

Chapter 6

Replacement of God

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

In several previous lessons, we have been studying Romans 1:21, where it says, "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*" That of course is the result of rejecting God. In their self proclaimed wisdom, they spew out such philosophies as, there is no right or wrong, we must tolerate and accept that which is an abomination to God. The result is wrong is defended, that which is right, descent, and God honoring is mocked, ridiculed, and attacked. That is evidence of professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

We now live in a "me first" society that is immersed with an entitlement attitude. People live under their baser instincts. There is the murder of babies in the name of choice. Back in 1972, 1973 when abortion was made legal, the baby could be murdered up to the first 3 months of it's life. Now they're at nine months. Right before the baby is delivered, that baby can be murdered. It won't stop there. As it goes, if you can do that, why can't you kill them when they are in kindergarten. Eventually, if we live long enough, it will get there. "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*"

Now, there are the dysfunctional. You and I are surrounded by dysfunction. In the upcoming generations, there is dysfunction, and it has become normal. Dysfunctional is now the norm.

We are inundated with political correctness. I get a kick out of Joe Biden [Presidential candidate in 2020]. The poor guy is old enough to still say some truth every now and then. But political correctness comes along and gets him every time. I find it a little humorous. We have a government that can not function in the realm of common sense because we have become a nation of fools. These are our political leaders. These are the ones who head up academia and our nation. That leads to the next effect stated in Romans 1:23.

There is a cycle going on here. In verse 22, "*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*" Then in verse 23, "*And [There is a continuation] changed the glory*

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." Verse 23 speaks of a replacement of God. So far there is a rejection of God's general revelation. That results in vain imaginations and darkened hearts. Vain imaginations and darkened hearts result in a self proclaimed wisdom in verse 22, but in reality it's utter foolishness. All of this leads to a replacement of God.

Bible history bears out that any time God is rejected, He is replaced with something. Our society has come to this point in the cycle where God is replaced. It began with a rejection of God and now there is a replacement of God. That is to say, they put false gods in the place of God.

When it says here in verse 23, *"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God"*, they do not change God. Man does not change God. However, in their own twisted views and life; as a result of their vanity, their spiritual blindness, their self deception, thinking themselves to be wise, and in their ignorance; in their own minds they move God out of His rightful place and replace Him with something else. Here they replaced Him with creation. They reject the creator and replace Him with creation. It is the very thing that is forbidden in the first commandment.

Exodus 20:3, *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me,"* That's the very first commandment. It is a foundational commandment. It's foundational to all the other commandments. If you break the first commandment, it's just a matter of time before you break all the rest. It is the same in living. You break the first commandment, you reject God, and all of life begins to fall apart.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." What God is saying there is, "I am number one. There are to be no other gods before me. I am to be foremost." Now, if God is number one, if God is foremost, that prevents a lot of problems. A lot of problems do not even exist if you keep God first.

God is saying He is what is most important. That's true nationally, that's true individually. You look at the lives

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

of people. You look at the lives of God's people who have gone astray. They may deny it, but it doesn't change the fact that God has ceased to be what's most important to them. When that happens, you begin to replace Him. You begin with putting one thing in the place of God and before long, there are two, three, four. Before long, He isn't even on the list. This is the progression of sin.

God is saying, "I am the preeminent one, the supreme one, the predominant one. Thou shall have no other God before me." He is to be central. He is to be the main focal point. He is the purpose, the object, the aim of life. In that very first commandment, God is declaring something about himself. He is declaring Himself number one. It is the duty of the first commandment to make God our chief end. God is first. How many times have you heard it said, God is never to be next. He is always to be first. As individuals, any time we put God next, we are headed down a dangerous road. You better pray that God intervenes, because pretty soon there will be many things ahead of God. Pretty soon, there is no time for God. God is never to come next. Yet, we read in Romans 1:23 as a result of the rejection of God, they changed the glory of God. They put other things in the place of God.

Nothing is to compete with God. That's true nationally as well as individually. It's true congregationally. Nothing is to compete with God. Any time we try to "balance" there is a competition going on. Nothing is to compete with God. This is true concerning you and I as God's people. If we exchange the glory of God, if we begin to replace God, our life is going to fall apart. Dysfunction is going to become the norm. You can talk to almost anybody that's fallen into sin, and they begin to progress in that sin, it's because they broke this first commandment. Somewhere along the line, God was replaced with something else. Once you do that, it just sort of continues. God is to be first.

