

## CONSTANT BATTLE



Gary Wilkerson March 9, 2015

Why do we sense we're in a constant battle? It's like the cartoon where a devil sits on one shoulder and an angel on the other, each warring for attention. We are engaged in a battle, but not that kind. Paul addresses our real dilemma in Romans: "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Romans 7:14-15, 18, ESV).

Paul doesn't mince words here as he describes his condition: "I am of the flesh. I do evil all the time. No good dwells within me." So, is this Paul's basic description of a Christian? Is he saying, "All your days will be full of such conflict"? Not at all.

Yet Paul presses in further: "When I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 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. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (7:21-24).

Many Christians stop here and say, "That's me—I'm saved but my life is wretched. There's no way God could ever use me. I spend every waking hour just fighting off sin." The problem is, these Christians don't know who they are in Christ and that is exactly Paul's point. He paints a full picture of our dilemma, describing our wretched condition, and asks, "Is there any way out? How can I ever be delivered from this? It's impossible in my own strength."

Then, in one of the most amazing passages recorded in Scripture, Paul gives us God's response to the human condition: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (7:25, 8:1-2).

There is a new law at work in you—because there's a new sheriff in town! Jesus, the new sheriff, has run out the old, corrupt one—the "old man" of your flesh. You no longer live under the law of sin and death, for "the law of the Spirit has set you free in Christ Jesus."

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