

The Problem of Indwelling Sin

Romans 7:14-20

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

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

THE BIG IDEA

What is the main truth The Lord showed you in this passage?

Our Powerless Willpower
Sin has been a problem for all mankind for all time. One of the common treatment attempts is to work at increasing your “willpower.” We often say we can achieve whatever we want if we want it enough! While these ideas may supply great inspiring slogans for self-help programs, they fall miserably short of reality. Paul’s experience was that the evil in him (indwelling sin) always won over his good intentions.

Part 1—Sold Under Sin

Read Romans 7:13-14; Romans 5:12; Genesis 8:21

- 1) “Carnal” carries the idea of natural humanity apart from God. Why do you think Paul connects natural humanity with “sold under sin”?
- 2) According to Genesis 8:21 how did God view the natural state of man even from childhood?
- 3) How does this state of being “sold under sin” affect our natural human abilities today?

Part 2—Confused Results

Read Romans 7:14-15; Psalm 19:12-13

- 1) What did Paul not “allow” (know/understand)? Can you relate?
- 2) According to Psalm 19 what is often unknown to man? How might this affect our ability to live right?
- 3) Have you ever done something wrong with the right intentions? How did it affect your future decisions?

Part 3—The Right Desire

Read Romans 7:16-18; Matthew 26:41-43

- 1) To what does Paul “consent,” and what does that say of his desire (will)?
- 2) What did Jesus acknowledge about the disciples’ desire, and what warning did he give them? Do you think Jesus was confident in their will-power?
- 3) How have your decision been different from your desires? Why do you think that is?

Part 4—A Performance Problem

Read Romans 7:18-20; Philippians 2:12-13

- 1) What does Paul blame for his inability to perform his desire?
- 2) What difference do you see between Romans 7 and Philippians 2 in the performance of what is good?
- 3) How might this study explain a Christian’s constant struggle with wrong actions?