

Ephesians

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- [0 : 0 0] We are continuing to explore an issue that is one of the thorniest in all of the Christian life, so far as I am concerned. And it has to do with the fact that we maintain a volition.
- We have a volition or a will that is intact before we come to faith in Christ, and that volition is not changed nor removed from us after we come to faith in Christ.
- That simply means we still have the capacity to do right or do wrong, even as a Christian. As a Christian, however, we have a different criteria than what we had before.
- And now we are obligated to live a life that is well-pleasing to the Lord, as opposed to the kind of life we lived before Christ came in, which was concerned only with pleasing ourselves.
- That penchant, that determination to please ourselves does not leave you. It continues to reside in the old nature.
- [1 : 1 1] And the only thing that can overthrow that is the power that is greater than it is. And that is the substance of what we are talking about here in Romans chapter 7.
- We know that as Christian men, we are not exempt from temptation. We know that we may succumb to temptation. We also know that we have a more activated conscience that reminds us, when we violate a standard that we didn't have, nearly as active, before we came to faith in Christ.
- So, everything is different, but some things remain the same. And that is, we still have a capability of displeasing God, as well as pleasing God.
- Whereas before, the only capability we had was the works of the flesh, and that was displeasing to God. And as an unbeliever, they don't even have a choice.
- Yes, they can know right from wrong, and they can do right from wrong, but it is strictly based on human understanding. When one becomes a believer in Christ, we also possess the Spirit of God.
- [2 : 2 6] If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, we are told. And Paul reminds us, as he reminded the Corinthians, that when you come to faith in Christ, know you not that your body is not your own.
- You are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body, which belongs to Christ. So, you also have the option of not doing that.
- And I have made the statement, and I prepared to stand by it, that God has no greater asset on this earth than a believer who is walking in the Spirit, as opposed to walking in the flesh.
- And God has no greater liability than a believer who is walking in the flesh, as opposed to walking in the Spirit. It sets him up for hypocrisy and everything else that goes along with that.
- So, this struggle is something that is true of all Christian people everywhere, male and female. Nobody has escaped this.

[3 : 32] The Apostle Paul did not escape it. Someone who had his spiritual ducks in a row, like Paul the Apostle, still had an internal struggle with the flesh.

And that's what we're talking about. Actually, we have departed somewhat, just for a brief hiatus from our Ephesians 4 study, to deal with this issue in Romans 7. And at the top of the page, we'll just jump in here for time's sake.

Paul said, Now, this is a really problematic statement.

We touched on it a little bit. I want to elaborate on it a little bit more, because it really bears some investigation. When Paul says, I was alive without the law once, he's talking about contrasting spiritual life with physical life.

He is not saying, I was alive physically without the law. Well, that's a given. Of course he was.

[5 : 06] But when he is saying, I was alive once, apart from the law, he's talking about spiritual life. All through the Bible, we find a contrast between things physical and things spiritual.

And nobody referred to that more than our Lord himself. He contrasted physical light with spiritual light.

He contrasted physical water with spiritual water. He who drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst. He contrasted physical bread with spiritual bread.

When he said, Man shall not live by bread alone. suggesting that there is spiritual bread for the spirit as opposed to the body. So we find this contrast all the way between the physical and the spiritual, because when God created Adam, he had a physical body to begin with that had been fashioned from the dust of the earth.

And when he breathed into the nostrils of that physical body, Adam, Adam became alive. He became a physical slash spirit being.

[6 : 25] He was physical before because God had created him with a physical body. But he was not alive. He was not enlivened, energized, until the spirit of God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Now we've got a three-part being. We've got Adam in his physical body, Adam in his spirit existence that God breathed into him, the very essence of life, and the two combined constitute Adam's soul.

And this is what the text says. This is Genesis 2-7. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a human soul.

The soul consists of the immaterial spirit and the material body. Those together constitute the totality of the person.

