

THE GRACE OF GOD | The believers' difficult yet victorious journey of sanctification

Romans 7:13-25

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Big Idea: The difficult journey of sanctification is proof of regeneration.

> The difficult yet victorious journey starts when one is regenerated.

> Because sanctification is a process, there will always be conflict within us between our unredeemed flesh, sin, and the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

There must be a constant and increasing appreciation that though sin still remains it does not have the mastery. There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate complacent to sin. It is one thing for sin to live in us: it is another for us to live in sin.

Jerry Bridges – The Discipline of Grace, p. 105

> Those who are maturing in Christ experience the inner struggle with sin.

The closer we get to God, the more we see our own sin. Thus it is immature, fleshly, and legalistic persons who tend to live under the illusion that they are spiritual and that they measure up well by God's standards. The level of spiritual insight, brokenness, contrition, and humility that characterize the person depicted in Romans 7 are marks of a spiritual and mature believer, who before God has no trust in his own goodness and achievements. **John MacArthur – Romans, p. 379**

Marks of maturity:

1. A delight in God's law (7:22).

Psalm 1:2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

> **As we delight in God's word there will be conformity to Christ and growing disdain for sin.**

"If there is still sin to any degree in one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then there is tension, yes, contradiction, within the heart of that person. Indeed, the more sanctified the person is, the more conformed he is to the image of his Savior, the more he must recoil against every lack of conformity to the holiness of God. The deeper his apprehension of the majesty of God, the greater the intensity of his love to God, the more persistent his yearning for the attainment of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the more conscious will he be of the gravity of the sin which remains and the more poignant will be his detestation of it." **John Murray**

2. A transparency about our struggles with our flesh and sin (7:14-23).

There are 3 major subsections (vv. 14-17, 18-20, 21-25) and each section advances a similar argument.

To make it through this difficult, yet victorious journey . . .

a. We must acknowledge our spiritual condition (vv. 14, 18a, 21).

b. We must recognize that there is a war within us (vv. 15, 18b-19, 22-23a).

c. We must identify the source of our problem (vv. 16-17, 20, 23b)

3. A desire for the Lord to deliver us from our body of death (7:24-25).

Romans 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

“Until sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet.” –**Thomas Watson**

Three sections:

(1) Verses 14-17

a. Confession of spiritual condition (v. 14)

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

b. Testimony of internal conflict (v. 15)

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.

c. Source of the problem revealed (vv. 16-17)

16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.

17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

(2) Verses 18-20

a. Confession of spiritual condition (v. 18a)

18a For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.

b. Testimony of internal conflict (vv. 18b-19)

18b For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

c. Source of the problem revealed (v. 20)

20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

(3) Verses 21-23

a. Confession of spiritual condition (v. 21)

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

b. Testimony of internal conflict (vv. 22-23a)

22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,

23a but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind

c. Source of the problem revealed (v. 23b)

23b and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.