

DIARY OF A DEFEATED CHRISTIAN

Friday, May 26

Reading: Romans 7:14-25

Romans 7:18 *For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it... 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, Who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Have you ever felt like you couldn't do anything right? That no matter how hard you try to do the right thing and live for Christ you just keep messing up? You're not alone! All Christians are in a constant war against the old sinful nature. Trusting Christ has freed believers from the penalty and power of sin, but we are not free from the presence and possibility of sin. That will not occur until we reach heaven. As long as we are living in this world, sin will always try to get a foothold in our hearts and lives.

At the end of Romans 7, Paul gives us a glimpse of the struggle going on in his own life. He explains that often the good he desires to do is thwarted by his sinful nature and he ends up doing the very things he hates! Paul desired to do God's will but in his own strength he was helpless to carry it out.

This should give us great encouragement. We sometimes view Bible men and women like Paul as some kind of "superheroes" that never had any problems or struggles with sin. But here the apostle shares a little of his battle and gives us the battle plan to defeat sin in our own lives. We do not need to live as a defeated Christian! We can have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only One who can defeat sin and Satan. We are not fighting this battle alone. The Holy Spirit lives within us and will give us the strength to say "NO" to sin if we allow Him to control our lives.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "Waging War." Temptations don't disappear when we become a Christian. In fact, they will probably intensify! We are in a spiritual war with our old sinful nature and the Holy Spirit battling for control of our lives. There is an old story about two dogs fighting. When asked which one would win the owner stated "The one I feed the most." We feed our old sinful nature by indulging in the things of the world. We feed our new Spirit-controlled nature by studying God's Word, prayer, and doing the things that build our relationship with the Lord. Which "dog" are you feeding more? How does this affect the way you live?
2. "What a Wretched Man I Am." This is the cry of a believer who has struggled against sin and failed. Until we get to this point when we cry out in desperation and realize that we are helpless and hopeless on our own, we will never be able to cry "Thanks be to God who delivers me." We must realize that Jesus Christ is the answer. That He is the only way to have victory over sin. Have you realized the "wretchedness" of your spiritual condition without Christ? What must you do to give up your own striving with sin and allow Christ to fight the battle for you?