



8/20/25

My friend calls today's passage the "Dr. Seuss" passage. "Do you like green eggs and ham?" "I do not like them San-I-Am!" Hahaha

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 7:15-21 ~

In my counseling ministry, I have found this passage to be so helpful for women! More often than not, when I ask women to read these words, their tears start flowing... They are not alone! Even Paul knew the struggle of doing the very things we don't want to do!

Vs. 15 ~ "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." So... there are two "I's" happening here. There is the "I" of the flesh, where sin dwells and Satan attacks... and the "I" of the spirit, where the Holy Spirit dwells and empowers. So... I, the new creation in Christ, do not understand WHY I keep falling prey to doing the things I don't want to do... the things I hate! For me, I get so frustrated that I fall into the trap of letting my feelings rule my faith! I FEEL like God is angry with me, so I act like He is... but that's a lie. I FEEL like I'm alone, so I make decisions as though I am... but I'm not. I FEEL like I should be treated better, so I judge or avoid people... but the only one who I have to trust to treat me well is the Lord who will protect and sustain me. I KNOW the truth from His word, but I don't always ACT on the truth from His word! And then I beat myself up in shame!!! I hate that about myself!

Vs. 16 ~ "Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good." Even when I feel convicted for failing the Lord, that is evidence of my faith. I believe His word is good, all that He commands me to do is good. If I didn't belong to Him, that wouldn't even be my concern. I might try to follow the 10 Commandments because I think they're practical... or I might adhere to the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" because I think it makes sense... But I wouldn't concern myself with the two greatest commandments without the Holy Spirit working them in me... to sacrificially love the Lord with everything I've

got, and to sacrificially love my neighbor as myself.

Vs. 17-18 ~ "So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me." Wait... Does this mean I can say, "The devil made me do it, and therefore, I am not responsible"? No. If I rewrite this with "flesh" and "spirit", it will read, "So now, it is no longer I, my spirit, who sins against God, but it is sin working with my flesh to get me to sin against God. For I know that NOTHING good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." This is why I can never fight the desires of the flesh in my own strength. My own strength IS the flesh.

My flesh and my spirit are in a constant battle within me. I FEEL that battle all the time! My spirit has "the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." My spirit by itself cannot fight off the power of the flesh. The only thing my spirit can do is cry out to the Lord to help me... and He DOES! Psalm 118:5 says, "Out of my distress (of the sin that wants to conquer me) I cried out to the Lord, and the Lord answered me and set me free."

I see this happen in my life ALL THE TIME!!! I feel overwhelmed by a situation, so tempted to respond in sin, even trying to quote scripture to overcome... but treating the scripture like a magic mantra. The power comes when I use the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the word of God AND pray in the SPIRIT, asking Him to help me... while I hold up my shield of faith... clinging to Him for help. The Holy Spirit is the power who helps me overcome my deceitful flesh. Any other strategy I use will fail. Does that mean I'm weak? ABSOLUTELY! And that's just fine, because when I am weak, He is strong.

Vs. 19-20 ~ Let me get this truth settled in my heart and mind... "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me." One proof that I belong to the Lord is that I can't stand that I sin against Him. But let me understand the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow...

Godly sorrow hates that I do evil (embrace any motive, feeling, or action that goes against the heart of God) because I hate that I grieve Him who has done so much for me. My first response to the conviction of sin is that I have grieved God, and that breaks my heart. Godly sorrow leads to genuine repentance.

Worldly sorrow hates getting caught. It grieves the consequences of sin, but not that I have sinned against my good God. Worldly sorrow leads to lies, manipulation, and rationalization.

Godly sorrow rejects the sin that dwells within me and turns to God. Worldly sorrow embraces the sin that dwells within me and goes deeper into SELF.

Vs. 21 ~ "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand." Evil is always waiting to lure and entice my flesh to sin against God. It's the law sin lives by. Use whatever means necessary to drag me down.

Vs. 22-23 ~ "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members." I LOVE God's word!!! It's food for my soul. But I KNOW there's a war raging within my members. What are my members? They're all my "parts". They're the tools of my life that can be used for good or evil. They have no moral value within themselves, but they are used either in moral or immoral ways.

There are several laws at work in me... all at the same time...

- *The law of sin and death*
- *The law of my mind.*
- *The law of the Spirit of Life (Romans 8:2)*

The law of sin and death is always trying to take the law of my mind captive. Without the law of the Spirit of Life working in me, I will become sin's voluntary slave.

Vs. 24-25 ~ Trying to handle these constant battles within me is exhausting and frustrating. It can feel so hopeless that I say, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death!" Let me see this very clearly... I am WRETCHED in my SELF. I am NOT a superpower as the world claims I am. It is NEVER good to just "follow my heart." I CANNOT deliver myself. I NEED an answer outside of my natural self.

Paul gives me the answer to my wretchedness... the answer that gives me my hope. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The Father sent His Son to deliver me from death. When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in me, seal me, lead me, empower me, and transform me. I did nothing to earn this incredible gift from the Lord, and I can do nothing to keep Him as my Savior. He is mine... now and forever because HE saved ME.

So... if I'm not the one who can stop this sin that dwells within me and tries to take my mind captive, what IS my responsibility? "So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind." The law of sin cannot take my mind captive if I'm serving the Lord and His law of life and freedom. I serve Him by focusing my attention on Him... by letting my mind dwell on what's true. His word is true.

If I set my mind even on trying to stop myself from the things of my flesh, I will still be "serving the law of sin." Why? Because my mind is focused on trying to overcome the sin in my own strength, and my own strength IS the flesh. My own strength is too weak to overcome sin... and if I DO think I'm conquering sin on my own, I fall into the sin of arrogance... trying to take the credit for myself. On the flip side, if I think I can conquer sin on my own, and then fail... I fall into the sin of shame... thinking I SHOULD be able to get the credit. The only way to overcome sin is to DWELL on what is truly good and pleasing from the Lord AND to cry out to the Lord for help. The Holy Spirit helps me in my weakness.

The most beautiful hope in all these struggles of my flesh and my spirit in this constant battle, is that... because I am IN CHRIST, "there is therefore no condemnation for me. For the law of the Spirit of life has set me FREE in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2). Thanks be to God! I AM delivered from this body of death through Jesus Christ my Lord... This war is already won. The battles I face, I never have to face alone. O Lord, please help me to set my mind on You!!!