

# The Anatomy of a Church (20)

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 04/20/14)

## PERSONAL HOLINESS

### STRUGGLE AND CONFESSION: THE BELIEVER IS TO BE FREE FROM THE LAW, [Romans 7:1-25](#)

#### The Confessions of a Man's Struggling Soul, [Romans 7:14-25](#)

#### The First Lament

[Romans 7:14-17 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>14</sup>“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

<sup>15</sup>For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

<sup>16</sup>But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

<sup>17</sup>So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

#### The Source

[Romans 7:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>16</sup>“But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.”

<sup>17</sup>“So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.”

Paul now deals with the reason, or the source, of his inability to perfectly fulfill the law and he begins by staunchly defending the divine standard. “Whatever the reason for my doing **the very thing I do not wish to do**,” he says, “it is not the law’s fault. **I agree with the Law** in every detail. My new self, the new creation that placed God’s incorruptible and eternal seed within me, is wholeheartedly **confessing** that the law **is good**. In my redeemed being I sincerely long to honor the law and to fulfill it perfectly.”

Every true Christian has in his heart a sense of the moral excellence of God’s **Law**. And the more mature he becomes in Christ, the more fully he perceives and lauds the law’s goodness, holiness, and glory. The more profoundly he is committed to the direction of the Holy Spirit in his life, the deeper his love for the Lord Jesus Christ becomes, the deeper his sense of God’s holiness and majesty becomes, and the greater will be his longing to fulfill God’s law.

04-27-14

Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

What then, is the problem? What is the source of our failure to live up to God's standards and our own inner desires? "**Now** it is **no longer I** who is **the one doing it**," Paul explains, "**but sin which indwells me.**"

Paul was not trying to escape personal responsibility. He was not mixing the pure gospel with Greek philosophical dualism, which later plagued the early church and is popular in some church circles today. The apostle was not teaching that the spirit world is all good and the physical world all evil, as the influential Gnostic philosophy of his day contended. Proponents of that ungodly school of thought invariably develop moral insensitivity. They justify their sin by claiming it is entirely the product of their physical bodies, which are going to be destroyed anyway, and that the inner, spiritual person remains innately good and is untouched by and unaccountable for anything the body does.

The apostle had already confessed his own complicity in his sin. "**I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin**," he said of his present earthly life as a believer ([Romans 7:14](#)). If the "**real**" inner Christian were not responsible for sin in his life, he would have no reason to confess it and have it cleansed and forgiven. As noted earlier, John makes clear that a claim of sinlessness makes God a liar and proves that His Word is not in us ([1 John 1:10](#)). A true believer is continually recognizing and confessing his sin ([1 John 1:9](#)).

Throughout this chapter Paul has spoken in personal, nontechnical terms. He has not been drawing precise theological distinctions between the old preconversion life of a believer and his new life in Christ. He was certainly not teaching that a Christian has two natures or two personalities. There is just one saved person, just as previously there was one lost person.

In [Romans 7:17](#), however, Paul becomes more technical and theologically precise in his terminology. There had been a radical change in his life, as there has been in the life of every Christian. *Ouketi* (**no longer**) is a negative adverb of time, indicating a complete and permanent change. Paul's new **I**, his new inner self, **no longer** approves of the sin that still clings to him through the flesh. Whereas before his conversion his inner self approved of the sin he committed, **now** his inner self, a completely new inner self, strongly disapproves. He explains the reason for that change in his letter to the Galatians: "**I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me**" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

After salvation, sin, like a deposed and exiled ruler, no longer reigns in a person's life, but it manages to survive. It no longer resides in the innermost self but finds its residual dwelling in his flesh, in the unredeemed humanness that remains until a believer meets the Lord at the Rapture or at death. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," Paul further explained to the Galatians; "**for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please**" ([Galatians 5:17](#)).

04-27-14

Series: [The Anatomy of a Church](#)

In this life, Christians are somewhat like an unskilled artist who beholds a beautiful scene that he wants to paint. But his lack of talent prevents him from doing the scene justice. The fault is not in the scene, or in the canvas, the brushes, or the paint but in the painter. That is why we need to ask the master painter, Jesus Christ, to place His hand over ours in order to paint the strokes that, independent of Him, we could never produce. Jesus said, **“Apart from Me you can do nothing”** ([John 15:5](#)). The only way we can live victoriously is to walk by Christ’s own Spirit and in His power, in order not to **“carry out the desire of the flesh”** ([Galatians 5:16](#)).

In [Romans 7:16](#), we find that our disobedience reveals the function of God’s Law. It brings out the worst in man. It brings out our wickedness. It shows we are sinners and need a Savior.

[Galatians 3:24 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> **“Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.*”**