

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

Romans 7:16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

Romans 7:17 But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Lots of people go on diets. There are always foods you can eat and foods you cannot eat. Some count calories, others carbs.

I'm doing the South Beach diet. Or am I? You see, occasionally or even often I eat foods not on my list!

The bottom line is this: You desire to lose the weight and you know what you ought to do but you still blow the diet for a piece of New York cheesecake!

It's a humorous example of what Paul will allude to in these three verses. Only we're not talking about something as benign as dieting and food. We're talking about obedience to God versus sin. Giving in to sin doesn't result in a few more pounds but in the shame and guilt of having disobeyed God whom you love.

Paul was describing the sad experience of many a person who believes that the Law of God that says "thou shalt not commit adultery" is holy and just and good but still has a terrible struggle with adulterous thoughts. Or the person who firmly believes that "thou shalt not covet" but has great feelings of resentment toward the person appointed to the position he wanted. They both **delight in the law of God according to the inward man**, but, unfortunately, they discover that they still struggle with sin.

Paul said he didn't **understand** what he was **doing**. Stick with the dieting example. When I eat an item not on my approved foods list, I know what I'm doing... But I can still say, "What I am doing, I do not understand." What I mean is, "I don't understand why it is so difficult to do the right thing – the thing I really want to do."

When we apply that to sin we'll see that the reason it is so difficult is because sin dwells in me. If I choose the wrong strategy for defeating sin it will conquer me. We're building up to chapter eight where Paul will describe how to defeat sin. But for now he was describing our common lament when we are defeated by it instead.

Paul said he didn't understand what he was doing. What was he doing? First he told you what he was not doing. **For what I will to do, that I do not practice.** Paul had a desire to always do the right and good thing. You could apply that an almost infinite number of ways in your life. You always want to love your wife like Jesus loves His church. You always want to speak the truth with love. You always want to return blessing when you are mistreated. You always want to pray for those who oppose you.

What **was** Paul doing? **What I hate, that I do.** He was acting and reacting in ways he detested. To put it in our own context: We don't always love our wives like Jesus loves His church. We don't always speak the truth let alone with love. We don't always return blessing when mistreated or pray for those who oppose us.

In verse sixteen he said **if [since] I do what I will not to do.** It was a matter of fact for Paul that he didn't always do what was right but often did what he hated. Since it was true he could say **I agree with the law that it is good.** Paul had previously been talking about the purpose of God's Law. It was to expose sin. It was and is good at what it was designed to do. When he was not doing the good and right thing, or when he was doing wrong things, it was God's Law that was his standard.

But now, it is no longer I who do it. Blameshifting has been popular ever since God asked Adam what happened with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam shifted the blame to Eve who shifted the blame to the devil.

Paul was definitely not blameshifting. He wasn't blaming sin as if he had no responsibility. He was identifying sin as a real and powerful principle that still dwelt within him.

When he said **I** he was referring to himself as a born again man with a new nature. So there is the new nature and there is sin both existing in the believer warring against each other.

But sin that dwells in me. This is a strong expression, denoting that sin had taken up its habitation in you and abides there. Sin dwells in you as if you were it's home. It will be in residency until you receive your new glorified body.

Paul recognized that as he sinned he acted *against* his new nature as a new man in Jesus Christ. A Christian must own up to his sin, yet realize that the impulse to sin does not come from who we really are in Jesus Christ.

To be saved from sin, a man must at the same time own it and disown it; it is this practical paradox which is reflected in this verse (Wuest).

Every Christian can say that he does not choose to do evil but would wish to be perfect; that he hates sin, and yet that his corrupt passions lead him astray.

We seem helpless. It seems hopeless. Not at all! I can't leave us without taking a peek at the solution:

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? - *being changed to bring change* -

Romans 7:25 I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

There is victory over sin even though we must struggle against it until we get to Heaven. It is in the Spirit-filled life. The Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times in Romans eight.

We'll get to it... If you're a believer, **you've got it!** God the Holy Spirit indwells you and He can empower you to conquer sin.