You do not have a soul. You are a soul. And in this soul being that you are, you possess a physical body and a non-physical spirit.

[7 : 48] And this is what James is talking about when he says, the body without the spirit is dead. It's just dead.

It is the spirit that makes alive. It is the spirit that is quickened. And when you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, God's spirit came in to your life, and he quickened or made alive your human spirit that was in you.

Because while your human spirit that you always possessed from the time of birth, while that human spirit was that which animated the body, and it gave you physical life, it did not give you spiritual life.

When the Spirit of God came in to your life, the Spirit of God energized your spirit and made you spiritually alive.

It didn't do anything for your body, but it made you spiritually alive. It made you alive on the inside. This is the part of you that was regenerated.

[9 : 05] This was the part of you that was born again. This is the part of you that when you die, the Spirit exits the body and goes to be with the Lord.

The body goes to the grave, or crematory, or wherever it's going. So, we are a three-part being. We are comprised of an immaterial spirit, a material body, and the two combined constitute the soul.

This, I think, is what Paul is referring to here when he says, I was alive without the law once. That means he was born spiritually redeemed.

And we base that on Romans 5 where Paul says, Is in Adam all die? And he means, I think, all. He's talking about all of humanity.

Every single human being that ever lived is in Adam. It came from Adam. No exceptions. If you are a human being, Adam is your father.

[10 : 23] And as in Adam, all die. And that means physically and spiritually. When God breathed the spirit into Adam, he created him, he made him in a state of innocence, and God and Adam had a kind of camaraderie, a kind of fellowship, that when Adam disobeyed God, that connection was forfeited.

And Adam and Eve both died spiritually. Previously, they had been alive to God, and they fellowshiped with God.

But when they disobeyed God, that connection was severed. It was broken. And God came looking for them, and a whole new thing had begun.

Yes? Does that sound like the age of innocence also? It's kind of related to that. Could that be what Paul was talking about? I think it is. I think it's exactly what Paul was talking about.

As a baby, as a child. As a baby. He was born redeemed. Babies are born in a state of redemption that is covered by the finished work of Christ.

[11 : 45] And I think that's exactly what he meant when he said, as in Adam, all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. And that means that babies are born spiritually alive.

They are born with a connection to God. And this is the basis for believing that babies who do not reach the age of accountability, and we have no idea what that is, because the Bible doesn't say a child becomes accountable at the age of four or seven or whatever, it just doesn't say.

But there is a point in a child's life when they arrive at a position of responsibility and accountability and they understand the difference between right and wrong.

We don't know when that is. I suspect that it's different for different children. Probably a lot of factors come into play. So, we have, I think, a theological basis for saying that infants or babies that die before they reach the age of accountability, they are with the Lord.

And I think that that is implied when Christ said, allow the little children to come unto me for such is the kingdom of heaven and so on. So, they have not reached the age of accountability. But there comes a time in that child's life, we cannot determine exactly when that is.

[13 : 14] When that child loses that innocence with which it was born just like Adam and Eve forfeited their innocence when God created them that way.

And they then become accountable. They are then culpable. I think this is what Paul is saying when he says, I was alive without the law once.

When was that, Paul? Well, I was born that way. I was born in the state of innocence that made me acceptable to God. But when I reached accountability, I actually exercised my will as opposed to God's will and I became a responsible individual.

Now, the Jewish people, the Jewish people traditionally have arrived that what they think this age is. Of course, they would be the first to agree that nobody really knows, but they arbitrarily set an age at 13.

And they have a celebration. They have a service. It's called a bar mitzvah. And it means that that 13-year-old boy is now a responsible man.

[14 : 30] And he is accountable for his actions. They do the same thing for girls. It's called a bat mitzvah. The only difference is she has arrived at womanhood and she is considered accountable.

So, when Paul says, I was alive once, apart from the law, but then he goes on and says, but when the commandment came, that means when he was able to recognize that he was violating a commandment or a standard of God, when the commandment came, when it hit me and I realized I had taken my own will into this situation, sin revived.

