

The Dark Ages

Part 1

Key Scriptures: Proverbs 13:24; Romans 1:18-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21

1. Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What is the funniest thing that you got in trouble for as a kid? Did you do it because you thought it was funny, or for some other reason? Explain.
- What is the worst thing you've been caught doing? Who caught you? What were the results? Were they justified? Why or why not?

2. Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Proverbs 13:24. How does this verse define love? Is that easy to experience as a child? Is it easy to follow as a parent? How does careful discipline protect us as kids?
- Read Romans 1:18. What does God reveal His wrath against? Is the "godlessness and wickedness of people" the same as the person themselves? If godlessness and wickedness are removed from a person's life, does their life improve, grow worse, or stay the same? Why?
- Read Romans 1:18-20. What are some of the invisible qualities about the world and universe that are apparent to us? Mathematics? The design in creation? What do all of these qualities tell us about God? What other invisible qualities have been demonstrated to us?
- Read Romans 1:21-23. What distinguishes this type of person? What does it mean that their thinking becomes suspect, and their hearts are foolish and darkened? In verse 23, they exchange God for idols. What do we idolize today that turns us from focusing on God? Explain why the Bible calls this foolish.

3. Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Have you tried to suppress a truth in your life? Maybe others have told you about it, but you try to ignore it, forget about it, or rationalize your way around it. How should you handle it? Why?
- If "futile" means *no useful purpose*, what type of thinking is Paul describing as foolish? (Give examples.) Does this thinking find its value in God's wisdom or man's wisdom?
- If you were to draw a circle that represented all the knowledge in the universe, (Physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, philosophy, etc.) how much of that circle would represent what you know? How does your knowledge (mine would be a tiny dot in that circle) compare to God's knowledge as the designer and creator of everything? Whose knowledge should we trust? Why?

4. Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that God would continue to reveal His truth to you through the Bible, even if that challenges what you think, or what the world tells us.

5. Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Find 5 things that God declares are true in the Bible and research why it is true. (gotquestions.org is a great place to find some Biblical answers)