

WHY ITS SO HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

Romans 7:18-21.

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INTRODUCTION.

- A. No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means.
This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting it, not by giving in. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later.
That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it.

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, book 3, chapter 11.

- B. At times we all struggle with doing the right thing.
1. Even great people in the Bible struggled-Romans 7:18-21.
2. Is it any wonder that we struggle to do what's right too?
- C. Las Vegas has a motto, "What happens here stays here."
1. That may be comforting for unbelievers, but not for Christians.
2. Even if no one else knows what we do, God knows.
3. And yet we often do it anyway. Why? Why is it so hard to do the right thing?

I. ONE REASON IS THAT WE JUST DON'T WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING.

- A. Doing the wrong thing just comes more naturally. Why?
1. The Bible says its because of original sin.
2. Original sin has been defined as being born with a natural tendency to sin. Its kind of a "sin gene" we inherited from Adam-Romans 5:12.
3. Jesus came to do something about this sin gene-Romans 5:18.
4. Although Jesus doesn't remove our sin gene he does give us the ability to control it-1 Corinthians 10:13.
5. The struggle continues, though, between our two natures. Is there anything practical we can do to control our sin nature? Consider the following as a good suggestion.
- B. A grandfather was talking to his grandson. "Grandson," he said, "there are two wolves living in my heart and they are at war with each other. One is vicious and cruel, the other is wise and kind."
"Grandfather," said the alarmed grandson, "which one will win?"
The grandfather paused before he said, "The one I feed."
We must feed one and starve the other knowing that the one we feed always wins.

II. ANOTHER REASON ITS HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING IS THAT WE OFTEN POSITION OURSELVES FOR FAILURE.

- A. An old boy from Kentucky moved away and made his fortune. When he retired, he returned home to spend the rest of his years hunting and fishing and to build his retirement home. For the job he hired a local carpenter.
The retiree explained, "I've got the plans right here, you can read a blueprint, can't you?"
"Oh, I can read a blueprint," said the carpenter, unrolling the plans. "And I can see a BIG mistake already. You can't build this house like this!"
"I certainly can," replied the retiree. "These plans were drawn by the best architectural firm in New York. I want to you follow them exactly or I'll find myself another contractor."
"Your funeral," the carpenter shrugged, "but I'm warning you right off - the bathroom is going to end up on the inside."
- B. Sometimes we position ourselves for failure.
1. Where do temptations come from? James says its from ourselves-James 1:13-15.

2. Therefore we need to change our position according to the Apostle Paul-2 Timothy 2:22.
3. There were two guys working for the gas company going down the alley reading the meters. One of the employees was a bit younger than the other, and the younger one kept reminding the older man of his age.
Once, after finishing reading the meters, the older man had had enough of the young buck's mouth and challenged the younger guy to put up or shut up; they were going to race back to the truck. So they took off.
About half way down the alley they heard something behind them and they turned to see a woman in her apron barreling toward them. So they stopped to ask her what she was doing.
She said, "Whenever I see two gas meter guys running away from my house I figure I might want to get out of there too!"
We too must "flee" those situations that tempt us to sin.

III. STILL, ANOTHER REASON IT HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING IS WE OFTEN DON'T LISTEN TO OUR GUIDE.

- A. God has given us the Holy Spirit to be our conscience and guide-John 16:8.
- B. The closer we stay to God to more influence our guide has over us.

IV. FINALLY, ITS HARD TO DO THE RIGHT THING BECAUSE THE CLEANUP JOB ISN'T OVER YET.

- A. We are all a work in progress.
- B. Millard Erickson says, "The standard to be aimed for is the complete freedom from sin. It's like being guided by the North Star; no one has ever reached it but people still press toward it.
- C. When we get off course, though, and we will, we can't just give up. We have to look for the North Star again and get back on course.
- D. Its like going off a diet for one meal. We can't just quit and start pigging out at every meal. We just need to get back on the diet after we have failed. The same is true with sin.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Its hard to do the right thing because....
 1. Sometimes we just want to do the wrong thing. It comes more natural to us.
 2. We sometimes put ourselves in a position to fail.
 3. Sometimes we don't listen to our spiritual guide, the Holy Spirit.
- B. Remember, though, we are all still a work in progress. We are going to fail. But we still need to follow our North Star, Jesus.