In this first commandment, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me*", is not God saying, "I am God"? "Since I am God, you are to acknowledge me accordingly. Since I

am God, you are to think of me accordingly. You are to esteem, desire, believe, cleave, surrender to me accordingly." On and on we could go. Romans 1:23 is the result of breaking the first commandment. The first commandment is a statement that life is to be all about God. *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* That requires absolute commitment to God. When that is not there, you end up in Romans 1:23, *"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image"*, which is a result of Romans 1:22, *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,"* From Romans 1:23 you end up in Romans 1:24, *"Wherefore God also gave them up..."*

When you talk to someone who has gone down this road of sin, whether it be a lost person or a saved person, they begin to try and defend their wrong; *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."* Anybody that defends wrong has become a fool. Anybody that defends what has gotten them to this place of dysfunction is a fool. It began some time back with a rejection of God. You and I do not fall overnight. Our life does not become dysfunctional overnight. It's a process. It goes on for a while. That's what we have here in Romans 1.

The first commandment requires us to recognize God as master above all. Matthew 6:24, says we can not have two masters. You will love one and hate the other. It becomes a competition. You'll serve one or the other. God is to be revered, esteemed above all else. In Psalms 89:7, *"God is greatly to be feared [Reverenced] in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all [them that are] about him."*

They began rejecting God, which is a result of irreverence, which feeds more irreverence. As irreverence is fed, pretty soon, God doesn't even exist in the minds of the people. So it is today. You look at most people, even many who profess to be God's people; it's bad enough if you and I go through a day without thinking about God, but I'm convinced there are people that go years without giving any thought of God, whatsoever. They have rejected God, and

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

now through the years, they have replaced God with many, many things. The religious will try and make a little bit of time for God, just to soothe their conscience. They fall into that trap and are satisfied with that. However, that won't last long either, as their conscience becomes seared and they don't need to soothe their conscience any more. God is replaced. This applies to the unsaved and the saved as well.

Psalms 111:9, *"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend [is] his name."* That speaks of respect for God. This cycle began with a rejection of God, a loss of respect for God. That's where it began and now we're here in Romans 1:23, where God has been replaced.

Psalms 145:1, *"I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great [is] the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness [is] unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works."* God is to be revered, God is to be esteemed above all else.

God is to be loved above all else. Deuteronomy 6:5, says there is to be nothing to come into competition with our love for God. Not our spouse, not our children, nothing. We are to love God above all else. If we don't, then eventually, God's going to be rejected and you start into this cycle. The only way this cycle can be broken is if God intervenes. However, the cycle is that once you start this cycle, God leaves you to yourself, and one continues on. That's where we are in Romans 1.

God is to be desired above all else. If this is true of our life, we are going to be pretty safe. In Psalms 73:25, we read, *"Whom have I in heaven [but thee]? and [there is] none upon earth [that] I desire beside thee."* That needs to be true. There is none upon earth, nothing upon this earth that we desire beside God. That needs to be so in our lives. If it's not, we are going to reject God and find ourselves in

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

this cycle, the cycle that our nation is in.

It's true when people say of the United States, "We need to get back to God." That's true, but it's not that easy once you have rejected God. Read history. Once you reject God, most don't come back. Read the Bible. It's there, over and over.

There is a rejection of God and you begin to go down that path, and unless God intervenes, it's a path of no return. That's why when people say, "Well, I'm only going to do it this one time." You do not understand two things, the nature of sin and your own sinful nature. You don't understand the progression of sin. It's repeated all through the Bible in numerous ways, but it's still the same. It's the progression of sin.

Romans 1, is perhaps the best illustration in all the word of God of the progression of sin. It's not like you can just turn on a switch and say, "I'm going to go back to God now." It doesn't work that way. While it's true that people need to get back to God, it's easier said than done. In Isaiah 26:9 it says, *"With my soul have I desired thee [God is to be desired. He goes on to say ...] will I seek thee early."*

God is to be served above all else. God told Israel this over and over again in Deuteronomy, that God must be served above all else.

