***Biblical Lines of Authority  
RO91-02***

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans 7:21-25. Our subject is "The Great Conflict," and this is the second segment on that.

**The Law of God and the Law of Sin**

The apostle Paul is concluding Romans 7 with a description of the great conflict within himself between two laws that he has observed. One is called the Law of God, which calls for a moral rectitude. The other is the law of sin (or of the sin nature), which calls for a life of evil. The apostle Paul observes that in his soul (in his thinking), he delights in the law of God. But on the other hand, in his experience, he finds himself obeying the law of the sin nature. So, while Paul's mind approves of God's moral law, he uses the physical members of his body to do evil.

Consequently, Paul is led to cry out in desperation for a solution to this conflict that he sees within himself – between godliness and sinfulness. Paul realizes that he does not have the capacity in himself to resist the appeals of his sin nature. As long as he is in the physical body, he cannot escape the sin nature.

**A Wretched Man**

Paul therefore calls for someone outside of himself to enable him to reject the temptations of the sin nature. So, we read in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" So, picking up the study in verse 24, we learned that the base of the sin nature is actually the physical bodies that we have. Paul says, "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me?" He realizes this it's going to take a person outside of himself.

**Deliverance**

What he wants is to be delivered. The Greek Bible looks like this on this word. It's the word "rhuomai." This word means "to rescue." So, Paul says, "Who's going to rescue me? I'm a captive. Who will release me?" This word is used in Matthew 27:43, which will exemplify its meaning: "He trusted in God." These people stood at the foot of the cross, making fun of Jesus as He hung on the cross. They say, "He trusted in God. Let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him. For He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" There is the very word "deliver:" "He trusted in God. Let Him (that is, God) deliver Him now." That means "to rescue him:" "Let Him "rhuomai" the Savior on that cross." This is in the future tense, which means at any point in the future, after we become aware of the enslavement to that sin nature as Christians, we call out for this delivery. It's in the middle voice, which means it's for our personal benefit to be freed from it. Paul specifically stresses that the person he's concerned about is himself: "Who shall deliver me from." And specifically, the thing he wants delivery from is: "the body." He calls it the "soma." This refers to Paul's physical body.

In Romans 6:12, Paul calls the human body "our mortal body." There he uses the same word "soma" for our mortal body. So, he's speaking again here of the same thing: "Who will deliver me from this body?" And he describes it as "a body of death (the "thanatos"). This word here connotes a lack of spiritual life. And we translate as: "This body of death," Paul's mortal body: "O wretched man that I am. Who shall rescue me from this body of death?"

The reason for that is that the human body is genetically where the sin nature resides. Consequently, it is through the human body that we face the issue of death. The sin nature residing in Paul's body drives him to choices which can only be described as the choices of death. It is the thing for which men will be experiencing eternal death unless rescued by the provision of the Lord Jesus Christ. A person goes to hell because he is born with the moral guilt of Adam imputed to him. A person also goes to hell because he has performed certain personal sins stimulated by this genetic structure of the sin nature.

Once Paul dies physically, and goes into the Lord's presence, he will be released from the overpowering lust patterns of the sin nature, because when he dies, he will leave the body behind. And as a disembodied soul, he will go into the Lord's presence. Later, when his body is resurrected, and his soul and spirit are reunited with that body, it will be a body just like Jesus Christ had – a body which could not suffer death again, because it will now be a sinless body, and totally incapable of sinning. So, the enslavement to evil through the nature in the body places the body in a very lowly state now compared to what it is in the future.

**The Removal of the Sin Nature**

On another occasion, in Philippians 3:21, Paul referred to that mortal body (this body of sin) in this way: "Who shall change our lowly body (that is, a body that is subject to evil), that it may be fashioned like His glorious body (referring to Jesus Christ), according to the working, by which He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." One of the great things that lies ahead for all of us as Christians is to finally be able to live without ever sinning. That is impossible until we come into the Lord's presence, and the contamination in the genetic structure of our human bodies has been removed.

