

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 9 - Number 23

The Week of April 28, 2024

Dying to Live
The Saint and the Struggle
Romans 7:14-25

Welcome to the fourth week in our series *Dying to Live*. This passage is one of the most difficult interpretive passages in the New Testament. The critical issue revolves around the identity of the wretched person (v. 25) and the inner struggle to do what is right. In this study, we take the position that the person Paul describes (including himself!) is not the struggle of an unregenerate person or a defeated believer, but a sin-sensitive saint. Overall, there is no exemption for any believer from the internal struggle described here. While Romans 7 does not explain everything that might be said about the Christian life, it does portray the normal Christian life and the internal struggle we all face.

OBSERVATION (*What does the passage say?*)

Before meeting with your Growth Group, read through the passage at least twice and perform the following prompts:

- Circle every "I" in this passage.
- Place parenthesis around every relative pronoun (i.e. me, my).
- Place brackets around each present tense verb.
- Place brackets around each partial phrase that begins with *For*. For instance, [For we know].
- Underline every statement that requires more clarification for you.
- On the line above each paragraph, write one word that captures the theme of each.

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

INTERPRETATION (*What does the passage mean?*)

1. What evidence do you find in the text that leads you to think Paul is describing himself after he became a Christian? Do you find this view persuasive? Why or why not?
2. Which statements are most troubling for you and why?
3. In what sense is Paul describing the normal Christian life?
4. How does Paul find hope in verse 25 after his exasperation in verse 24?

APPLICATION (*How does the passage apply to our lives?*)

5. Do you identify with what Paul says in this text? Share your experience with indwelling sin.

6. Are your motivations driven more by what you are trying to do to earn God’s acceptance or by what He has already done to bring you into His favor?

7. In what ways do you try to rationalize, justify, or minimize your sin? What does it mean to be a sin-sensitive saint?

8. When you experience this internal struggle, do you tend to reach out to the Lord (or, others) or do you tend to withdraw?

9. Assuming you can identify yourself in this passage, what keeps you from giving up? How do vv. 24-25 answer this question?

Lined area for taking notes.