

Understanding Our Weakness

Rom 7:14-25

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. NKJV

This passage is one of the most confusing passages in Paul's writings. And many have misinterpreted this very important passage. He has been discussing the law and has come to the conclusion that the law is perfect and has no flaws in it. He concludes then that the problem is with us and not with the law of God. Let us look at this passage and pay close attention to what Paul is saying to us.

- I. Who is this person?
 - A. It is not talking about a non-Christian, an unregenerate person.
 1. The lost person has not contradiction in relationship to sin.
 2. They sin with no regret and wonder at those strange Christians who will not follow their pernicious ways.
 3. The lost are taken captive by Satan to do his bidding and they willingly go along.
 4. It is only in societies that are restrained by Christian influence that we find a semblance of civility.
 - B. This is speaking of a Christian, a regenerated person, brought to life by the Spirit of God.
 1. Because God has placed His law in their hearts they are sensitive to the simplest of wrongs.
 2. They are like the child who after each action looks to their father to see if the smile of approval is there.
 3. Understanding the price of their sin that nailed Jesus to the cross they more

often than not run from sin rather than into it.

4. They seek those things that are above.
5. They long for a city not built with the hands of men but is eternal in the heavens.
6. Their greatest desire is to look into the face of their blessed Savior and hear the words, well done, good and faithful servant.
7. So sensitive of sin that in times of failure they cry out O wretched man that I am.

II. How is he weak?

- A. He is weak in that though he might have an iron will and be very determined there is still a propensity toward sin.
- B. He does not lack desire but power.
 1. Jesus said that the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak.
 2. Those disciples had each vowed very sternly that they would not forsake Jesus but would die instead.
 3. But when the time came they fell away, not because they did not desire to be faithful to Him but because they lacked the power to carry out what they desired.
- C. He is weak because the sin nature that he was born with still has a strong influence of his life.
 1. Everyone was born in sin.
 - a. Ps 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. NKJV
 - b. We were all children of wrath even as others.
 - c. And our sinful nature was what we obeyed.
 2. But when we were born again into the family of God, He gave us a measure of His nature, a new nature, a godly nature.
 - a. That new nature is not the conscience.
 - b. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that dwells in every believer.
 - c. That is where the conflict began.
 - d. Our old nature still desires the things of this world, but the godly nature desires the things of God.
- D. As we said before there is a weakness in the flesh to follow the commands of God.

1. Our will is a part of us and is controlled by that old nature.
2. Christians often live like yo-yos, sometimes there up and then they are down.
3. They have a victory over sin in their life and then they fall.
4. They never seem to be consistently victorious and they often do not understand why.

III. Is there any hope?

A. Paul indicates that there is.

1. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!
2. What we find in this verse is that not only are we helpless to save ourselves by our own works as he has already shown in this epistle but we are also unable to live the victorious Christian life of our own strength and power.
3. Our hope is not in redoubling our efforts and setting our will.
4. Rather our only hope is found outside of ourselves.

B. It is only through Jesus Christ.

1. It is only by the Holy Spirit working in our lives that we can have victory.
2. It is only in dying to self and surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ that God will give us victory.
3. Call upon Him and surrender to Him and He will bring you through.

C. Now there are some things that will help, but of their own, will do nothing.

1. Spending time in the word of God.
2. Reading and studying it to understand what God is saying.
3. Praying that God would show you His will in His Word and then would apply it to your life.
4. Honoring God with our public and private worship.
5. God has always commanded these and has consistently blessed those who would honor Him above themselves and all others.
6. Don't feed the flesh but feed the spirit.
 - a. In many Christian lives the flesh is strong and the spirit is weak because we consistently feed the one and starve the other.
 - b. Don't listen to things that will inflame fleshly desires.

- c. Don't watch things that will only feed the flesh and quench the Holy Spirit's work in your life.

I close with is illustration. When I was a boy we had two coon dogs that dad used to take coon hunting on a regular basis. Now they fought something terrible. As a child I often thought they would kill one another. Now dad did not show favoritism to either dog. But you know if he would have fed the one and starved the other he could have greatly influenced the outcome of those fights. Paul is telling us here that we have a fight going on inside of us. The fleshly nature is struggling against the godly nature. Do you think it makes a difference which one we feed.

Rom 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. NKJV