In verse 25 then, Paul breaks out with a sound of joy – the joy of deliverance: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word "thank" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "eucharisteo." "Eucharisteo" is a word that expresses gratitude. Paul is grateful for the fact that there is a divine solution to his spiritual enslavement. This is in the present tense, which indicates that this is constantly his case. He's always grateful because there is a solution. It's in the active voice, which means that this is Paul's personal feeling of gratitude. And the person he thanks is God, and it is "the" God – God the Father.

So, we translate this as: "Thank God." That's all it says. It's just, "Thank God" in the Greek. There is an answer, and that is: "Through (by means of the agency of) Jesus Christ, our Lord. The word "Jesus" is "Iesous." This is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "Joshua," which means "Jehovah is salvation." It's a personal name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "Christ" is "Christos." This means "the anointed one." This refers to His role as the Son of God as Israel's Messiah. Then it uses the word "Lord," which is the word "Kurios." "Kurios" means "master," and it is use of the Son of God to indicate His deity. So, "Iesous" indicates His humanity. "Christos" indicates that He is called to be Israel's Messiah. "Kurios" indicates the fact of His deity.

Freedom from enslavement to sin is the consequence of the atonement of this person. This is the who. Paul says, "Who?" The answer is: "the Lord Jesus Christ." And without Him, there can be no escape.

So, here is the unbeliever. He is totally under the command of the sin nature. He cannot do one single thing that is good in the sight of God. All that he can approach is human good. There is no divine good. He is totally under the condemnation of God. But when you become a Christian, you walk into the Christian life, and here comes that sin nature right along with you. Finally, you get to the place where you cry out, "Who can save me from it in my experience? Who can enable me to be able to live a godly life?"

When we get to Romans 8, that's what it's all about. It answers the how, through what Christ has done, that it is possible to stop living like a dog once you're a Christian – to start living like a prince and princess of the living God. The basis of release from the enslavement to the sin nature is the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind. Somebody had to pay for your evil. He's the one who has done it.

For those who are born again, therefore, there is potential victory over every last appeal from the sin nature. And Paul is going to show us, in Romans 8, that this release is specifically through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to us, based upon the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Frame of Reference of the Mind**

So, Paul says, "Thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then." And he proceeds to say, "As a result then, then these words introduce a conclusion about Paul, and Christians in general, based on what he has been saying since verse 14. The idea is: "This then is my condition." And he sums it all up. He says, "My condition is this. That with the mind, I myself serve the Law of God." "The mind" is this Greek word "nous." This is the mentality of the soul. It is the mind which controls our will and our emotions. Whatever is the frame of reference of your mind, that controls what you do with your will. That controls what you do with your emotions. If in your mind you are oriented to being a thief, then your will will decide to steal, and your emotions will feel good about it. And your conduct will be guided accordingly. If you are an adulterous-minded type of person, then you will not mind being guilty of sexual immorality. It will be acceptable to you. That is your frame of reference. This is the most important part of a human being – his mentality. And what you have in your mind as your frame of reference, and what you have put into your thinking as the structure of your value system, which either comes from the world or comes from the Bible, is what will guide you in your actions.

It will also guide how you feel about things. The reason sometimes our feelings are so fouled up is because our thinking is fouled up. The reason our actions are so fouled up is because our thinking is fouled up. And it is a terrible problem that we are all born with (a deficiency). The Bible calls it "within the mentality of the soul." The apostle Paul here is saying that, with his mind, he has progressed to the point where he has a frame of reference that enables him to make the choice. He himself (the person, he stresses) who is responsible for his choices, says that on the one hand, his mind proceeds to serve the law of God. This is the word "douleuo." "Douleuo" means "to act as a slave." It indicates Paul's dedication to something. He says, "I am continually, by my personal choice, a slave (in my thinking\_ to the law of God." This word "law" is "nomos," which refers to the principles of "the" God. Paul's mind chooses God's standard, and he refers to it as the law of my mind in verse 23.

