



### **Introduction**

The Christian faith rests upon the confession that we “...believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” We recognize, therefore, that the Creator and the world that He has made (objective reality) precede us (Gen. 1:1). The introduction of sin into the world, however, has negatively affected both our minds and hearts, leading us to suppress the truth and to misunderstand ourselves and the world (subjective reality).

**Main Point:** The failure to rightly recognize God as our Creator leads us live our lives in accordance with a \_\_\_\_\_ rather than the \_\_\_\_\_.

## ***How Did We Get Here?***

### **The Creator-Creation Distinction**

Rom. 11:36—For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

- \* That all things are *from* Him means that all of creation has its \_\_\_\_\_ in God.
- \* That all things are *through* Him means that all of creation is \_\_\_\_\_ upon God to be sustained.
- \* That all things are *to* Him means that all of creation is to serve the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ God.

“From the very first moment, true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between God and the world, including man, as that between the Creator and his creature. The idea of existence apart from and independent from God occurs nowhere in Scripture. God is the sole, unique, and absolute cause of all that exists...The world is the product of his will...it is the revelation of his perfections...and finds its goal in his glory...” —Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*

**Key Point:** As creatures of the Creator, our chief end is found in \_\_\_\_\_ Him in the world that He has made.

### **The Rejection of the Creator-Creation Distinction—Romans 1:18-23,25**

#### **1. Mankind is under the righteous \_\_\_\_\_ of God because of the rejection of His truth.**

Rom. 1:18—For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

#### **2. The truth about who God is as Creator is shown through the \_\_\_\_\_ He has made.**

Rom. 1:19-20—<sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

“There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance, God has implanted in all men a certain understanding of His divine majesty.”  
—John Calvin, *Institutes*

#### **3. The rejection of the truth about God has affected both the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of mankind.**

Rom. 1:21—For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

*“futile...thinking”*

⇒ This is often referred to as the noetic (*nous* - “mind” Gk.) effects of sin. This means that our ability to think and reason is impaired concerning the things of God (doubt, skepticism) and in how to live well in the world (meaning, purpose).

Eccl. 2:11—Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity...

*“hearts...darkened”*

⇒ The heart is the place of our loves and desires. Because the word used here is the same found in Eph. 6:12 (“this present darkness”) of the present evil age, we should recognized the tendency of our desires to be conformed to those of the surrounding culture.

#### **4. That mankind does not rightly worship God as Creator does not mean that they \_\_\_\_\_ to worship.**

Rom. 1:22-23,25—<sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things...<sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

- ⇒ Glory is about what we celebrate and enjoy. In our rejection of God as Creator, we have exchanged the greatest glory for the \_\_\_\_\_ glories of His creations.
- ⇒ Truth gives us the \_\_\_\_\_ by which we are to make sense of ourselves and the world in which we live. We have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, thereby skewing our understanding of these things.

**Key Point:** We are shown to be idolators in that we have replaced God with ourselves as the ultimate \_\_\_\_\_ over our lives.

## **The Results of Rejecting the Creator-Creation Distinction—Rom. 1:24,26-32**

### **1. God’s wrath is shown to be upon mankind in that He has \_\_\_\_\_ to us what we want.**

*“God gave them up...”*—παράδιδωμι (*paradidōmi*)—To hand over or give up. (1:24,26,28)

- ⇒ This is often referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_ wrath of God because He is simply handing us over to ourselves and the natural consequences of our actions.

### **2. How mankind seeks the gratification of \_\_\_\_\_ evidences the darkness of our hearts.**

Rom. 1:24—*Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves*  
*“impurity”* *“dishonoring”*

Rom. 1:26-27—<sup>26</sup>*For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;* <sup>27</sup>*and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

- ⇒ Because of the rejection of God and His design, the body and its desires are often viewed as \_\_\_\_\_ rather than \_\_\_\_\_.

### **3. How mankind \_\_\_\_\_ to God and to their fellow man is evidence of the futility of our thinking.**

Rom. 1:28-32—<sup>28</sup>*And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* <sup>29</sup>*They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* <sup>30</sup>*slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* <sup>31</sup>*foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* <sup>32</sup>*Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*

- ⇒ Because of the rejection of God and His design, we often \_\_\_\_\_ the image of God in others by how we treat them or view ourselves in relation to them.

- ⇒ Because God will not condone our sinful conduct, we often seek to \_\_\_\_\_ our fellow sinners while also seeking \_\_\_\_\_ from them regarding our own sin.

**Key Point:** Our idolatry will be revealed in how we \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves in the world.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

- **Idolatry of ‘the self’ in our culture is evidenced most clearly in the form of expressive \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“Expressive individualism holds that human beings are defined by their individual psychological core, and that the purpose of life is allowing that core to find social expression in relationships. Anything that challenges it is deemed oppressive.”*

—Carl Trueman

***We must therefore hold to the truth that God is our \_\_\_\_\_ and that who we are and how we are to live must be informed by what He says is good and right.***

- **Although the \_\_\_\_\_ we see in the surrounding culture may grieve us, it should also remind us of God’s grace to us through Christ.**

Rom. 1:16-17—<sup>16</sup>*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* <sup>17</sup>*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*



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- \* That all things are *to* Him means that all of creation is to serve the purpose of **glorifying** God.

“From the very first moment, true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between God and the world, including man, as that between the Creator and his creature. The idea of existence apart from and independent from God occurs nowhere in Scripture. God is the sole, unique, and absolute cause of all that exists...The world is the product of his will...it is the revelation of his perfections...and finds its goal in his glory...” —Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*

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