

Romans 1:21-25

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and darkened in their foolish hearts. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity for the dishonouring of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise! Amen.

Berean Study Bible

1

How to be a back-slider. Romans 1:21-25

Begin by doing nothing. 1:21a

Fail to acknowledge God. 21a “they knew God”

Fail to praise God. 21a “they neither glorified Him as God”

Fail to thank God. 21a “nor gave thanks to Him”

Drift into shallowness. 1:21b-23

Intellectually shallow. 21b “but they became futile in their thinking”

Emotionally shallow. 21b “and darkened in their foolish hearts”

Individually shallow. 22 “Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools,

Focus on self-centredness. 1:24

Spiritual problems. 24a “Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts”

Social problems. 24b “to impurity

Physical problems. 24b “for the dishonouring of their bodies with one another”

Rejection of God. 1:25

Invent a Godless way of thinking. 25a “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie,

Invent a Godless way of seeing. 25b “created things rather than the Creator”

Invent a Godless god. 25b “who is forever worthy of praise! Amen.”

2

Storm warning! Romans 1:21-25

Warning: Do not relegate God to second place. 1:21

Ignoring God is easy. 21a “they knew... not glorify... not thank”

Ignorance is inevitable. 21b “futile thinking... foolish hearts”

Warning: Do not replace God with anything else. 1:22-23

False claims lead to foolishness. 22 “claimed to be wise, became fools”

False praise is hollow honour. 23 “exchanged the glory”

Warning: Do not remove God from His pre-eminence. 1:24

Dishonour God. 24a “God gave them over”

Dishonour self. 24b “dishonouring of their bodies”

Warning: God is still God. 1:25

God’s Truth is still our authority. 25a “the truth of God”

God the Creator is still our answer. 25b “the Creator is forever worthy”

3

Lost and Found at the Baggage Claim. Romans 1:21-25

I arrived in Dallas, and I boarded my connecting flight to Cincinnati, but at the same time my luggage boarded a connecting flight to Miami.

What was lost. 1:21

Head knowledge was lost. 21a “although they knew God”

Heart knowledge was lost. 21b “neither glorified... nor gave thanks”

What was claimed. 1:22-23

False knowledge was claimed. 22 “claimed to be wise”

False honour was claimed. 23 “exchanged the glory... for images”

What was found. 1:24

People could have their heart’s desires. 24a “God gave them over in the desires”

People could do what their body desired. 24b “dishonouring of their bodies”

What was fact. 1:25

Truth can be replaced with a lie. 25a “exchanged the truth of God for a lie”

The Creator still rules His creation. 25b “the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise”

4

Why the blind man thought he could see. Romans 1:21-25

The blind man was indifferent to facts. 1:21

Failure to glorify. 21a “neither glorified Him as God”

Failure of gratitude. 21 “nor gave thanks to Him”

The blind man ignored the facts. 1:22-23

Rejecting reality. 22 “claimed to be wise, they became fools”

Replacing reality. 23 “exchanged the glory of the immortal God”

The blind man is injured by facts. 1:24

We can have what we want. 24a "gave them over in the desires of their hearts"
We will reap what we sow. 24b "dishonouring of their bodies with one another"

The blind man became ignorant of the facts. 1:25

Truth was replaced by lies. 25a "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie"
The Creator was replaced by creation. 25b "created things rather than the Creator"

5

Romans 1:21-25

How sinners treat God. 1:21-23

Sinners reject God. 21-22 "became fools"
Sinners replace God. 23 "exchanged the glory"

How God treats sinners. 1:24-25

Sinners are allowed our sin. 24 "God gave them over to..."
Sinners are allowed our gods. 25 "worshipped and served..."

6

Romans 1:21-25

Look and you will see God is real. 1:21

Everyone begins close to God. 21a "they knew God"
Everyone moves away from God. 21b "they became futile"

Look and you will see God is relational. 1:22-25

What God always gives. 24 "God gave them..."
What God always keeps. 25 "truth... worthy..."

7

Romans 1:21-25

God wants me to know Him through my mind. 1:20-21

I know God through insight. 20 "...clearly seen"
I know God through understanding. 21 "futile in their thinking and..."

