? How do you square this with the fact that **so many** books, documentaries, and podcasts exist which explore "*man's quest for truth*"? Are we hypocrites? What do you think is going on?
- 6 Pastor Doug noted that we often suppress truths which don't support what we **want** to believe about ourselves (III in [Sermon Summary](#)). **Why** do you think we prefer comfortable fiction to reality?
- 7 Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-29. Was there a time when you thought that the gospel was foolish? Tell us about it. What did you find faulty about the gospel? With whom did you debate these things?
- 8 The world finds the gospel foolish—but the solution to this situation will probably surprise you! Read Romans 10:17. What are we to do for those who think the gospel is foolish?
- 9 How does Acts 17:30-32 illustrate **our** role in evangelism? What is **God's** role (see Acts 13:46-48)?
- 10 Regardless of how people respond, are we **ever** a failure when we share the gospel (see 2 Corinthians 2:14-16)?

## Application-Challenge

- If you have been suppressing the truth about God—don't wait another moment—place your trust in Christ and live for him, every day.
- Never be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.

- 1 A soft-ball discussion-starter. Not unimportant, but don't take **too much** time on it. Limit discussion.
- 2 **This one is** an important question. It's sets the topic for the rest of this week's discussion.
- 3 Again, this question begins to zero-in on the nub of this week's discussion. Go for substantive answers.
- 4 My hunch is that people tend to feel that **their own** response was justifiable, but when **God** is wrathful at ingratitude, it often rubs us wrong. This is an important question—go for honesty and depth in answers.
- 5 We suppress the truth of God's existence (v. 18) and exchange that truth for a lie (v. 25), worshiping idols rather than the true God. Regarding "man's quest for truth"—we flatter ourselves. If we really wanted the truth, it's "evident within us, for God made it evident to us" (v. 19). Our "quest" could be a short one if we didn't push God away. Yes, we're hypocrites. We **say** we want truth, even as we suppress it.
- 6 This question is going to require "soul-bearing honesty"—you may need to lead off with your own "true confession mie culpa"! Help your group be honest with this one.
- 7 If nobody in your group formerly was a scoffer, you can broaden it to "Who do you know who..." However, bear in mind that the follow-up questions ("What did you find faulty about the gospel? With whom did you debate these things?) will fall flat if nobody can tell a first-person narrative, so seek to find a story within your group.
- 8 Since "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ", we must keep on bringing it around to the gospel. That is the message that God promises to use to bring people to himself. Many won't respond, but those who do, will do so because we keep the message of Christ front and center.
- 9 We proclaim. God gifts some with faith to respond.
- 10 Never. Our responsibility is to witness faithfully. God's responsibility is to draw people to himself. Some other verses to explore include John 6:37, 44 & 65 and 1 Corinthians 3:5–7.

## Sermon Summary (Key Text: Romans 1:16-21)

How can a person know whether or not God exists? Paul gives the most **brilliant, four-part answer.**

**I. We can know that there is a God** (v. 19-20). We can infer God's existence by observing the world around us. It is a clue—not an undeniable proof, but a clue—to God's existence. Paul is saying that, if our hearts and minds were in better condition, if we were more objective, we would more readily acknowledge the clues we find in creation. Creation reveals God's eternal power and divine nature. After all, it's logical that (1) whatever begins to exist has a cause, (2) the universe began to exist, and therefore (3) the universe has a cause. The Big Bang takes us back to some ultimate beginning—to some uncaused cause. An uncaused cause is something supernatural, something beyond nature: God. Beyond that, the world is so perfectly designed it can't be an accident. Physicists tell us that for life to exist, the universe has to be perfectly calibrated—and it is! Atheists spend a lot of time trying to refute these arguments—which proves how powerful they are as clues to the existence of God. (To do this, they postulate that there are zillions of universes, and we just happen to be one of the ones where life happened. Convenient, isn't it?) I think it is much more likely that our universe was designed by an eternal Creator.

**II. We already know that there is a God** (v. 18-20). God made his existence evident within us. We know God exists but choose to live as though we don't know it, and that makes God angry. At some very deep level every human being knows that God exists. We know it, but we suppress that knowledge. There is a **part of our heart** that, as it views the world around us, can't escape the conclusion that this is not a cosmic accident! There must be a divine being behind it all. But v. 21 argues that there is **another part of our heart** that can't bear for that to be true. God's existence threatens our perceived independence, and so we actively suppress that truth and believe a lie. When you read the autobiographies of prominent atheist-intellectuals who once laughed at religion and Christianity, you discover that they didn't come to faith because they came across some new argument for the existence of God. Rather, they admit that on some level they had believed in God all along, but had suppressed that knowledge.

**III. We don't believe in the God we already know about.** Deep down, we know God exists. Yet we suppress that knowledge. Somehow, we manage to hold both beliefs at the same time. We do this all the time: all of us like to think of ourselves in certain ways, but when the data doesn't match our vision of self, what do we do? Do we adjust that preferred vision of self? No—we suppress the data that disagrees with it! That's what we do with respect to God's existence. Knowledge of God is traumatic and life-altering because it means that we must give him the honor and respect that he deserves (v. 21). We are dependent upon God for every breath we take, for all that we are and have—but we like to think that we are responsible for all of this. We like to see ourselves as masters of our own fate; we determine what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust. We're impersonating God, and that makes him angry. Creation screams that there is a Creator, but we persist in our ingratitude.

**IV. We can truly know God** (v. 19-20). Creation tells us that God is invisible, eternal, powerful and divine, but there are many things we can't know about God just by looking at nature. Nature doesn't tell us anything about God's love or care and concern for us. To know God as he truly is we need the Bible (John 3:16). God is angry with us because we ungratefully suppress truth about him and deify ourselves. God decrees that the wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23). Our sin violates God's justice and evokes his wrath, which expresses itself in God's penalty—spiritual death. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes; the righteous live by faith (Romans 1:16-17). Despite our ingratitude, disobedience, and suppression of truth, God loves us and Jesus endured God's wrath for our sins. Who else loves you like that? The answer is no one. And you won't learn about God's great love by gazing at a beautiful sunset. You learn about God's love in the Bible. Place your trust in Christ and live for him, every day. And, never be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**"Five-Question Bible Study"** (see page below) *is a simple way to study any passage. We can use it to study how to know God...*

**Monday**—Read John 17:1-5. How do John 5:24 and 1 John 5:20 shed light on v. 3?

**Tuesday**— Read John 17:6-12. How does v. 9 identify true believers? Does that describe you?

**Wednesday**— Read John 17:13-19. To "sanctify" is to "set apart for special use". **What** sanctifies us?

**Thursday**— Read John 17:20-24. What is the relationship between "glory" and "oneness" (unity)?

**Friday**— Read John 17:25-26. What **results from** knowing God?

**Saturday**—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord together with your church family,***  
read **Matthew 1:18-25.**



## **PointMan** Breakfast at the fire pit!

- **Saturday, December 4**
- **9<sup>00</sup>-10<sup>30</sup>am**
- **Just \$10**
- **Bring a camp chair**
- **Chick-fil-a breakfast** (gluten free option available)
- **To register: [tcc.org](http://tcc.org) Keyword: **firepit****



Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]