**The Flesh**

He says, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. This is the law of his "nous." That is the law that says, "I accept God's standard. So, in his thinking, he says, "On the one hand, I'm for that, but." And he throws in this Greek word of contrast. "On the one hand," he says, "in my mind, I'm all for the law of God. I'm all for God's law (moral code). I'm all for God's standards. But on the other hand," he says, "I discover something else." He says, "That with the flesh, this is the word "sarx." The word "sarx" refers to human nature in its natural state – a perverted animal lusts and selfishness. The best way to describe the word "flesh," as it is used in the Bible, is that it is the animal lusts and self-centeredness that characterizes every human being by nature. No matter how cultured; how refined; how dedicated to anything; or, how determined to be something better, we are by nature propelled by these lust patterns of the sin nature. And they're on an animal level, and we are at the same time self-centered, and we do our own thing. That's the phrase that has come into popular use.

So, here, on the one hand, is the love God to which the mind of Paul is committed. But on the other hand, he says, "There is the inherent propensity to moral evil, which he calls "the flesh." He is not referring by this word to the human body. We have the human body. That's the "soma." But that's different. He is not talking about that. When he says "flesh," he doesn't mean that there's something evil about your physical body. And we don't want to leave that suggestion. What he's talking about here is his sin nature that is within him.

So, he says, "With his flesh, he serves another law – that which he calls again, the "nomos," the principle of sin: "hamartia" – acts of evil, violating God's moral standard. And Paul calls this "the law of sin that is in his members" up in verse 23.

So, here's the contrast, Paul observes that his mental dedication to God's moral law is not fully expressed through the use of his physical body, including his mind. Instead, what he finds is that that is countered. Paul does not do the good that he would do. Paul does not avoid the evil that repulses him, and that he is disgusted with.

**Lines of Authority**

If you stop and think about it, we can find many examples of how, in daily life, this principle of conflict comes into being. Let's start, for example, with lines of authority – constituted lines of authority. With the law of God, there is one viewpoint toward authority. With the law of sin, there is a contrasting viewpoint of authority. This is the problem that each of us faces every day in lines of authority. This is probably the primary problem in American society today – the subjection to proper and constituted lines of authority.

**Male over Female**

There is, first of all, in the Scriptures, put foremost, the authority of the male over the female. So, let's grab the Bibles and see that indeed the Word of God has something to say about this. Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman, He (God) said, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception. In sorrow you shall bring forth children, and your desire (your fulfillment) shall be to your husband (or by means of your husband). And he shall rule over you." There is no question in the Garden of Eden as to whom God placed in charge of the family unit. Sin had entered the human race before that. This was not necessary. Now a terrible disease was inherent in the physical structure of these people, and it was necessary now so that they did not go on a self-destructive course to establish lines of authority. That's what authority does. It keeps us from tearing ourselves apart. Here is the primary line of authority within the human race. Any time this is violated, nations collapse.

In 1 Corinthians 11:3, we read, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. Then 1 Corinthians 11:7: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and the glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." It was Adam's rib that formed the woman: "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have authority on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman; neither the woman without the man in the Lord." When it comes to spiritual things, they are on equal ground: "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman: but all things of God. When it comes to human relationships, there is a line of authority. When it comes to the relationship spiritually to God, they are on equal terms.

Then in Ephesians 5:22-24, Paul says, "Wives, submit yourselves into your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Titus 2:5 said this, on the authority of male or female: "To be discreet (speaking to the young women); chaste; keepers at home; good; obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed."

Then moving to 1 Peter 3:1, we read, "In the same manner, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any don't obey the Word, they may also, without the Word, be won by the behavior of the wives."

1 Peter 3:5: "For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands." This is a badge of honor, and it makes a woman attractive because it enables her to be feminine (not just female), because she is relating herself under God's arrangement to her husband.