Sin was always latent there. It was latent there in him, even though he was in that state of innocence. And the reason it was latent in him was because he was born that way as a child of Adam.

We're all children of Adam. And as soon as that child reaches a specific time, he's going to fall. He's going to become a little rebel.

That's the self-centeredness that we are all kind of cursed with. And he says, sin revived and I died. And he's talking about I died to God.

[15 : 51] I didn't die physically. I continued right on living, eating and sleeping and drinking. But my connection with the Almighty was severed just like Adam and Eve was. And every child goes through this.

We all went through this. You may not know. I don't know when it happened to me. But I do know that it happened. And as a result, man then needs to be born again.

He needs to have that lost connection with the Maker reestablished. And that is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

And this, I think, is what he is talking about when he says in the commandment, which was ordained to life, verse 10, I found to be unto death for sin taking occasion by the commandments.

That's that sin that was latent in him, lurking in him, just waiting for the opportunity to show itself. sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me, killed me.

[17 : 03] Didn't kill him physically. Killed him spiritually. Setting up the need for the rebirth. Yes. Yes.

Well, yeah, this... Well, this is a standard doctrine, of course, of the Roman Catholic faith.

And they believe that we are born with original sin, and we are born with the propensity for sin. And, you know, you cannot find a more self-centered individual than a little baby.

You stop and think about it. Whenever anything displeases them, they let out a wail, and they cry and scream and carry on. Where's my bottle? And my diaper's wet, and I need change.

And they just holler and carry on something else. And they think the whole world revolves around them. And you can't find it. You can't find any creature that is more ingrained with self-centeredness than a little baby.

[18 : 37] And my illustration is you take two children two years old and put two of them in a playpen and give them one toy. And then stand back.

Watch the fireworks. And one is not going to say to the other, well, how about if we negotiate this? And how about if you play with the toy for ten minutes, and then I'll play with the toy for ten minutes?

Wouldn't that be wonderful? No, they'll fight and scrap over that. And the one that doesn't get it will ball and carry on something awful because they've been cheated and deprived of that toy.

That's human nature. That's the way we are. We're just born little rebels. And when we have that first opportunity to serve ourselves, we take it. It's just amazing.

Yes, Dean? You're talking about self-centeredness and innocence. When I hear innocence, I also think of malice.

[19 : 34] Does that fit in here at all? Malice? Yeah, I was with innocence. And kids, I don't think, are born with malice. At some point, if they follow the devil, maybe they get it.

Well, malice comes from the same word as does the word malignant.

And we all know what a malignant tumor is as opposed to a benign tumor. In Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, he closed it with liberty for all and malice toward none.

And that sounds good on paper, but human nature being what it is, there was a lot of malice. After that war was over, there was a lot of bitterness and resentment on the part of the South because the North had invaded and all the rest that went with it.

A lot of hard feelings. And you know as well as I do, there are still some hard feelings between North and South, even to this day. And good grief, we're talking about 150 years later almost.

[20 : 49] So there's plenty of room for malice. Malice is kind of like resentment, an ongoing anger that will not be pacified or assuaged.

And it is kind of a continual thing. It's a deadly thing. So the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

He's talking about spiritual death. Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me. Now, he's saying, was there something wrong or unjust?

Was there something wrong with the law? No. He says, wherefore, the law is holy and the commandment holy. The problem wasn't with the law or with the commandment.

The problem was the law was incompatible with my fallen sinful nature. There's where the incompatibility.

[21 : 43] This is what Paul is talking about also in Romans 8 when he says, when he said, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did in the person of his son condemn sin in the flesh.

And he's saying, the law that was given to us is holy and just and perfect, but the law was given to imperfect people. So there is a tension that is set up there.

Something's got to give. And there's nothing wrong with the law. The weakness through the flesh was unable to measure up to the demands of the law.

