

## **Reaching New Heights in our Ability to Grow The Power of Authenticity**

Three issues that must be addressed to make progress in our Spiritual Growth.

### **I. The “Who?” of the Spiritual Struggle.**

A. Paul is speaking as a Christian man.

1. We know this because of the tense of the verbs.
2. We know this because of the language of the text.
  - v. 16 – *I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*
  - v. 18 – *the willing is present in me*
  - v. 19 – *the good that I want*
  - v. 21 – *...me, the one who wants to do good*
  - v. 22 – *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man*
  - v. 23 – *waging war against the law of my mind*
  - v. 25 – *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord*
  - v. 25 – *on the one hand, I myself with my mind am serving the law of God...*

B. Paul is speaking as a mature, yet struggling man.

1. “I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin” (v. 14).
2. “That which I am doing, I do not understand” (v. 15a).
3. “I am not practicing what I would like to do” (v. 15b).
4. “I am doing the very thing I hate” (v. 15c).
5. “I do the very thing I do not wish to do” (v. 16).
6. “Sin . . . indwells me” (v. 17).
7. “Nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh” (v. 18a).
8. “The wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not” (v. 18b).
9. “The good that I wish, I do not do” (v. 19a).

10. "I practice the very evil that I do not wish" (v. 19b).
  11. "Sin . . . indwells me" (v. 20).
  12. "Evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good" (v. 21).
  13. "I am a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23).
  14. "Wretched man that I am!"
  15. "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (v. 24)
- cf. The prophet Isaiah – Isaiah 6:5 – *Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."*
- cf. The apostle Peter – Luke 5:8 – *But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*
- cf. The Apostle John – Revelation 1:17 – *And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,"*
- cf. Moses – Exodus 3:6 – *He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*

## II. The "Why?" of the Spiritual Struggle.

- A. There is a significant difference between being freed from sin's power, and being freed from sin's presence.

v. 17 – *sin that is dwelling in me.*

- B. Every believer still has "sin that dwells within me."

Romans 7:17 – *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

Romans 7:20 – *But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

Romans 7:23 – *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

Romans 7:24 – *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

- C. There is a significant difference between “it’s not me” and “it’s not me when I’m thinking correctly.”

### **III. The “Now What?” of the Spiritual Struggle.**

- A. Be quicker to admit you sin and slower to accuse others.
- B. Avoid perfectionism in your treatment and expectation of others.
- C. Avoid perfectionism in yourself.

*Philippians 3:8-10 – More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

- D. Take the energy used to blame, run, hide, and blame-shift and channel it into pursuing Christ.
- E. Make the gospel not something you believed a long time ago, or something that will some day get you to heaven, but something you live every day.
- F. Develop relationships of authenticity and accountability.
- G. Guard time for the spiritual disciplines.