We come to Romans 1, and there is this cycle of digression and it begins with *"They glorified him not as God."* That's where it began. One many think, "That's no big deal." It's **foundational**. They rejected Him as God, and now we come to verse 23, and they have changed the glory of God into an image, into a thing. Paul states it in another form in Romans 1:25, *"Who changed the truth of God into a lie,"* He is basically saying the same thing as he did in verse 23, just in a little different way. They changed the truth of God into a lie, the result of which is, they, *"worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."*

They changed, they exchanged, they traded the truth of God for a lie. That's what Esau did. He made a trade, he

made an exchange. Any time we reject God, that's what we are doing. We are going to come out on the short end every time. It's a bad exchange every time, whether it be God Himself, or whether it be the truth of God. They changed the truth of God into a lie. Here we are, as a result, a society surrounded by more idols than ever before. In the history of our land, there have never been this many idols. By next year there will be more.

These idols, these false gods, they leer at us from billboards, magazine covers, they call us from the television, radio, computer, cellphone, whatever; they want to capture our attention. They do a good job. People who are in advertising are not ignorant. They have studied the human mind. They have some knowledge of human nature. They direct that, whether it be just music in a store, it is all designed to capture your attention, your interest, to get your money. That's the goal, of course, in advertising. They want to capture your time, your commitment; all things that should be captured by God.

Anything and everything can become an idol. A little child can become an idol, a grandchild can become an idol. Anything can become an idol. Idolatry can lay in lawful things and unlawful things. It is all a matter of where you put it. There is nothing wrong with owning things. It's lawful. But, when you put it ahead of God, it's now sin. It's now idolatry.

Whatever gives a back seat to God is an idol. That is where this cycle begins. This rejection of God, which leads to vanity, which leads to spiritual blindness, which leads to self deception and ignorance. In all of that, they move God out of His rightful place and replace Him with something else. That is testified loud and clear when you get into your car on Sunday morning, and you head to church. There aren't many others doing that. They are out mowing their lawns, washing their boat, camper, out at the ball field, and no time for God. That didn't just happen overnight. It's a cycle.

It's going to continue to digress. As a nation it's

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 1

going to continue, but as individuals, God may intervene and save a soul and get them on the right track, or God may intervene in a saved person's life and get them back on the right track. However, over all, it is a cycle of digression that does not improve over time.

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

In Romans 1:23, it says, *"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."* This is an advancement, a progression upon verse 22, *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."*

We spent a lot of time on verse 22, *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."* Every day, you can read a headline and you could write that verse above it. Most of you probably have seen that the San Francisco city board of supervisors decided to ban certain words, such as "convicted felons". They are not going to call them convicted felons anymore. Instead, they are going to call them "justice involved individuals". The people that they committed crimes against are also going to be "justice involved individuals." What does that do? It puts them on the same level as the criminals. *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."* San Francisco, right now (2020) has the highest crime rate of any city in the country. This is their solution. It's amazing. Their solution is not more police. Their solution is, "We just won't call them felons anymore."

They are also going to do away with the term, "juvenile delinquents" and call them "young people impacted by the juvenile system". That makes it sound like it's the justice system's fault. This is their solution to the problem of crime. These are the elected individuals who, *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"*. It says the same thing about the people that elected them. Romans 1:22 is proven everyday.

Then, in verse 23, they replace God. It's a violation of the very first commandment, which is foundational. *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* Anything that gives a back seat to God is an idol. They take God out of His rightful place and replace Him with something else. That has been going on for a long, long time.

To replace God is utter foolishness. *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"*. Then in Psalms 135:15, we find, *"The idols of the heathen [are] silver and*

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

gold, the work of men's hands." Think about the heathen. Heathen are anybody who puts something ahead of God. That's heathenistic. Speaking of their idols, Psalms 135 continues in verse 16-17, *"They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there [any] breath in their mouths."* In other words, these individuals settle for shadows rather than substance.

This becomes degrading. In verse 18, *"They that make them are like unto them: [so is] every one that trusteth in them."* That idol is dumb, has no life. *"They that make them"* and trust them are like them. To replace God is degrading. Those *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"* don't look at it as degrading. They look at it as, "We're progressing."

In Jeremiah 2:5, *"Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?"* They not only walk after emptiness, they have become vain. They have become empty. It all starts with a rejection of God's general revelation. That leads to vain imaginations, which leads to darken hearts. That results in self proclaimed wisdom, which in reality is a digression in thought process. That leads to a replacement of God. We will replace God.