God wants me to know Him through my heart. 1:22-25

I know God through practical wisdom. 22 "claimed to be wise..."
I know God through absolute truth. 25 "exchanged Truth for a lie"

8

Romans 1:21-25

Glory and thanks. 1:21

God's glory is my first response. 21

God's works demands my thanks. 21

Heart and body. 1:22-24

A pure life comes from a Godly heart. 24

A pure body comes from a Godly heart. 24

Exchange and serve. 25

Truth leads to blessing. 25 "He is blessed forever"

Lies leads to wrath. 25, 18 "exchanged truth for a lie"

9

Romans 1:21-25

God is secondary. 1:21

God is no longer recognised. 21a "although they knew God"

God is no longer appreciated. 21b "neither glorified... nor gave thanks"

God is substituted. 1:22-23

God is no longer consulted. 22 "claimed to be wise"

God is no longer prioritised. 23 "exchanged the glory... for images"

God is slipping from view. 1:24

God allows me whatever I want. 24a "God gave them over in the desires"

God is no longer in my choices. 24b "dishonouring of their bodies"

God is still sovereign. 1:25

God's Truth can be displaced. 25a "exchanged the truth of God for a lie"

God's Person still rules. 25b "the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise"

A (A similar outline also appeared in Romans 1:18-19)

Romans 1:21-25

Human rejection of God. 21-22

Human replacement of God. 23

Human rebellion against God. 24-25

B (A similar outline also appeared in Romans 1:18-19)

Downward spiral. Romans 1:19-25

First of all

God can be known. 19 “may be known”

God is known. 21 “they knew God”

Failure

Fail to glorify God. 21 “did not glorify”

Fail to thank God. 21 “nor were thankful”

Futility

Futile in mind. 21 “futile in their thoughts”

Futile in heart. 21 “foolish hearts were darkened”

Foolishness

Promote self. 22 “Professing to be wise”

Promote creation. 23 “into an image...”

Faith

I can intervene at any point and reverse the spiral

C

What can I get away with? Romans 1:22-32

What is the point of no return? ‘Pharaoh hardened his heart.’ ‘My Spirit will not always strive with humanity.’

God gives them their distorted will. 22-23

False wisdom. 22

False spirituality. 23

God gives them their distorted emotions. 24-27

Reversed in mind. 25

Reversed in body. 26-27

God gives them their distorted actions. 28-32

Do wrong themselves. 28

Approve wrong in others. 32

Other possible titles

You do not want to mess with God.

Yes, God will give you what you want.
Journey to a 'better' god
Take me to your leader, so I can replace him
When the Swap Meet goes bad
Trading away Truth
When God gives up
Pawning Paradise for pennies
Warning: God may give you what you want!
What went wrong?
Things are not as they seem
Have you succumbed to Stockholm Syndrome?

Cross-references and commentary

For although they knew God, 21a

Yet He has not left Himself without testimony to His goodness: He gives you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14:17

The true Light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. John 1:9

For what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. Romans 1:19

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from His workmanship, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:20

¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts. Ephesians 4:17-18

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:3

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true—in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and darkened in their foolish hearts. 21b

³For the wicked man boasts in the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.

⁴In his pride the wicked man does not seek Him;
in all his schemes there is no God.

⁵He is secure in his ways at all times;
Your lofty judgments are far from him; Psalm 10:3-5

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity, with a craving for more. Ephesians 4:17-19

If we come to the Scriptures with our minds made up, expecting to hear from it only an echo of our own thoughts, and never the thunderclap of God's, then indeed He will not speak to us and we shall only be confirmed in our own prejudices. We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behaviour. John Stott

²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools,

²⁸Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
they will earnestly seek me, but will not find me.

²⁹For they hated knowledge
and chose not to fear the LORD.

³⁰They accepted none of my counsel;
they despised all my reproof.

