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## The Extent of Humanity's Sinfulness

Romans 1:28-32 (NASB), **“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”**

We have reached the end of Romans chapter one and the continuing indictment of mankind and his sinful depravity. Because of the fact that fallen humanity **“did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over”** in yet another way, in this case **“to a depraved mind.”** The godless mind of fallen humanity is **“a depraved mind,”** and the **“depraved mind”** inevitably chooses **“to do those things which are not proper.”**

The Greek word *adokimos* is used here and is translated to **“depraved”** and it has the meaning of standing the test. This term was commonly used of metals that were rejected because of impurities in the metal. As a result of their impurities these metals were then discarded so *adokimos* came to include the ideas of worthlessness and uselessness. How does this relate to God? The rejecting mind of humanity becomes a rejected mind and therefore it becomes spiritually **“depraved,”** worthless and useless. Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 6:30, **“They call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them.”** The mind that finds God to be worthless then becomes worthless itself. It is debauched, deceived, and deserving only of God's divine wrath.

In Job 21:14-15 we see the **“depraved mind”** on full display: **“They say to God, ‘Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, And what would we gain if we entreat Him?’”** Godless people believe with all their hearts that they are wise in fact not just wiser but wiser than everyone else, but in reality they are supremely foolish and stupid. Romans 1:22 says, **“Professing to be wise, they became fools.”** Regardless of someone's natural intelligence and their level of education, in the things of God they are devoid it says in Proverbs 1:7 of, **“the beginning of knowledge,”** because they lack a reverential fear of Him. They are merely **“fools [who] despise true wisdom and instruction.”**

God's chosen people the nation of Israel, even they fell into this same foolishness when they rejected or neglected the revelation and blessings that He had showered on them so abundantly. Jeremiah 4:22 says, **“For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children and have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know.”** Those who reject the One True God are then completely vulnerable it says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 to, **“the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”**

The list of sins that Paul proceeds to mention in verses 29-31 are by no means exhaustive, but they are representative of the virtually endless number of vices with which the sinful and depraved natural man is **“filled.”**

The first two sins that are mentioned in the text, **“all unrighteousness”** and **“wickedness,”** are comprehensive and general, they are synonyms that cover the entire range of the specific sins that follow. Some versions include the term *fornication* between these first two terms, but that word is not found in the most accurate Greek manuscripts. That does not mean that *fornication* would not be entirely appropriate here in this context, because fornication is universally condemned in Scripture and is frequently included by Paul in his other lists of vices. Fornication then is an implied sin and it is implied in the sin of impurity, which has already been mentioned in verse 24.

The sins that are then mentioned in the rest of this list are basically self-explanatory: **“greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”** The Greek term for **“untrustworthy”** literally means to break a covenant, which is reflected in some translations. **“Unloving”** relates especially to unnatural family relationships, such as that of a parent who abandons a young child or a grown child who abandons aging parents.

Paul reiterates here the fact that rebellious, ungodly people are without excuse, Paul writes that **“they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death.”** Back in verses 19-21 Paul had already established that since the creation of the world, God has made Himself plainly known to every single human being. John MacArthur writes that **“People do not recognize God because they do not want to recognize Him.”** This is why it says back in verse 18 that they willingly **“suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”** In John 3:19-20 Jesus said, **“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”**

Whether they recognize it or not, even those who have never been exposed to the revelation of God’s Word are instinctively aware of His existence and of God’s basic standards of righteousness. Romans 2:15 says, **“in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”**

The truth is that in most societies in the world today, even in those places that are considered uncivilized, most of these sins that Paul has listed are in fact considered wrong, and many of them are considered criminal. Humanity inherently knows that such things as greed, envy, murder, deceit, arrogance, disobedience, and mercilessness are indeed wrong.

The absolute bottom of the pit of wickedness is finally reached then the Apostle writes when those who themselves are involved in these evils **“also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”** It’s wicked and depraved enough to justify one’s own sin it is immeasurably worse to approve and even encourage others to sin. This is indeed where we are as a modern culture in America. We have many who are blatantly sinful, wicked, and perverse. Our culture

today openly condones and defends such evils as sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and many other sins and this is evidence that we have reached or are fast approaching the deepest levels of corruption. In our culture today sexually promiscuous celebrities are celebrated, homosexuality is celebrated, and in fact we are most likely mere days away from the Supreme Court announcing its decision which will most likely legalize same sex marriage; thus codifying into law blatant immorality. These acts of sin are in direct contradiction to the revealed will of God.

I will close our study of Romans 1 with a quote from John Adams: “Avarice, ambition, revenge and licentiousness would break the strongest cords of our Constitution, as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”