



**Paul's Behavior Problem: The Problem with Subcultures; Volitional Assent Permits the Flesh to Rule the Soul; Paul Does What He Doesn't Desire, Rom 7:20**

11. For example, one who is ensconced into the homosexual lifestyle has entered into a subculture:

**Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v.: "subculture":**

A social group exhibiting characteristic patterns of behavior sufficient to distinguish it from others within an embracing culture or society.

12. Every culture places certain unwritten demands on those who embrace it. Its "social" pressures are so strong that one's willingness to violate them is suppressed even though he might have a sincere desire to extract himself from its customary behaviors.
- NOTE: Therefore, social disapproval is a restraint. This is the establishment influence of society, but it only functions when a society is establishment oriented. For example, homosexuals are no issue in society until they make an issue of themselves, and then society must denounce them. But if a Christian goes on a crusade against homosexuality, it is not good, because that is an attempt to improve the devil's world. Change must occur by the establishment function of the law based on the function of a large pivot of mature believers.
13. To break free from a subculture is extremely difficult to do since one's initial involvement was due to an inability to discern its indigenous sin, human good, and evil.
14. Therefore, it is really quite easy to desire to do the right thing but be unwilling to face the ramifications of doing so.
15. Thus the easy out is to take the path of least resistance and execute a familiar wheel-track which carries with it no major inconveniences.
16. Some of these inconveniences within the subculture include peer pressure, social ostracism, criticism, vilification, vituperation, anger, hatred, name-calling, character assassination, manipulation, maligning, judging, and, in some cases, violence and even murder.
17. Thus, knowing you have done the wrong thing while desiring to do the right thing leads to frustration. This constitutes the lifestyle of the loser believer.
18. Such a believer has wheel-tracks of righteousness in long-term memory, but without reliance upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, it cannot be acted upon.
19. You may desire to do the right thing, but you also desire to avoid ramifications more and thus you ultimately decide to make the easy choice.
20. Therefore, volition, influenced, intimidated, and bullied by the *agent provocateurs*, chooses to go with the path of least resistance—facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness.
21. Once again in our passage we find Paul's liaison with his first husband results in commission of a spiritual *ménage à trios*.

**Romans 7:20a -** Now if, as a result of my personal volitional assent, I am performing what I do not desire (and I am) ...



22. Next comes the introduction of the apodosis, the main clause of the conditional sentence, which will document the sinful nature's *coup d'état*. It begins with the temporal adverb:  
**οὐκέτι, ouketi** - "I am no longer"
23. Again we see the same nuance we first noted in verse 17. There we learned that Paul's volition is responsible for the sins he commits but the actual performance of these trends originates with the sinful nature:  
**Romans 7:17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me.**
24. Several conclusions may be drawn from Romans 7:17 and 20:
1. Volition decides to surrender control of the soul over to the sinful nature.
  2. Once done, the sinful nature performs the sinful act.
  3. With the sinful nature back in control, volition is neutralized, held hostage by its first husband.
  4. From this point on, volition operates from a position of weakness, unable to override the desires of the flesh.
  5. Thus, Paul's volition commits a *ménage à trios* which permits the sinful nature to execute a *coup d'état*.
25. From these principles we observe a contrast between the first and second marriages.
26. In the first marriage, his volition was enslaved without recourse to a tyrannical husband, but at salvation, due to retroactive positional truth, the power of the sinful nature was broken.
27. This means that in the second marriage volition is free to avoid the assaults of the first husband.
28. Paul distinguishes between the responsibility for sin which is assigned to our free will and the function of sin which finds its source in the sinful nature.
29. Therefore, whether enslaved by the first marriage or free in the second, volition is responsible for giving assent to sin.
30. In the first marriage the sinful nature had the authority to dictate policy and to enforce compliance.
31. However, in the second marriage, the sinful nature becomes an influence peddler, like a former politician, now out of power, who lusts for recovery of lost sovereignty.
32. The only successful long-range strategy to defend against his attempts to regain power includes:
1. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit under His filling ministry.
  2. The inculcation of Bible doctrine under His teaching ministry.
  3. Development of doctrinal constellations in the norms and standards of the conscience.
  4. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit to recall pertinent principles under pressure.
  5. The enabling power of the Holy Spirit to execute wheel-tracks of righteousness to experience.
33. It is important to remember that the Holy Spirit's functions of guidance and leadership are handicapped by ignorance of doctrine.



34. With absolute principles of right and wrong retained in long-term memory traces of the conscience, the Holy Spirit is able to recall them into the believer's working memory.

**Romans 7:20a** - Now if, as a result of my personal volitional decision, I am doing what I do not desire to do (and I am), I am no longer ...

35. Next we have the present middle indicative of the verb:

**κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai*** - "the one accomplishing it."

present: Durative; denotes that which has begun in the past and continues to the present. The action is in progress and in a state of persistence.

middle: Deponent; middle in form but active in meaning. Denotes Paul using himself as an example for the purpose of illustration.

indicative: Declarative for a statement of fact.

1. Here we see the bearing of fruit from Paul's *ménage à trios* with the first husband.
2. The responsibility for sin is Paul's volition but the accomplishment of the sin is from his sinful nature.
3. Whether a believer or unbeliever the individual is guilty of making bad choices and is responsible for the ramifications of his decisions.
4. However, in the first marriage, volition is under the sovereignty of the first husband which gains control of the soul at the moment of physical birth.
5. Remember that the soul is created immediately by God and imputed to biological life at the moment of selection.
6. Since the soul is created by God it is intrinsically pure. It contains no corruption in and of itself and is thus free of the sinful nature.
7. PRINCIPLE: God is not the Author of sin. Man is!