

To Desire To Do Is Not To Do; Romans 7:19a

NOTE: Class began with a recognition of the anniversary of D Day. Recitation of citations were presented on the three soldiers who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism on Omaha Beach, Pvt. Carlton W. Barrett, 1Lt. Jimmie W. Monteith, Jr., and Technician John J. Pinder, Jr., all of the U.S. Army.

“The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, The Deeds.” Forest Ranch: Sharp & Dunnigan Publications, 1984; pp. 254-55; 400-01; 424.

In Romans 7:19 we see the continuing dilemma of the believer who has little doctrine. Such a person places a lot of sincere stock in observing the policies of God but only seems to come up with facilitated trends of the sinful nature.

The Romans had a proverb to describe such blind arrogance: *“What we wish for we call good, what pleases us we call holy.”*

Romans 7:19 begins with the explanatory conjunction: *gar* - “for” + the relative pronoun *hos* - “which.”

Next comes the present active indicative of what has become a very popular verb in this passage: *thelo* - “I desire.”

present - Customary; denotes that which habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur.

Paul has facilitated wheel-tracks that desire to please God and to do things which serve Him. In some cases, Paul knows what to do in order to fulfill these desires. Because of other facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness, he is unable to actually accomplish his objective.

On the other hand, Paul is ignorant of how to properly serve God and thus resorts to facilitated wheel-tracks of human good and evil. In either case, Paul desires to serve and please God by doing the right thing, he just can't pull it off. This is the impact of this customary present: Paul habitually wants to serve God. The problem is that it just doesn't happen.

active - Paul produces the action in this example of using himself to demonstrate the inner conflict.

indicative - Declarative; reality

Paul defines that which he desires to do with the singular adjective: *agathos* - “good of intrinsic value,” or “intrinsic good” *“For the intrinsic good which I desire to do...”*

Then comes another old friend, the present active indicative of the verb: *poieo* - With the negative *ou* it is translated, “I do not do.”

present - Historical; views a past event, i.e., Paul's carnal function, with the vividness of a present occurrence.

Paul is writing Scripture, specifically the book of Romans. He is using his previous battles with the inner conflict as an example of what is normal in the life of a believer who is without doctrine and as a result functions habitually in status quo carnality.

The logical sequence goes like this: The customary present of *thelo* tells us that Paul habitually desires to do the right thing.

The historical present of *poieo* says that historically he habitually didn't do it.

This dichotomy is a lifestyle, a behavior pattern, and character traits which reflect Paul's decision making during his period of carnal function. Again, the reason: wheel-tracks which are facilitated into long-term memory traces will always get the volition's permission for action even though mentally the believer may desire to do otherwise.

active - Paul produces the action of doing that which he does not desire to do. indicative - Declarative; reality

“For the intrinsic good which I desire to do, I do not do...”

Paul is correct in perceiving that believers are to do things which are pleasing to God and which serve Him. The unfortunate human rationale however, is that we are capable of determining what those things are and that we may accomplish them through human energy. This defies logic. Why? Because first of all if there is a God then He has seen fit to permit His existence to be perceived in the finite mind of man.

If God exists, and if man perceives His existence, then it follows that God desires to make Himself known. If God desires to make Himself known to us, then it follows that He must also desire to establish some sort of relationship between Himself and us. Consequently, if God desires to reveal Himself to man and to do so in such a way as to establish a relationship with Him, then He must do it in a manner which man can understand. This requires the capacity to communicate and to understand language.

Again, it becomes necessary to quote Dr. Richard F. Thompson, director of the Neuroscience Program at the University of Southern California:

Thompson, Richard F. *The Brain: A Neuroscience Primer*. New York: (2d ed.) W. H. Freeman and Company, 1993.

All languages, from English to obscure dialects, have the same degree of complexity and similar general properties. It is as though humans came into the world equipped with a well-elaborated, complex, and biologically determined language system. In short, it would seem that we may have speech and language centers in the brain that are in some ways predetermined or preprogrammed.

Language is the one species-typical behavior that sets humans completely apart from all other animals.

The reason? Man is the only animal to whom God seeks to communicate. The communication vehicle by which He has chosen to reveal His policy, plan, and purpose to man is the Bible.

What God desires us to do in order to establish a relationship with Him is called the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Those things which God desires for the believer in Christ to then do as a means of serving and pleasing Him are also delineated in Scripture. Absolute principles of right and wrong, good and evil, and righteous and wicked are clearly proclaimed.

If Paul, or any other believer, wishes to please and serve God, then he must do so within the parameters of these biblical revelations. Otherwise, man will falsely assume that *“what he wishes for is good and what pleases him is holy.”* This leads to the conundrum of desiring to please and serve God but not being able to do so.

The believer who is ignorant of how to serve and please God is ignorant because he has not taken the time to learn the process and procedure from the Bible. In some areas he may be entirely aware of how to serve and please God but, although he desires to do what is right, is unable to get it done. Why? In both cases it is because of facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness producing the children of the first marriage: sin, human good, and evil.

Until biblical truth makes up the brain’s paths of least resistance, man will always choose to follow the currently facilitated wheel-tracks. Thus, we may quote Solomon in:

Proverbs 23:7 - For as a man thinks in his own soul, so is he.

This is why Paul is compelled to say in:

Romans 7:19 - For the intrinsic good which I desire to do, I do not do...