

Dear Friends of "Dial Daily Bread,"

In reading Romans 7 and 8, you will see that in chapter 7 Paul is sad. He tells how he is "the purchased slave of sin. ... What I do is not what I want to do, but what I detest. ... I agree with the law [of God] and hold it to be admirable. But as things are, it is no longer I who perform the action, but sin that lodges in me. ... Nothing good lodges in me--in my unspiritual nature, I mean--for though the will to do good is there, the deed is not. The good which I want to do, I fail to do; but what I do is the wrong which is against my will; and if what I do is against my will, clearly it is no longer I who am the agent, but sin that has its lodging in me.

"I discover this principle, then: that when I want to do the right, only the wrong is within my reach. In my inmost self I delight in the law of God, but I perceive that there is in my bodily members a different law, fighting against the law that my reason approves and making me a prisoner under the law that is in my members, the law of sin. Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me?" (vss. 14-25, *The New English Bible*).

People have argued for many years as to who Paul is talking about. Does he mean he himself before he was converted? Or is he talking about himself while converted? Well, he ends the chapter by saying, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (vs. 25, *King James Version*).

It's difficult to believe that while Paul was writing those words he could still be wallowing in alcoholism, adultery, envy, jealousy, or hatred. No, at this time Paul was living a life of victory in Christ. Therefore it is clear that Paul is describing himself as a representative of the entire human race. His "I" is the corporate "I" of humanity in general--anybody who wants to do what is right but who realizes that his nature prompts him to do wrong. That is all of us, by nature!

But in chapter 8 Paul answers his own question. There is somebody to rescue him, and that is Christ Jesus. There is a new law in Him, a new principle at work--of triumph over sin and evil. And as a human being you are a part of His purchased possession--the freedom and victory are already yours. Now believe it, and act upon that faith.

--Robert J. Wieland

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