

the ultimate journey

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Article:
Why Did I Do That?

Sometimes I get really frustrated with myself. I know the right things to do and the right things to say, but sometimes it just comes out all wrong.

“For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.” Romans 7:15-19

Sound familiar? Even though this was written nearly 2,000 years ago by the Apostle Paul, I frequently hear people saying this in one way or another.

How about you? Have you ever awoke in the morning thinking to yourself, “I think I’ll be totally selfish today and have a bad attitude? In fact, I think I’ll say something insensitive and mean to the very people I care about the most. Or maybe I’ll lie, or let my pride get in the way of admitting when I am wrong or choose to think the worst about something, someone, or even myself.” I doubt you have said those things or even consciously thought them, but ... I’ll bet you ended up doing them.

What causes us to do the very things we don’t want to do? The Apostle Paul answered it this way, “Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.” Romans 7:20. Sounds strange, doesn’t it. It is no longer I, but sin living in me? It almost sounds as if Paul has gone mental on us and has a split personality. Is Paul crazy?

Read Romans 7:15-25. Take a look as Paul describes the waging war going on inside of him between his Spirit Man and his Old Man. Paul recognized something very important. That is, he was no longer the same man.

When we choose Jesus Christ as our covenant representative, God declares that we are holy, righteous, just, pure, clean, spotless, the apple of His eye, His bride, members of a royal priesthood, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, victorious, over comers, the salt of the earth, and a light unto the world. Do you always feel like that? Probably not.

We are all the same. Like the Apostle Paul, we all struggle with sin in our lives. The difference between those who are experiencing the Life-Changing power of Jesus Christ and those who aren’t is seen in how Paul responds. Even though Paul sins, he does not identify that sin with who he is. Instead, he distances himself from the Old Man he used to be. He now sees that Old Man he used to be as a “body of death” that he needs “rescued” from.

Paul has chosen to identify himself with the new life that has been put within him. The work that God has done in him was done in the Spirit. When Paul received Christ, he became a “new creature” and was immediately made Holy, righteous, pure, clean, spotless, and just in his Spirit Man. However his soul did not change. That is, his mind, will and emotions.

Just like yours and mine, Paul’s mind, will and emotions were still held captive by the patterns of this world that he had been conformed into. Therein the battle ground is defined: The waging war between our Spirit Man (Spirit) and our Old Man (soul or flesh).

In order for us to win the war, we must crucify our flesh and bring it into alignment with what God has done in our Spirit. The real question is "who are you identifying with?" Are you identifying with who God says you are (Regenerated child of God – Spirit Man), or are you allowing the father of lies to tell you that you haven't changed and that you never will?

If we identify with who God says we are and recognize our position "IN Christ," we will experience His abundant life. Paul wasn't living in denial of his sin nor was he trying to excuse it; he just looked at it in the perspective of who God said he was. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are IN Christ Jesus" Romans 8:1a.

CONVICTION VS. CONDEMNATION

Condemnation makes us believe we are the sin. Conviction does not allow the sin to identify us, but rather leads us back to who we really are. Condemnation floods us with shame and guilt makes us feel not good enough, and drives us farther away from God. Conviction leads us to repentance which turns us away from our sins and back to who we really are IN Christ Jesus. This restores us to right fellowship with Him. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness 1 John 1:9.

Many Christians never experience the abundant, joy-filled life that God intends for them because they are still identifying themselves with the Old Man they used to be. The "secret" to the abundant joy filled Christian life is identifying with who God says we are and resting IN Him, using our shield of faith (faith in Him and who He says we are IN Him) to extinguish the fiery darts of accusation and condemnation the enemy hurls against us.

So, who are you identifying with? The new creation you are IN Christ Jesus or the wretched body of death you used to be?