



Pastor's Perspective — What's Shaping Your Perspective of God?

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Idolatry may seem passé, but it's actually alive and well. The writers of the *Life Application Commentary* on the book of Romans help us to understand some of the reasons why:

Idolatry begins when people reject what they know about God. Instead of looking to Him as the Creator and sustainer of life, they see themselves as the center of the universe. They soon invent gods that are convenient projections of their own selfish plans and decrees. These gods may be wooden figures, or they may be things we desire—such as money, power, or comfort. They may even be misrepresentations of God Himself—a result of making God in their own image, instead of the reverse. (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers. 1992. 30)

An idol doesn't have to be a figure on your mantle...

An idol doesn't have to be a figure on your mantle that you pray or burn incense to. An idol can be a mental image of God that distorts what the Bible actually teaches about Him. This kind of idolatry is often betrayed in the phrase: "I like to think of God as _____." What's used to fill in the blank may take many different directions—any one of which

may be fine in itself, but the problem is that such thoughts are often coupled with a denial of something else the Bible teaches about God—for example, that He is Judge. We've all heard this line of reasoning: "I don't like to think of Him as a Judge, but as a loving Savior."

That kind of subjectivism can inject just as much idolatrous limiting and projecting and controlling and subtracting as the grossest devotion to material images. As J.I. Packer has

put so well: "It needs to be said with the greatest possible emphasis that those who hold themselves to be free to think of God as they like are breaking the second commandment" (*Knowing God*, 42)—they are making an idol and then bowing down to worship it as if it were God, which it is not since it is He who created us and not we Him.

This is why it's so important to build our understanding of God from what the Bible tells us about Him. For it is there, in God's own Word to us, that He has revealed Himself uniquely and offered us life in His Son. The Bible makes the unknowable God knowable, the unseen God seen and the distant God near. It also tells us that it is *in Him we live and move and have our being* (Acts 17:28).

What's shaping your perspective of God these days—the Bible or something else?

The Romans Road

Verses from the book of Romans have long been used to share the gospel with those who need to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Because these verses point the way to a right relationship with God through personal faith in Jesus, they function like a road map and are often termed "The Romans Road."

Below is a brief digest of "The Romans Road." It's provided here as a pocket guide that you can cut out, fold and keep in your pocket, wallet or purse.

Romans 3:23. We have all sinned. We've all done things that are displeasing to God. Sin separates us from God because He is without sin and must punish sin.

Romans 6:23. The penalty of our sin is death. This death involves separation from God. But God has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him through the free gift of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8. The free gift of His Son is a demonstration of God's love for us. Jesus, God's Son, died in our place, suffering the penalty of our sin. This demonstration of God's love was provided even though it was undeserved because of our sin.

Romans 10:9. We receive this gift of eternal life when we simply believe that Jesus died in our place, for our sin and rose again.

Romans 10:13. We must individually and personally ask God to save us.

When sharing the gospel, it's always appropriate to ask the person we're talking with if they would like to believe in Jesus and be saved.

The Romans Road

- Romans 3:23—For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- Romans 6:23—For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 5:8—But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 10:9—That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
- Romans 10:13—For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Sometimes, in extending this invitation, the person will ask what they should say in calling on the Lord. One response that you might give is to say that they should tell God that they know that they are a sinner and that they believe Jesus is God's Son, and that He died for them and rose again. Another suggestion would be to lead them in a simple prayer like the following:

"Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I confess that He died for my sin and rose again. Please save me. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Remember, this guide won't do much good if it stays in your pocket. We encourage you to use it to share the gospel with those who need to know Jesus Christ as Savior. What a privilege we have to tell others what God has provided through Him!

English as a Second Language



On May 23, we will conclude another year of Thursday night ESL classes, and once again Brian Platt can report with enthusiasm about the blessings of this ministry. We continue to have around twenty to thirty students every week, and they usually represent every continent on the globe. We teach them for two hours each week, and part of that time is devoted to Bible instruction. In the middle of the two-

hour block on Thursday evening we have a break time, which gives us the opportunity to chat with our students and find out what's going on in their lives. Those chats enable us to pray for our students with greater specificity. Many of our students have very basic needs in their lives: they need jobs, they are separated from family members in their home countries, their housing situation is unstable, they sometimes lack basic economic security, and so on. Our students are almost always deeply moved to hear that we are praying for them in regard to such matters. And whenever we can, we try to follow up by ministering to our students outside the classroom.

Our instructional and support staff has remained very stable over the years. Lee Hoggard and Sherry Wasserstein teach the literacy class; Brian and Mary Ann teach the beginner class; Pete English and Deanne Mahoney teach the intermediate class; and Nancy Gardner and Pastor Lindholm teach the advanced class. Kathy Buckley and Neita Lindholm offer various kinds of support for the ministry, from setting out snacks for break time to registration and record-keeping. We are also delighted that Kay Bray, Russell Mahoney and Matthew Tucker have joined us in supporting roles this year. They have made valuable additions to this ministry.

Every Thursday night we are reminded of what an amazing opportunity God has given us, but the work entails many challenges that unquestionably require God's intervention, please continue to pray for us!

Romans Road—Pocket guide: cut-out and keep in your wallet for easy reference:

An Invitation

Would you like to believe in Jesus and be saved?

We need to tell God that we are sinners and that we believe Jesus is God's Son, and that He died for us and rose again.

Would you like to say a simple prayer like the following?

“Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I confess that He died for my sin and rose again. Please save me. In Jesus' name. Amen.”

Spring Festival

Our Spring Outreach Festival is May 18 from 12:00 - 4:00 PM. We have had a wonderful registration of volunteers for this year's event. Pray that the Lord will use this event to the furtherance of the gospel in our community.





May Memory Verse Challenge

Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.

~ Proverbs 22:6

Money Matters

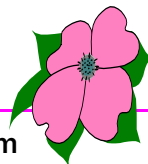
April Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$4,480
Weekly Need	\$5,229
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$81,799
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$88,894

Missionary Love Offering:



Following our annual International Student Ministry in March, we received a love offering for Paul and Geri Briggs. A total of \$2,287.00 was received. Your generous giving to this special offering will be a great encouragement to the Briggs and we praise the Lord for it.

Calendar



May 14	Nursing Home Ministry, 2:00 pm
May 18	Spring Festival, 12:00 - 4:00 pm
May 19	Awana Awards Ceremony, 6:00 pm
May 23	ESL Class party, 8:00 pm
May 26	Memorial Day Weekend (No PM Ministries)

Fellowship Baptist Church

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