

# CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH

GROWTH GROUP CURRICULUM

May 26, 2019

## "CITY OF GOD" - Week 3

For more information or to join a Growth Group, please visit our Growth Group page online at [cbclife.org/groups](http://cbclife.org/groups) or call the church office at 408.288.4115.

### QUICK REVIEW

For those who weren't there or even those who didn't understand it very well it will help them to get acquainted with the text and topic. These questions are also designed to be "softball" questions in order to get people to engage and participate.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

This is an opportunity to clarify the teaching for those who may not have understood it. This can also be a jumping off point for great discussion. Sometimes groups don't get past this question and that's ok! Remember, you want to "scratch where it itches" so don't feel the need to rush past this.

2. What is one thing from Sunday's message you are likely to remember two weeks from now?

### MY STORY

1. Talk about some of the idols that people have a tendency to set up in their lives. In today's day and age, idols have evolved and become more complex. How have you seen the onset of technology as a threat to creating idols in your own lives?

Social currency and approval are idols that have grown teeth and claws since the advent of social media. The tremendous wealth that has been accrued by some here in The Valley has surely impacted the prevailing idols in our culture.

### DIGGING DEEPER

Read aloud Romans 1:18-25 and then work through the questions below.

[Romans 1:18-25 \(NIV\)](#)

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

1. What is the reason that our minds and hearts become “futile” and “darkened?” (Look especially at verse 21a)

Verse 21 states that the reason is that we neither glorified or gave thanks to Him. If we unpack those terms we find out that Paul is saying; because we do not ascribe to God the importance (glory) or gratitude (“gave thanks”) that our minds and hearts become unclear and muddled. As a result we base our decisions on false pretenses.

2. According to these verses, what are some of the results of idolatry in our lives? Has this been true in your own experience? Share examples.

This question may be challenging for some to answer. As a group leader you may want to model the transparency you want to see develop among your group.

3. What do these verses tell us about the wrath of God?

Paul tells us that “God gave them over”. God’s wrath here looks more like loving, corrective discipline than blind rage. Pastor Jeff used the example of letting his kids “eat the whole box of cookies” knowing that sometimes the most corrective action is to give someone exactly what they are asking for.

4. John Calvin describes us as “a perpetual factory of idols.” What are some examples of personal idols?

There are “good” idols and “bad” idols. It is important for your group to realize that the most destructive types of idols aren’t necessarily “bad” things. The most destructive idols are often “good” things that we turn into “ultimate” things. A spouse, a child, even religion can be especially destructive if we give them preeminence over Christ.

5. Archbishop William Temple said, “Your religion is what you do with your solitude.” When you are alone what do you tend to think about most? Where do your thoughts go naturally, instinctively, habitually? How does this help identify your idols?

The goal of this question is to encourage introspection in your group. The things that occupy us in our solitude are very frequently “road signs” showing us the objects of our deepest concerns and affections.

6. In his book, *Gods That Fail*, Vinoth Ramachandra quotes Psalm 115 on idols: "Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them." He writes, "Noes the shattering conclusion: we become like what we worship." Do we? In what way and why

Ramachandra's point here is two fold; 1. We will become like what we worship. 2. If we worship inanimate things as opposed to the living God, we will become inanimate ourselves, or putting it another way, less human. One of the great themes of Scripture is the hardening and softening of the human heart (Ex 4, 7, 6, Dt 2, Is 6, etc...) If we worship things made of metal or stone our hearts will become like them, hard. Conversely, when we praise God fr who He is and what He has done through Jesus Christ our hearts will soften and we become more like Christ.

### **TAKING IT HOME**

1. What are the ways in which you can practically identify the idols in you own life and write down some ways you can start to redirect those attractions to idols and shift your focus to worshipping Christ?
2. Much of the ways in which we grow out of our idolatry is to immerse ourselves in the cause of Christ. Loving your neighbor as your love yourself becomes the biggest, practical way to rid ourselves of idolatry. Shift your focus this week to expand your view of love.
3. Who are those people who are hard to like that you can focus on showing the love of Christ this week? Between the "prosper you" of verse 11 and the "prosperity of the city" of verse 7? What was the purpose of the exile, according to verses 11–14? Why do you think these verses were included in the letter?

### **ANNOUCNEMENTS**

- June 9th is our Luau. We will have games and fun for the kids. Invite some friends to join us for a time of fun and fellowship.