

The Anatomy of a Church (21)

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[Acts 20:28](#)

(Continuation from 04/27/14)

PERSONAL HOLINESS

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

THE CONFLICT WITHIN—[Romans 7:15-19](#)

Every Christian can relate to the feelings Paul expresses in this section. He expresses the frustration we all have with our flesh. [Verse fifteen](#) states, “that which I do, I allow not.”

[Romans 7:15 \(KJV\)](#)

¹⁵“For that which I do I “allow” not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”

[Romans 7:15 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵“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.”

The word “allow” means “I do not approve or wish for.” How many times have you done something and then said, “I wish I had not done that?”

Paul continues and says, “What I would do, I don’t do!” Because Paul loves the Lord, he is concerned about what he neglects to do. We should too! Our failure to do what is right, to serve Christ, to let our light shine for Him should bother us. Paul continues to express his frustration. What I hate, I do! We hate our selfishness, pride, jealousy, anger, losing our temper, greed, etc. We still do these things sometimes.

In [verse sixteen](#), 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.

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

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

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

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

In [verse seventeen](#), Paul says that sin dwells in us.

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

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

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Paul is not passing the buck. He is identifying the source of our problem. Sin dwells in us, even though we are saved. There are two wills in constant conflict: the old man and the new man. If you try to live the Christian life in your own power and strength, you will fail. Your sin nature is too strong. You cannot live a victorious, Christian life independent of God's help. There must be a dependence and yieldedness to His control if you are going to be pure, patient, prideless, have your priorities right, perform Bible principles, and promote the Gospel. Becoming a Christian does not remove our conflict with sin, it intensifies it and makes the battle more fierce. You can become born again in a moment, but becoming like Christ takes a lifetime. The Christian life is a fight or race.

[1 Corinthians 9:24-27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴ **“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.**

²⁵ **Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.**

²⁶ **Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;**

²⁷ **but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”**

Paul states in [verse 18](#), **“I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.”**

[Romans 7:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ **“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”**

Our goodness is in Christ. Our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's eyes.

Paul continues, **“...for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.”** Two key things are inadequate in changing a person and conquering sin.

First of all, human knowledge alone does not make a man a good man. Education is not the answer to society's dilemmas. In fact, education is being used to make men more sinful which will create more social problems. Teens are being educated in sexual immorality and homosexuality in our public schools in the name of safe sex. All this does is promote promiscuity. We may know what is involved in ice skating, but it's another matter in getting on the ice. We know what a painting should look like. It's another matter knowing how to actually paint. We know how we should behave, but behaving is another matter. Only by knowing Christ are we **able** to do what we know what we ought to do.

Secondly, human will power or resolve is inadequate for change and conquering sin. Resolve is far from doing. There is no power in man's will power outside of Christ's power. Our sin nature is still with us. Do you remember Peter?

[Matthew 26:35 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁵ **“Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” All the disciples said the same thing too.”**

Will power did not help him.

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There must be a yieldedness to the Lord, lest we destroy our testimony, marriage, opportunities of blessing and service, or scar our lives by stupid decisions that lead to prison, pregnancy, addictions, or harming someone else. Sow a sin, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny. What are you sowing?

Paul loves God. He is frustrated with his flesh because he is dedicated to the Lord. He is concerned about his carnality. We should be too! The spiritual believer is sensitive to sin because of its consequences and destructiveness. Sin devastates our lives.

The Devastation from Sinful Living

1. Sin **Pains** the Holy Spirit. It grieves Him.

[Ephesians 4:30 \(NASB\)](#)

³⁰ **“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”**

2. Sin **Pierces** the Lord’s heart. It dishonors Him.

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁹ **“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?
²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”**

3. Prayers are hindered by sin.

[1 Peter 3:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² **“FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.”**

4. Spiritual **Power** is robbed by our sinfulness. We weaken our influence for Christ.

[1 Corinthians 9:27 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁷ **“But I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”**

5. Sin **Pilfers** the joy of our salvation.

[Psalm 51:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² **“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit.”**

6. Sin **Prohibits** good things from God.

[Jeremiah 5:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵ **“Your iniquities have turned these away, And your sins have withheld good from you.”**

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7. Sin Postpones our spiritual growth.

1 Corinthians 3:1 (NASB)

¹“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.”

8. Sin Petitions the chastisement of the Lord.

It invites God’s discipline in our lives.

Hebrews 12:6-7 (NASB)

⁶“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?”

9. Sin Prevents us from being a fit vessel for the Lord to use.

2 Timothy 2:21 (NASB)

²¹“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things*, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

10. Sin Pollutes Christian fellowship.

1 Corinthians 10:21 (NASB)

²¹“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

11. Sin Physically endangers our life and health.

1 Corinthians 11:30 (NASB)

³⁰“For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”

1 John 5:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.”

In *A View from the Zoo*, Gary Richmond, a former zookeeper wrote, “Raccoons go through a glandular change at about 24 months. After that they often attack their owners. Since a thirty-pound raccoon can be equal to a 100 pound dog in a scrap, I felt compelled to mention the change coming to a pet raccoon owned by a young friend of mine, Julie. She listened politely as I explained the coming danger. I’ll never forget her answer. ‘It will be different for me...’ and she smiled as she added, ‘Bandit wouldn’t hurt me, he just wouldn’t.’ Three months later Julie underwent plastic surgery for facial lacerations when her adult raccoon attacked her for no apparent reason. Bandit was released into the woods.”

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Sin too, often comes dressed in an adorable guise, and as we play with it, it is easy to say, “It will be different for me. It won’t hurt me,” but it does. Little sins do not stay little. Sin may start as a calm river, but it ends in a stormy sea.

12. Sin Plunders a man of four key things.

A. The peace of God.

Romans 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”

B. The prosperity of God.

Proverbs 28:13 (NASB)

¹³“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.”

C. Prowess or courage.

Proverbs 28:1 (NASB)

¹“The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion.”

D. Partnership or fellowship with God.

Genesis 3:8 (NASB)

⁸“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”