³¹So they will eat the fruit of their own way,
and be filled with their own devices. Proverbs 1:28-31

All day long I have held out My hands to an obstinate people who walk in the wrong path, who follow their own imaginations, Isaiah 65:2

²³but this is what I commanded them: Obey Me, and I will be your God, and you will be My people. You must walk in all the ways I have commanded you, so that it may go well with you. ²⁴Yet they did not listen or incline their ear, but they followed the

stubborn inclinations of their own evil hearts. They went backward and not forward.
Jeremiah 7:23-24

⁵I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers. Such branches are gathered up, thrown into the fire, and burned. John 15:5-6

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 1 Corinthians 1:21

Suppose a poor and homeless man finds a map that tells him where a great treasure is buried. But he looks at the map, thinks it is foolishness and will not believe it is real. The way is there, the instruction is there, yet he cannot use the information. The man just refuses to believe what the map says. The unsaved are in this dilemma. The truth that would will save them is but foolishness to them because they will not believe. (With thanks to Cooper Abrams)

²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

¹⁴Yet they say to God: 'Leave us alone!

For we have no desire to know Your ways.

¹⁵Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him,

and what would we gain if we pray to Him?' Job 21:14-15

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."

They are corrupt; their acts are vile. There is no one who does good. Psalm 14:1

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

all who follow His precepts gain rich understanding.

His praise endures forever! Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10

He feeds on ashes.

His deluded heart has led him astray,
and he cannot deliver himself or say,
“Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?” Isaiah 44:20

“For My people are fools;
they have not known Me.
They are foolish children,
without understanding.
They are skilled in doing evil,
but they know not how to do good.” Jeremiah 4:22

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over, 24a

God wants everyone to be saved. He has made it possible for everyone to be saved.
In fact, it is God’s will that everyone be saved.

God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world could be saved through Him. John 3:17

¹⁴Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that **One died for all**, therefore all died. ¹⁵And **He died for all**, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Cor. 5:14-15

God was in Christ **reconciling the world** to Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:19

⁵There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a **ransom for all**. 1 Timothy 2:5-6a

To this end we labor and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the **Saviour of everyone**, and especially of those who believe. 1 Timothy 4:10

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing **salvation to everyone**. Titus 2:11

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God **He might taste death for everyone**. Hebrews 2:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not willing anyone to perish but **everyone** to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also **for the sins of the whole world**. 1 John 2:2

But for those who do not want to be saved, God will step back and allow sinful people to go their own sinful ways, even to their own destruction.

¹¹But My people would not listen to Me,
and Israel would not obey Me.

¹²**So I gave them up** to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices. Psalm 81:11-12

Ephraim is joined to idols; **leave him alone!** Hosea 4:17

Leave them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. Matthew 15:14

“God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired.” 24a (New Living Translation) In this whole sorry paragraph, the words “they” or “their” occur ten times in this short paragraph. The emphasis is on human choices, human actions, and human failings. By contrast, verse 24a is the only point where God takes an active role; and His role is simply to step back and allow sinners to do whatever they want to do. He never forces us to do anything we do not want to do.

Note the similarities between Romans 1:21-25, and God’s dealings with pharaoh in the lead up to the Exodus.

1. God forewarns Moses, He will harden Pharaoh’s heart. Exodus 4:21, 7:3
2. Pharaoh’s heart repeatedly hardens. Exodus 7:13, 7:22
3. Pharaoh repeatedly hardens his own heart. Exodus 8:15,19,32
4. God confirms Pharaoh’s choice. Exodus 9:12. At last, God intervenes.
5. Pharaoh continues harden his own heart. Exodus 9:35
6. God again confirms Pharaoh’s choice. Exodus 10:1,20,27, 11:10, 14:4,8,17

²⁴ ...in the desires of their hearts, 24a

And you have done more evil than your fathers. See how each of you follows the stubbornness of his evil **heart** instead of obeying Me. Jeremiah 16:12

The **heart** is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9

¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the **heart**, and these things defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander. ²⁰These are what defile a man, but eating with unwashed hands does not defile him.” Matthew 15:18-20 / Mark 7:21-23

³⁷Although Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still did not believe in Him. ³⁸This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

“Lord, who has believed our message?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹For this reason they were unable to believe. For again, Isaiah says:

⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes

and hardened their **hearts**,

so that they cannot see with their eyes,

and understand with their **hearts**,
and turn,
and I would heal them.” John 12:37-40

The working of Satan, with every kind of power, sign, and false wonder, ¹⁰and with every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, because they refused the love of the Truth that would have saved them. ¹¹For this reason God will send them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie, 2 Thessalonians 2:9b-11

to impurity for the dishonouring of their bodies with one another. 24b

For a fool speaks foolishness;
his mind plots iniquity.
He practices ungodliness
and speaks falsely about the LORD;
he leaves the hungry empty
and deprives the thirsty of drink. Isaiah 32:6

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your **bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.
Romans 12:1

¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore, glorify God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. Galatians 2:20

Having lost all sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity, with a craving for more. Ephesians 4:19

¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the passions of your former ignorance. ¹⁵But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, ¹⁶for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” 1 Peter 1:14-16

⁴As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious in God’s sight, ⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

Sinful people place their desires in their bodies, rather than their spirit or soul. Thus, they reduce themselves from “made in the image of God” to actions in the image of animals.

