



## [Romans 1:18-28](#)

(18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, (19) because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. (20) For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, (21) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools, (23) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. (24) Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, (25) who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (26) For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. (27) Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. (28) And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

*New King James Version*

Verse 18 gives us the context, the proclivity of mankind to suppress the truth. Some translations say they suppress the truth “by” (rather than “in”) their unrighteousness, reinforcing the link between disobedience and blindness ([Deuteronomy 28:28-29](#); [Psalm 111:10](#)). [God](#) has given all humanity a measure of understanding, at least about His existence, but most

turn away in favor of something false that seems more reasonable to them. Even though [Satan](#) and his demons whisper their deceptions in the background, *the people blind themselves* through their choices. Satan forces no one; as with Eve, he adds fuel to an already-kindled fire of carnality and resistance to the truth.

People choose to close their eyes, and as the apostle Paul writes in verse 24, God responds by giving them over to that choice. He does not approve of or accept what they do but allows it to play out. At some point, they will understand the futility of rejecting God's way.

Paul states this principle again in verse 26: God gives them up to what is in their hearts, not realizing that they have *cursed themselves* by their choices. Ironically, they probably feel relief and liberation, having cut themselves off from bearing any accountability to uphold God's standards.

What begins with suppressing the truth in verse 18 ends with a debased mind in verse 28. As part of His judgment, God gives people over to the dominion of their choices' consequences. These verses depict God essentially taking His hands away to allow people to mess up their lives still further. However, other scriptures show God actively amplifying sin's effects; sometimes, God makes the spiritual plight of those rebelling against Him even worse.

In [Amos 8:11](#), God calls for a famine of hearing His Word. It is a different metaphor but still analogous to blinding in that He diminishes the understanding of the people. The famine of hearing is a devastating curse because God takes away the very thing that could help the nation: The ability to hear His truth. His action may seem cruel, but the fault does not lie with Him but with the peoples' previous choices. We have a saying today, "Be careful what you wish for." Israel yearned after her neighbors' paganism and so did not heed the revelation He had given to her, thus He began to take away her understanding.

— David C. Grabbe

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