That leads to the next thing in Romans 1, which is in verse 25, *"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."* Some may look at this verse and say it is just a repeat of verse 23. In a sense, it is. It's a further step away from God. They not only replace God, but in verse 25, life is now about self. Life is about the temporal. When you replace God, that changes the meaning of life. That changes the focus, the priority of life. The key here is, they worshiped and served the creature, created things, more than the creator. Life has now become about self and temporal things.

That describes the world today. Life is about self, about the temporal. Overall, generally speaking, that is so.

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

People worship and serve the creature more than the creator. That is not only so for unsaved people, it is so of God's people who have fallen into this cycle of digression. They put the creature ahead of the creator. They put creation ahead of the creator. The creature, created things, including themselves, becomes the focus in life.

When you replace God, that eventually leads to a "me" centered, temporal centered life. The temporal becomes the purpose of life, the supreme thing in life. What does that mean? That means that you have a life of misplaced purpose. Purpose defines everything in life.

You have a life of misplaced values. If the focus is upon self, you have a self value system in which everyone determines their own value. There is no standard of measurement and there are no values. When the temporal becomes the meaning of life, and then vanishes away as temporal things do, life has no real meaning, life becomes meaningless. If life is meaningless, that affects values.

When the temporal becomes the pursuit of life, that results in a life of misdirection. We have a life of misplaced purpose, misplaced values, no real meaning, and a life of misdirection. When God is replaced, when life is about self and the temporal, the temporal becomes the dominating factor in life. When that is so, you have a life of enslavement.

Today, we see people talking about freedom, and they are slaves. There are a lot of slave masters in the United States. There are a lot of slave masters throughout the world. Romans 6:16 says, "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants [His slaves.] ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, [If your slave master is sin, that road is going to take you to death.] or of obedience unto righteousness?*" Everybody is controlled by something or someone. We, of course, are to yield to God. The temporal becomes the focus, the dominating factor in life, you have a life of enslavement.

When the temporal becomes man's hope in life, you have a life of disappointment. This is life today. The

temporal is man's hope in life. That's why people talk about the economy so much. That's where their hope is. We all enjoy a good economy, we all want that. But that's not the main focus, for you and I. For those who put their hope in the temporal, it's going to be a life of disappointment.

The word of God teaches that God is the source of life. Man has moved away from God. In man's vain imaginations and darkened heart, self proclaimed wisdom and foolishness, he views the temporal as the source of his life. Everything is disorder, chaos. Man moves away from God, living his life detached from God. Then he lives his life in close relationship and association with the temporal. The temporal becomes everything, and life is no longer joyful. Life is no longer sweet and fulfilling. Life becomes an exasperation and annoyance, and empty.

Listen to these people who, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools". They are angry individuals. They are not happy. Regardless of where you are, just sit and watch people. You won't see too many people happy. because. There aren't very many people who do not find life to be an annoyance and just empty. It all begins with a rejection of God. That eventually leads to a replacement of God, which leads to a life that is about the temporal. They worshiped and served the creature, created things, more than the creator.

Man, in this state of departure from God and with vain imaginations, darkness of heart, gives preeminence to the temporal. He desires, revels in, and thinks upon the temporal. He loves the temporal rather than God. The temporal includes himself. Man becomes a god to himself. That's where we are. Then, he worships the creature or the temporal and he serves the creature or the temporal. Man reverences these things, exalts them, honors, gives preeminence to, desires, revels, thinks about, loves these things rather than God. He has become a god to himself. Not only does he worship these things, he serves them. Man gives his life to the temporal. They give their lives to that which will ruin them, destroy them, make them miserable,

ruin their home. They give their life unto these things.

They feel that the temporal is the reason that they are here. It's their god. Everything becomes self and temporal centered. We live in the era of the narcissists, where narcissists are raising narcissists. It's just going to get worse and worse and worse. The result is many very serious and destructive problems. We have problems we have never had before. We are going to have problems that you and I can not even imagine. That's where this stuff leads.

The culture of narcissism fosters such things as discontent, restlessness and it feeds dysfunction. The emotional and spiritual devastation caused by narcissism has not been fully comprehended. The monster of self has been unleashed in our society. What a destructive monster it is. Now we live in a society that is overcome with the idea of self importance, the overestimation of abilities, the inflation of so-called accomplishments, expecting constant attention, constant admiration. It is an obsession with self. That's what happens when you replace God. The results are manifold.

The cycle so far is; reject God; that leads to vanity; vanity as it progresses leads to spiritual blindness; spiritual blindness leads to self deception and ignorance; as that progresses, it leads to a replacement of God; then life eventually loses its meaning, life loses its purpose. The cycle continues throughout generations.

