

EVANGELISM AND APOLOGETICS

Introduction: Romans 1:18-32

America is feeling the effects of turning its back on God. (vv. 18-32)

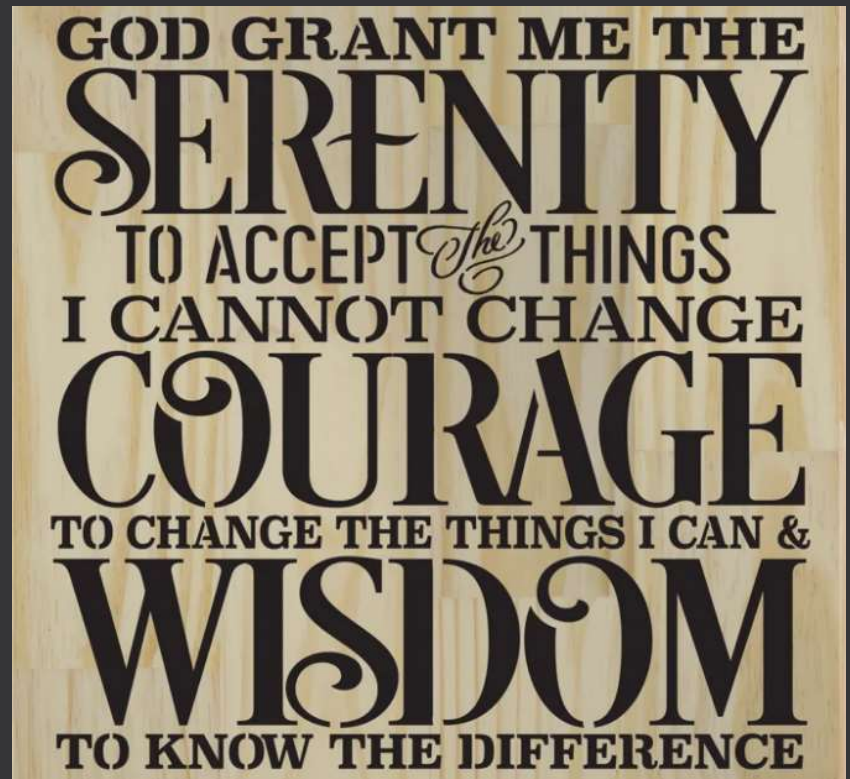
- Sexual revolution (v. 24)**
- Environmentalism (v. 25)**
- Homosexuality (vv. 26-27)**
- Every form of depravity (vv. 28-31)**
- Depravity is celebrated (v. 32)**

**AMERICAN CULTURE IS
IN DECLINE**

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

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- Join Habakkuk on the top of the mountain (Hab 3:16-19)
- Focus on what we can impact.



Jude 20-21

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. (NASB)

Jude 22-23

²² And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. (NASB)

- Focus on the “some” and “others” in your life.
- Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers

Key role of parents and grandparents

Parents

www.promisetoamericasparents.org

Grandparents

Deut 4:9 make known to sons & grd-sons

Deut 6:2 so sons & grd-son fear the Lord

Psa 78:4-6 tell generations to come

2 Tim 1:5 faith of mothers & grd-mothers

www.legacycoalition.com

www.thethink.institute/

Love your neighbor
Matt 22:36-40

Engaging the “Some” and the “Others”

Eph 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil.

. . . against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, . . . (HCSB)

2 Cor 5:18-20

¹⁸ Now everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ... (HCSB)

Gal 6:10

¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.
(HCSB)

Col 4:5-6

⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the time. ⁶ Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person. (HCSB)

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ but set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...¹⁶ However, do this with gentleness and respect... (HCSB)

2 Tim 2:24

24 The Lord's slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able to teach, and patient, instructing his opponents with gentleness. (HCSB)

Lessons from Paul's Engagements

- **Romans 1:18-32**
 - **“In house” reflections on the culture of the day**
- **Acts 17:16-34**
 - **Engaging the culture**
 - **Paul starts from where they are (vv. 16-23a)**

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols. **17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. **18** Then also, some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him.

18^b Some said, "What is this pseudo-intellectual trying to say?" Others replied, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities"—because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

19 They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, and said, "May we learn about this new teaching you're speaking of? 20 For what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these ideas mean."

21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new. 22 Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. 23a For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed:

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 - **He introduces a new thought (v. 23b)**

23b . . .Therefore, what you worship in ignorance,
this I proclaim to you.

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 - **Then he builds the bridge (vv. 24-29)**

24 The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. 25 Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. 26 From one man He has made every nation of men to live all over the earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live,

27 so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. **28** For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring. **29** Being God's offspring, then, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination. (HCSB)

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 - **Then he builds the bridge (vv. 24-29)**
 - **Finally confronts and invites (vv. 30-31)**

30 "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

32 When they heard about resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him. But others said, "We will hear you about this again." **33** So Paul went out from their presence. **34** However, some men joined him and believed, among whom were Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them. (HCSB)

BUT WHAT IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE IN GOD?

WHAT IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

**WHAT IF THEY HAVE NEGATIVE FEELINGS
TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY?**

HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT IT

How to Make Difficult Conversations Better

James 1:19-20

¹⁹My dearly loved brothers, understand this: everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, ²⁰ for man's anger does not accomplish God's righteousness.

(HCSB)

Nature of Good Conversations

- **There must be a willingness to listen**
 - **Where do we differ?**
 - **Why do these differences exist?**
- **Pursue mutual understanding ; then move into assessment**
- **Understand “why” the person has a different opinion, concern or priority. (Apply “active listening.”)**

Nature of Good Conversations

- When discussions become challenging, become more curious as to why the person thinks differently than you (without trying to predict where the other person's "head is").**
- Let them speak and receive their responses as sincere**
- Avoid dismissing what is being said by assuming a negative motive.**

Nature of Good Conversations

- Be curious and ask questions, *not to defeat the other person* but to move toward mutual understanding about why you disagree or where the differences and tension points are.
- Work to understand before asserting.

Nature of Good Conversations

- Learn to accurately paraphrase in the difficult moments in a way that assures your conversational partner that you understand them.**
- Recognize that it is possible to move towards someone and yet disagree with them. Remember James 1:19 (... slow to anger)**

Acts of Sabotage in Conversations

- **Quick confession with a pivot: “Yes, but your side is worse.”**
- **Using politically charged terms (racist, fascist, progressive, socialist, Marxist)**
- **Assigning motive (Only God know the heart.)**
- **Refusing to acknowledge “your side’s” faults**

General Suggestions

- **Be a gardener**
- **Stay on the offensive by asking questions**
 - **What do you mean by that?**
 - **How did you come to that conclusion?**
 - **What are your sources of authority?**
- **Be sure to leave the door open for further conversations.**

Examples

**Consider Caleb
Joshua 14:10-12**

Esther 14:4

**God has put us
in this time
and this place
for a purpose.**

He is not done

with any of us yet!