

IV Review. Romans 7:15-25

This paragraph introduced us to the marriage counselor of the first marriage, the Mosaic Law. The Law used one specific imperative mood to alert Paul to his status of spiritual death and the hopelessness of his totally depraved status.

The Tenth Commandment's prohibition against lust opened Paul's eyes to his innate sinful nature. Realizing from this that he was lost in sin, Paul received regeneration through the second marriage to Jesus Christ. However, after having been saved, his desire to serve God was frustrated by his inability to execute divine mandates because of constant submission to the wishes of his first husband. We classified this as a spiritual ménage à trois which is the subject of the third paragraph of chapter 7.

The subject of Paul's commentary actually shifts in the middle of Romans 7:14 with the conjunction of contrast *de* which is translated "but." What follows is a series of verbs in the present tense which indicate the source of Paul's dilemma, facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness.

Paragraph 3: The Attacks of the First Husband (Romans 7:15–21)

Romans 7:15 - 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**].

Romans 7:16 - 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.

Romans 7:17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing [**production of the sinful nature**] but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me.

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.

Romans 7:19 - For the intrinsic good I desire, I do not do, but the evil which I do not desire, this I keep on practicing.

Romans 7:20 - 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.

Romans 7:21 - Consequently, I discover this principle, that when I desire to do the honorable thing, the law of evil resides in me.

The overwhelming impact of this passage is found in a series of verbs which are used in the present tense. The fundamental significance of the present tense is the idea of linear progress, that is, action which occurs in present time and is typically ongoing. We noted seven forms of the present tense:

- a. Progressive: Brings to mind a picture of events in the process of occurrence. It denotes that which has begun in the past and continues into the present.
- b. Customary: Denotes that which habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur.
- c. Aoristic: Expresses a present fact without reference to progress.
- d. Futuristic: An event which has not yet occurred but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.
- e. Historical: Employed when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence.
- f. Tendential: Represents the idea of that which is inclined to occur or which tends to occur.
- g. Static: A condition which is assumed as perpetually existing.

Romans 7:15–Romans 7:25 is studded with the use of the present tense in its various classifications. From them can be seen the presence of facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness which have become paths of least resistance. This causes Paul frustration in that he desires to do the right thing but finds he is constantly doing the wrong thing. This was demonstrated by two examples of assaults by the first husband:

The Attack of the SWAT Team—the agent provocateurs of the lust pattern whose mission it is to tempt volition into committing a ménage à trois. (Romans 7:15, Romans 7:16, Romans 7:17) Once the decision is made by volition to submit to the temptation, the sinful nature executes a coup d'état on Paul's soul. (Romans 7:18, Romans 7:19, Romans 7:20, Romans 7:21)

Paragraph 4: The Battle of Wheel-tracks (Romans 7:22–25)

Romans 7:22 - For along with other believers, I habitually delight in God's principles resident in the soul [the inner man].

Romans 7:23 - But I see a different kind of principle in my body parts [brain] laying siege in a campaign against the principle of my mind [nous] and so making me a prisoner to the principle of the sinful nature which is located in my body parts.

Romans 7:24 - I ... a miserable person! Who will rescue me from the body of this death?

Romans 7:25 - Grace belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, on the one hand, with my mind [nous] 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].

In this last paragraph we learned quite a number of principles and briefly examined a few doctrines: Under the Greek word ἀντιστρατευομαι we learned of the sieges and campaigns waged by the sinful nature against the nous. (Romans 7:23: "laying siege in a campaign against my mind ...")

The Nine-Step Program for Reversion Recovery:

1. *metanoeo*: To admit wrongdoing to oneself.
2. *homologeo*: Confession alone to God alone.
3. *pleroo*: To be filled with the Holy Spirit.
4. *didaktos*: To be taught under the Holy Spirit's mentorship.
5. *gnosis*: Academic understanding of divine truth.
6. *epignosis*: Divine truth metabolized into the stream of conscious.
7. *hupomimesko*: Recall of divine truth to the conscious mind.
8. *katergazomai*: Application of divine truth to life and circumstances.
9. *misthoo*: Rewards in both time and eternity.

The Doctrine of Sanctification in three categories:

1. Positional Sanctification: Refers to salvation at which point the Holy Spirit baptizes every believer into union with Christ and thus sets the believer apart for special service to God.
2. Experiential Sanctification: The believer's advance following salvation all the way to spiritual maturity.
3. Ultimate Sanctification: The believer in the eternal state in resurrection body.

But the overriding message of the fourth paragraph is the battle of wheel-tracks waged by the two husbands for control of the believer's soul, also the subject of:

Galatians 5:16 - Always walk [*peripateo*] by means of the Holy Spirit [**mentorship**] and you will never submit to the temptations of the lust pattern.

Galatians 5:1 - For the desires of the flesh are those which are opposed by the Holy Spirit and the desires of the Holy Spirit are those which are opposed by the flesh. The two are in constant warfare against each other, with the result that you cannot do the thing you desire to do.

Review handout: "Straight Wheel-tracks of Righteousness Develop Capacity for Rewards and Blessings."