The cycle accelerates as it goes. In the last ten years, that cycle has accelerated at an unbelievable rate. It's going to accelerate more. It's going to keep picking up speed. The consequences become more and more grave and more and more widespread. The politicians and the educators talk about fixing the problem. They don't even know what the problem is. They don't realize ***they are the problem.***

This cycle just leads to a greater judgment from God. It is the result of the judgment of God and leads to a greater judgment of God. Since the fall of man in the garden, we see this deadly cycle. History has been marked by this cycle. The book of Judges is basically a summary of that cycle over and over. It's where we are today.

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

Let's look at the subject of philosophy. I can remember philosophy class in college, thinking it was extremely boring. However, it is something interesting if you look back, you can get a better picture of where we are today. (None of this is new, by the way. It goes back to Genesis 3.) Georg Frederick Hegle was a German philosopher, at the time just before Adolf Hitler. He presented the concept of *dialectic materialism*. What does that mean? Simply put, here is what he says; you have this idea, and it is "attacked" by an opposite idea, and out of that comes a new truth. That's why they always want to "discuss" matters. They believe that ideas can present new truth. They have already rejected truth. They want "new truth." ***(Those two words, "new truth", are very dangerous. There are no new truths. The book of Ecclesiastics states as much. There is no new truth.)***

This philosophy is deeply rooted in the idea that there is no absolute truth. They think that truth is constantly evolving. You might be thinking, "What does that have to do with anything." It has a lot to do with everything. The public education system goes back to these philosophies. Hegle's foundation is that there is no absolute truth. That makes man the determiner of truth.

Hegel also added the concept of two spheres. You have a public sphere, you have a private sphere. The two never ever come together. They are two opposites. The idea is that the spiritual is never to influence the public. Never! They are two separate entities. There are a lot of God's people that think that way. They believe they can behave however they want on their job. They have their church life and they have their church. That goes back to the garden. It goes back to Hegle's philosophy. If you have spirituality, you must keep that separate from the public. It's the same today, that spirituality does not belong in government. It's the same idea. These are not new thoughts. There are no new thoughts. It goes back to Hegle, to his philosophy. He got his philosophy from before that, and eventually traces itself back to Satan.

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

There is no correlation between private and public. That's why there are God's people who can vote for people who do not line up with what they profess spiritually. You see, they don't have a problem because to them it's two separate things. It's like they are living two separate lives. "Yes, I believe this, but that's my private life, and my private life is never to effect my public so I can vote for someone who believes in abortion or whatever." There are no new theories.

Along comes Karl Marx. He advances on Hagel's philosophy of dialectic materialism by adding some of his own thoughts. He said that God is a creation of man. Religion is the drug of the people. Religion is just a drug and that the state is to be the absolute authority over a man's life and the state determines what is right or wrong. With Hegel, you have this idea, and an opposite idea, and these two conflict and then you come up with a new truth. Karl Marx takes it further by saying it is the state that determines what is true, what is right, what is wrong. We are right back there today. These are no new philosophies. They just feed upon old philosophies, worded a little different. They are basically the same thing.

Sigmund Freud comes along, known as the father of modern day psychology. He adds the idea of central desires. The idea is that all of man's motivations are based upon physical desires. In order to fulfill those desires there is no absolute right or wrong, but all is relative to man fulfilling his desire. Again, we are right back there today. That's why when these people are talking about progressing, they are not progressing, but digressing. They are going back to old ideas that have been around for thousands of years. They think this is something new. There's nothing new about it.

John Dewey, takes all of these philosophies and makes them the foundation of progressive education, establishing a humanistic approach to education. John Dewey studied the philosophies of these individuals and took a little of all of them and became the father of education. Now we have generations that have developed the mindset of

Chapter 6 - Replacement of God - Part 2

these philosophies. That's why people think the way they think today. Their foundation is built upon false philosophies.

We have to have some understanding of where these things come from. They are not new ideas. They are going backwards to old philosophies. I get a kick and not in a humorous way when the liberals talk about the conservatives who won't let go of "the old ideas". They are the same and won't let go of a different set of old ideas. They think they have come up with all these things as a result of their thought process, but, there's nothing new. It all goes back to Satan and philosophers through the years.

God help us to be able to identify all the foolishness that goes on all around us in the world today.