They exchanged the **Truth** of God for a lie, 25a

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of Grace and **Truth**.
John 1:14

But whoever lives by the **Truth** comes into the Light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. John 3:21

³¹So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples. ³²Then you will know the **Truth**, and the **Truth** will set you free.”
John 8:31-32

⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you are unable to accept My message. ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out his desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, refusing to uphold the **Truth**, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, because he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵But because I speak the **Truth**, you do not believe Me! John 8:43-45

Jesus answered, “I am The Way, and The **Truth**, and The Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me. John 14:6

But when He, the Spirit of **Truth**, comes, He will guide you into all the **Truth**. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. John 16:13

Sanctify them by the **Truth**; Your Word is **Truth**. John 17:17

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the **Truth** in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30

The wrath of God is being revealed from Heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the **Truth** by their wickedness, Romans 1:18

Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on **Truth**. Romans 2:2

But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the **Truth** and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. Romans 2:8

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the **Truth**. 1 Corinthians 13:6

³And even if our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of **Truth**, the Gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13

Instead, speaking The **Truth** in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15

¹⁰and with every wicked deception directed against those who are perishing, because they refused the love of the **Truth** that would have saved them. ¹¹For this reason God will send them a powerful delusion so that they believe the lie, ¹²in order that judgment may come upon all who have disbelieved the **Truth** and delighted in wickedness. 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

[God] who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the **Truth**. 1 Timothy 2:4

Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the **Truth**, 2 Timothy 2:25

who are weighed down with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷who are always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the **Truth**. 2 Timothy 3:6b-7

³For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. ⁴So they will turn their ears away from the **Truth** and turn aside to myths. 2 Timothy 4:3-4

and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is forever worthy of praise! Amen.

⁷But ask the animals, and they will instruct you;
ask the birds of the air, and they will tell you.

⁸Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;
let the fish of the sea inform you.

⁹Which of all these does not know

that the hand of the LORD has done this? Job 12:7-9

¹The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of His hands.

²Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.

³Without speech or language,
without a sound to be heard,

⁴their voice has gone out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world. Psalm 19:1-4

Humans continue to make the same mistake that turned Lucifer into Satan.

¹²How you have fallen from Heaven,
O shining one [Lucifer], son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the ground,
O destroyer of nations.

¹³You said in your heart:
“I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God.

I will sit on the mount of assembly,
in the far reaches of the north.

¹⁴I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.”

¹⁵But you will be brought down to Sheol,
to the lowest depths of the Pit. Isaiah 14:12-15

Illustrations and quotes

Create a simple graph:

As we move away from the true God. (Left to right, up to down)

So we move towards ourselves as God. (Left to right, down to up)

Quotes on disputes

Our culture has accepted two huge lies. The first is that if you disagree with someone's lifestyle, you must fear or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate. Rick Warren

Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are incapable of forming such opinions. Albert Einstein, *Essay to Leo Baeck*, 1953

I don't have to agree with you, to like you or respect you. Anthony Bourdain

Truth does not become more true by virtue of the fact that the entire world agrees with it, nor less so even if the whole world disagrees with it. Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*

Jasnah had once defined a fool as a person who ignored information because it disagreed with desired results. Brandon Sanderson, *Words of Radiance*

He who cannot put his thoughts on ice should not enter into the heat of dispute. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*

Together, we form a necessary paradox; not a senseless contradiction. Criss Jami, *Healology*

‘That was excellently observed’, say I, when I read a passage in an author, where his opinion agrees with mine. When we differ, there I pronounce him to be mistaken. Jonathan Swift

The rich, the poor, the high professor and the profane, seem all to be infected with this grievous disorder, so that the love of our neighbour seems to be quite banished, the love of self and opinions so far prevails. Christopher Marshall

