

Principle on the Sin Nature; Paul's Behavior Problem, Romans 7:14-25; the Command to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit, Eph 5:18b; the Imperative Mood

IV. Principles:

1. The sin nature is not the source of sin; sin is the personal choice of the individual to commit the sin by which he is tempted.
2. New believers and believers who are not biblically trained have a vague idea of what constitutes sin and very little idea about how to manage it.
3. All believers bring into the Christian life the inventory of ideas they possessed prior to salvation.
4. Since sinful behavior is the path of least resistance for the biblically ignorant then the ability to grow in grace is extremely limited.
5. Knowledge of rebound does little good if no spiritual growth occurs while in fellowship and, without doctrinal principles to override temptations, sin will remain chronic.
6. Spiritual growth occurs under the mentorship of the Holy Spirit and under the authority of a pastor-teacher. This is the function of the two power options of (1) spiritual IQ plus (2) GAP, which must become spiritual skills if progress is to occur.
7. Minus this system the believer with a minimum inventory of doctrinal knowledge can only "drink in" the basics but he is unable to "drink in" advanced doctrines. See 1 Corinthians 3:1-2.
8. Because of paltry knowledge of doctrine such a believer has little control over the impulses of the sin nature. This means that facilitated behavior patterns that were developed in unbelief continue generally undeterred after salvation.
9. Paul faced this problem and it led to a dissertation on his behavior problem of doing what he detested, wheel-tracks of wickedness, instead of what he resolved, wheel-tracks of righteousness:

Romans 7:14 - [Corrected translation] **Consequently, we know—we comprehend in long-term memory traces—that the Law is spiritual but I am tendentially carnal [a present tense that admits a tendency toward this status though not currently involved], belonging to the realm of the sinful nature, when I have been led astray under the authority of the sinful nature.**

v. 15 - For what I do—what perpetually works its way out of me—I do not understand, because what I resolve to do [**wheel-tracks of righteousness**], these things I am tendentially not practicing, but what I detest [**wheel-tracks of wickedness**], these things I keep on doing [**because they are facilitated into paths of least resistance**].

v. 16 - Now if I keep doing this thing which I do not desire to do, I keep on agreeing with the Law that it is advantageous.

v. 17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing [**production of the sinful nature**] but the sinful nature which keep on living in me [**the behaviors are facilitated**].

Romans 7:18 - In fact, I know that in me (that is in my flesh) there does not reside any good of intrinsic value, for the desire to do the will of God is present in me but the divine-good production of my desire is not.

v. 19 - For the intrinsic good I desire, I do not do, but the evil which I do not desire, this I keep on practicing.

v. 20 - 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 the one producing the sinful act but the sinful nature which continuously resides inside of me.

v. 21 - Consequently, I discover this principle, that when I desire to do the honorable thing, the law of evil resides in me.

v. 22 - For along with other believers, I habitually delight in God's principles resident in the soul [**the inner man**].

v. 23 - But I see a different kind of principle in my body parts [**brain**] laying siege in a campaign against the principle of my mind [**νοῦς, nous**] and so making me a prisoner to the principle of the sinful nature which is located in my body parts.

v. 24 - I ... a miserable person! Who will rescue me from the body of this death?

v. 25 - Grace belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, with my mind I myself am obligated to comply with the principle of God [**wheel-tracks of righteousness**], but on the other hand, with my flesh I myself impulsively capitulate to the principle of sin [**wheel-tracks of wickedness**].

10. Paul was able to overcome the dominance of his facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness by means of rebound and continued spiritual growth, but he had it to do. The option of rebound was the divinely provided device that gave him the ability to regain fellowship and the power to acquire the necessary doctrine to manage his sin nature.
11. The fellowship that occurs with rebound is characterized by the filling of the Holy Spirit which places the believer in status quo spirituality. This environment is the sine qua non for learning the Word of God and therefore mandatory for spiritual growth.
12. Consequently, we are not surprised to learn that we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This mandate is found in Ephesians 5:18 where the verb for “be filled” is the present passive imperative of:
- πληρώω, plēroō:** “to fill something with something; to become filled.”
- present: Customary: denotes that which habitually occurs, or may be reasonably expected to occur.
- passive: The subject receives the action of the verb which is produced by the Holy Spirit, the instrumental of association of the noun **Πνεῦμα, Pneuma**. To have association, a second party, the Spirit, must furnish the means of that association.
- imperative: Direct command: Scripture issues a positive appeal to the volition of the believer. The verse is therefore a command to begin an association with the Holy Spirit which association is not presently going on.

Ephesians 5:18b - ... keep on being filled [**πληρώω, plēroō] by association with the Holy Spirit.**

13. It is important to remember the definition of the imperative mood:

Dana, H. E. and Julius R. Mantey. A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 174:

The imperative mood is the mood of command or entreaty—the mood of *volition*. It is the genius of the imperative to express the appeal of will to will. In ordinary linguistic communication the primary appeal is from intellect to intellect, but in the imperative one will addresses another. It expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention, and is, therefore, the furthest removed from reality.

14. The issue to be considered in this imperative of direct command is that we are never commanded by God to do something we are not able to accomplish.
15. Secondly, the implication of the command is that those being addressed are not presently filled with the Holy Spirit but are instructed to become so.