Then, finally, 1 Timothy 2:11: "So here now tonight you should learn an enormous thing concerning two sides of an appeal from the sin nature." When you have the law of God, there is the fact clearly declared in the Word of God that men are supposed to lead in all areas of human relationships. Of course, including in that is that men are to be spiritual leaders.

On the other hand, the sin nature comes along and says, "No. Women should be in place of authority where men are subject to them, and are under their authority." You have to make your decision. What does God say? On the one hand, against that which is the law of sin that appeals to resist that. I need not remind you how the woman who is carnal will find this something that enrages her, and something that she wants to strike down.

**Parents over their Children**

Then there is, in terms of authority, also the authority of parents over their children. Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth." Paul reminds these people that one of the first promises of God is that how you treat your parents will determine what kind of a life you have, and how long the life you have. It's a promise of blessing for following God's way. It's a promise of destruction for following the sin nature's way.

**The Rod of Correction**

That authority of the parents, of course, extends to the fact that they are to rear their children in a certain way. Proverbs 22:50 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him." This rod of correction is not only a physical rod, but it's also the rod of correction of how you deal with children. The child is told that he cannot do something, or that he cannot have something he wants, and then he has a little temper tantrum, and starts crying. And mother says, "Oh, Daddy, let him have it. He's just a little boy." He is not just a little boy. He's a little old sin nature rat. That is what he is. And if you keep treating him like that, he will grow to be a big sin nature rat, and we will all suffer from it. That's what he is. And this rod of correction drives that foolishness out. So, the Word of God says, "There's an authority that parents are to exercise over their children," and you commit yourself to that. But the sin nature says, "No, forget it. Let them get away with it." Several of you have been rude that way. And you know what the consequences have been. I'm just kidding.

Colossians 3:20 is another one: "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." That has to be the basic training. Within a child is, by nature, the rebellion of will. And the first thing a parent has to do is to break the will of the child. You have to break his rebellious will immediately. And the longer you wait, the harder it is. And the time comes when it is very difficult to break the rebellious will of that child so that he will conform to your directions, and he will respond to your authority. He comes to a point in life where he's so big, he won't respond to your authority. And then you've got a real problem on your hands. And how true that is. Just leave the child to grow up with his rebellious will, fighting against the authority of his parents, and he'll go out in society, and he'll buck everybody else, until society has to crush him.

**Government**

There is, of course, the authority of government too – a very legitimate and a proper authority that God has ordained, and for which we have a responsibility. In Romans 13:1, we have an extensive declaration concerning this: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (that is, civil authority). For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resists the power, resists the ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Will you then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and you shall have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to you for good. But if I do that which is evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, and avenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil. Wherefore you must needs to be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause, pay your taxes also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and, honor to whom honor."

One of the great things about the United States is that it was a government which was formed by men who are aware of the sin nature and of the natural inherent tyranny that exists in governmental structures because of the people who run it, and the people who make the rules. So, there was put together, under the guidance of God, a system of government in our Constitution that enabled a person to take that passage in Romans 13, and be delighted to be subject to it completely, because under the Constitution, as it was originally written, there was a restraint upon government so that it could not become a tyranny over the lives of the people. It could not become an oppressor.

Well, the Word of God says, "When that government is functioning as for God's purposes, to execute and maintain law and order, and to preserve individual freedom, then you will not be oppressed, and you will be free to do exactly what the Scriptures say to support it to the limit. When it does not do that, then you have to start resisting it, and to start changing it.

In Genesis 9:5-6 government was given the terrible authority. After the flood, God said, "And Surely your blood of your lives I will require; at the hand of every beast I will I require it; and, at the hand of man (at the hand of every man's brother) I will require the life of man. Who so sheds man's blood by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God He made man." If you shed a person's blood, you are to be executed, and the authority of government was established to do just exactly that.

In Titus 3:1, again, we have the authority of government: "Put them in mind, to be subject to principalities and powers; to obey magistrates, judges, and to be ready to every good work."