In the age of, “if you disagree, then you are against me” mentality, it is difficult to separate the person from their position. You having a position/opinion on something does not define who you are, but simply what you are thinking today. The opinion is not the person. Thomas Plummer

Quotes on tolerance

Love is wise; hatred is foolish. In this world, which is getting more and more closely interconnected, we have to learn to tolerate each other, we have to learn to put up with the fact that some people say things that we don't like. We can only live together in that way. But if we are to live together, and not die together, we must learn a kind of charity and a kind of tolerance, which is absolutely vital to the continuation of human life on this planet. Bertrand Russell

I will never compromise Truth for the sake of getting along with people who can only get along when we agree. D R Silva

Structure, Romans 1:18-32

This Scripture begins, 1:18-20; and ends, 1:29-32; with a simple inversion parallelism, flowing A¹ A² A³ and reversing B³ B² B¹.

Within these ‘bookends’ is a less structured mixed parallelism, 1:21-28, that runs C¹ E¹ D¹ F¹ E² D² F² C² D³. This is not a simple step parallelism, but is more like a dance parallelism. It is rather like a complicated knitting pattern that only your grandmother could read, but from which she could produce a garment of astonishing complexity and beauty.

A¹ Anger of God, 18

A² God is known, 19

A³ God’s nature is clearly seen, 20

C¹ Failed to honour God, 21-23
 E¹ They exchanged the glory of God, 23
D¹ God gave them over, 24a
 F¹ Dishonour their bodies, 24b
 E² They exchanged the Truth of God, 25
D² God gave them over, 26
 F² Dishonour their bodies, 27
C² Failed to honour God, 28a
 D³ God gave them up, 28b

 B³ Ungodly nature is clearly seen, 29-31
 B² God is known, 32a
B¹ Justice of God, 32b

Music and songs

Songs about knowing God, 21a

All I once held dear... Knowing You, Jesus (Kendrick)
Be still and know that I am God, 114
Everybody ought to know, HCJ 43
Father God I wonder... the knowledge of Your parenthood, Ot 13
I cannot tell... but this I know, H 185
I know who holds tomorrow, CWH 84
I know whom I have believed, H 651
I serve a risen Saviour... You ask me how I know, H 725

Songs about glorifying God, 21a

Above all, TS 611
At the cross / I'm not ashamed, H 732
I want to praise You, Lord, Ot 70
Glory (Go Fish! Statema, Rust) Ot 59
Jesus is the answer for the world today, Ot 82
O church arise (Getty, Townend), Ot 68
Our God reigns, SiS 201
Sing your praise to the Lord (Mullins)
Stand and bless the Lord (Fettke), Ot 91
Stand up and bless the Lord your God, Ot 71
The greatness of our God
What a wonderful life, Ot 39
Worthy of all praise, Ot 1

Songs about thanking God, 21a

Consider Christ... Mere words alone are not sufficient thanks. Ot 2
It's a good thing to give thanks, Ot 75
My heart is filled with thankfulness, Ot 97
Thanksgiving... Thank you Lord for giving yourself to us (Rob Smith), OT 28
There's a quiet understanding... Thank You, thank You, thank You, Jesus, FE 21

Songs about avoiding darkness, 22

A better life (Owens)
Mr Bad. Mr Evil (Leiken, Gassman)
Purify my heart, 657
Yes He did / I can tell the world, FE 61

Songs about the Creator, 25

Across the lands, Ot 29
The earth is the Lord's, Ot 131
The heavens shall declare, 537
There is a higher throne (Getty), Ot 95
This is my Father's world, H 615

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion.

1. Many people drift in and out of churches. What are they looking for? Why don't they find what they need?
 2. What are the first steps of drifting away from God, 21a? Explain the consequences, 21b.
 3. How does losing the knowledge of God, lead to losing ourselves?
 4. How does glorifying, and thanking, 21a, keep us spiritually vibrant?
 5. Why is the claim of 22a such a big problem?
 6. Why would it be a bad thing to get your heart's desires, 24a?
 7. What is the "Truth of God" 25a that everyone needs to accept?
 8. We do not practice idolatry, so how could the problem of 25b apply to us, personally and as a society?
 9. Why is the last line of 25 such a fitting conclusion?
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