Finally, 1 Peter 2:13: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God that with well-doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but the servants of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God' and, honor the king." Here again, this stresses the fact that when government is doing what it's supposed to be doing, and not going beyond its justified divine limitations, then it is something that is a blessing to mankind, and it is preserving freedom.

So, you have the appeals of two law. The sin nature tells government to do one thing, and that's what mostly government does. The Word of God says something else.

**Sexual Purity**

There is another line of conflict, and that is relative to sexual purity. The Bible makes it clear that God has set up this relationship of sex, to be executed within marriage only. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage is honorable in all, the bad undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

1 Corinthians 6:9: "Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkard, and so on, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

In Deuteronomy 23:17, the Law of Moses had this to say: "There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite or the sons of Israel" – no male or female prostitutes.

1 Corinthians 6:13 says, "Foods are for the body, and the body for foods. But God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power. Don't you know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? Don't you know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body? 'For two,' he said, 'shall be one flesh.' But he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body." Great self-destructive results are placed upon your personal physical body through illicit sex. Every other sin is something that is in some way detached from the body. But this thing strikes at your very life.

1 Corinthians 7:2-5 say, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her do, and likewise also the wife unto the husband (mutual sexual exchange). The wife has not power of her own body, but the husband. Likewise, also, the husband has not power of his own body, but the wife. Do not defraud one another. Do not deny one another, except it be with mutual consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence." So, the Bible makes it very clear that God's law is one thing relative to sex. The sin nature obviously counters that, and it is widely practiced in our day.

Sexual perversions are forbidden in the Word of God. In Deuteronomy 23:18, we have this issue dealt with: "You shall not bring the hire of an harlot or the price of a dog (sex with an animal) into the house of the Lord your God for any vow, for even both these are abomination onto the Lord, because both of them are sexual perversions.

**Homosexuality**

In Romans 1:24-32, we won't take time to read that. It is a familiar passage, but as you know, it delineates how mankind, when he had a knowledge of God, was not appreciative, and gradually descended to where he was engaged in homosexual activities, and the Word of God roundly condemns that.

Back in Genesis 18:20-21, sexual perversions are dealt with; that is, the sin of homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-7). So, finally, in Genesis 19:24-25, we read, "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." It is very clear from the Word of God that sexual perversion is not only forbidden, but that God will seriously deal with it.

So, here we are in our country where, on the one hand, the law of God condemns homosexuality. On the other hand, the sin nature says, "It's OK. Go with it. It's a minority. People have a right to do what they want to do." And we are now at a stage where we are publicly accepting this evil. When we as a society do not recoil against it, then we have indeed become part of the evil.

There is one other thing concerning sexual purity, and that is maintaining the male and female roles. If there's anything that creates a homosexual, it's to grow up in a home where you don't have a clear image of what a male is, and a clear image of what a female is. In Deuteronomy 22:5, therefore, this rule was placed upon the Jewish people: "The woman shall not wear that which pertains unto a man. Neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord your God." So, you do not, as a female, wear men's clothing, and as a male, you do not put on female clothing. There are a lot of people who are engaged in doing exactly that.

In 1 Corinthians 11:6, we have the exchange of hairstyles forbidden: "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn. But it would be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered." A woman's covering is her female-style length hair.

Verse 14 says, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a shame unto him. It's an honor unto a woman, but a shame unto a man." So, you have the contrast of the sin nature appeal against the law of God.

**Private Ownership**

Another area that we can see this contrast is in private ownership and distribution of possessions. Matthew 20 gives us the example, which will not read today, that you're acquainted, of the man who had the vineyard, and who went out, and hired people to work for him. And he paid the people who work one hour the same as he paid those who worked all day long. And in verse 15 after the complaint is lodged, he says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil because I am good." He has just said, "Those of you who made a contract with me, I will fulfill the contract. Those of you said, 'Just do right by us," I've done what I consider right, and it's up to me to use my money." So, who's to tell you that you cannot take your money and use it as you choose, since you have earned it?

In Acts 5:1-11, you have the story about Ananias and Sapphira, who again came up with the idea that they had to lie about the property that they were selling. And Peter pointed out to them that it was not necessary for them to do that. They held back part of the price, and lied about how much money they had received on it. And who they had lied to was to God, and not simply to this congregation. Furthermore, it was theirs. They didn't have to do anything with it. They didn't have to lie about it.

We have one more passage in Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For you said I will never leave you nor forsake you, so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'" So, it is not your right to petition the government, and say, "I belong to a minority group, and I must have this kind of special financial provision, because I am a poor minority group. Therefore, I should have the power of the government to put a gun to the taxpayer, and to take from the taxpayer, to do what I could not personally do, and to distribute to those whom I would choose to do." You don't take that kindly, but we stand around like a bunch of ninnies, and the whole government does that to us all the time. It jerks away what you have earned, and it hands it to the people who are screaming bloody murder.

Now, concerning private ownership and distribution of possessions, God's law says one thing; and, the sin nature says something else. Whom should we listen to?

**Christian Service**

Let's take one more to say Christian service ministry. We have a nice contrast between God's law and our thinking. In Colossians 1:10, this is what God's law says, "That you might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Then Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season, we shall reap if we don't faint. What an admonition that is. What does God's Word say? "Well, it's Sunday morning again. It's time to teach that Sunday school class. Oh boy, am I tired of doing that. I just I wish I didn't have to do it. Why does Sun had to come around so frequently?" And here you are, complaining, and being wearied in well-doing. And God says, "That's really dumb. You walk in there and you teach that class. You do that Christian service ministry under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and you have stored treasures in heaven that you will enjoy forever. And you will reap if you don't faint – if you don't get weary in well-doing.

It is an occupational hazard of the Christian life, of getting wearied of repeating year-after-year the same areas of ministry that you have done so long, and with which you have become such an expert, and have developed such capabilities. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The Lord Jesus knew what he was called to do. He entered his service. He did it with singleness of mind. He didn't let anybody distract Him from it. He did not faint in that way of doing. And the result is he now sits in magnificent glory at the right hand of Almighty God in heaven. And you and I, in our Christian service ministry, will share that kind of a position with Him.

Titus 2:7: "In all things, showing yourself a pattern of good works. In doctrine showing uncorruptness, in gravity, sincerity," and so on: "In all things, showing yourself a pattern of good works. Boy, some people are so sloppy in Christian service, they're not a pattern to anything. That's the kind of thing that the Word of God condemns because you're not an example to anybody in that.

Titus 2:14 says, "Who gave Himself pause that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify Himself of people of His own, zealous of good works." The Word of God says, "God's law is to be zealous for good works – divine good works: works that God the Holy Spirit is producing through you. And you are to pursue the good works. But what does the sin nature say? Lie low in the bushes. Maybe somebody else will take that job.

Philippians 2:14: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that you may be blameless and harmless children of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." Paul says, "Don't murmur. Don't grouse. Take hold of Christian service. Engage in that ministry – that ministry of holding forth the Word of Life.

Now, indeed, if from your heart, you do not have the propulsion of God the Holy Spirit to serve in some area, then you ought to get out, because obviously, you're wasting your time. You're building wood, hay, stubble, and straw. Everything is going to burn up. But on the other hand, if God has given you a gift (an ability), and given you an opportunity of service, then the law of God says, "Take hold of it, and do it as unto the Lord." And that's the secret of going every year, doing some of the same old things that you've done for so long in Christian service. When you do it as unto the Lord, then you have your perspective right, because if you do it as unto people, people are going to double-cross you. People are fickle. People will stand by you. People won't stand by. Don't ever serve people. Only do it as unto the Lord.

So, here's a big area of Christian service ministry. The law of God says this; but, the sin nature says this. There are several other areas that are, I think, very important. We'll try to pick those up next time, where God's law calls us in one direction; and, the sin nature in the other.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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