And the word sin means to fall short, to not measure up. Think in terms of a bullseye being set up over there.

And an archer stands back here and he draws the bow and he aims for the bullseye. And it only gets halfway to the target and it falls to the ground.

[22 : 58] The arrow misses the mark. It falls short of what it was intended to do. It could not measure up. That is the picture of man and the law.

So, nothing wrong with the law. It's holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Was then, that which is good, made death unto me.

God forbid. But sin. Here's the culprit. Sin. That it might appear. Sin. That it might appear to be what it is. Working death in me by that which is good.

In other words, sin used the law against you. Sin used the law against you to kill you. And it started with that first recognition of right and wrong back whenever it took place in your life.

For we know. Verse 14. For we know that the law is spiritual. That I am carnal. Fleshly.

[24 : 03] This carnality is the word from which we get the word carnivorous. Beasts. They're flesh eaters.

And even carnival. Carnival has to do with the flesh. And if you know anything about Mardi Gras. In Brazil.

In South America. They call the Mardi Gras. What we call the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. In South America. They call it carnival. And the reason they call it carnival is because it is all about the flesh.

And the idea is to sin all you want to sin. Get it all out of your system. Sin your heart out.

Whatever your sin or your pet passion is. Pursue it. Get all of the sin into your life and enjoyment that you possibly can. Because.

[25 : 08] Lent. Is about to begin. And Lent is the cut off. That's when you have to start depriving yourself. To get ready for Easter.

You know. This is a tradition. Yes. The Amish has kind of a similar thing too. They do. Or cut loose. They call it sowing your wild oats.

Yeah. There's an Amish name for it other than that. But yeah. Yeah. It's. It usually takes place in the Amish community when they are. When they turn 18 years of age.

Boys and girls. Now there are different sects of Amish. And Mennonite. And. And. And some of them do not even recognize the legitimacy of some of the others.

You know. But. Their belief is that when. When a young man. Or young woman. Reaches the age of 18. They are allowed to.

[26 : 06] Leave. The home. If they choose. Where they've been reared. And go out into the world. And they can taste the world. They can do anything and everything they want.

And some of the Amish boys go out. And they go to the bars. And they start smoking. And they start getting involved in sex. And all kinds of stuff like that. And the idea is. You get that out of your system.

You got one year. Get that out of your system. And then at the end of the year. You decide. Do you want to continue that? Do you want to pursue that? In which case.

You will be shunned. By the community. You will not be welcomed back. You will not be received. You will then be as one of the world. But if you've gotten that out of your system.

And you say. I don't want this kind of life. I don't want to live this way. Then you come back home. And if you are a man. You begin growing a beard. No mustache.

[27 : 03] No mustache. Just a beard. And you join the church. And you are baptized. And then you wear the garb. And you are officially Amish.

And you are one of the community. So you've got that year determination. To make up your mind. Yes. Do you know. Either of you. If. Say after five years.

You change your mind. You want to go back. And practice. Honest religion again. Are they accepted in. I honestly do not know. I cannot. I cannot answer that. My guess is.

And this is just a Wiseman guess. My guess is. There may be different criteria. With different groups. Some. Some would say. That if you are repentant. And if you.

Maybe if you. Go and confess your sin. I just don't know. I can't really answer that. Yes. Depends on the bishop. The bishop. The bishop's got. Got a lot of leverage.

- [27 : 57] Yeah. Yeah. If the bishop. To that second. You take him back. Then. That's kind of. Kind of his decision. But if they. Won't take him back. Maybe he can do another bishop.
- Maybe he can take him back. That's my understanding. Well the bishop. The bishop. In each. Amish community. Is almost. Like a kingmaker. Like a.
- Like a little poop. And his word is law. Pretty much. So. Name of the game is. You don't cross the bishop. Because he has the final say. Wow. It's a. It's a very interesting.
- Kind of. Lifestyle. And we've got a very. Very large. Amish community. And. Up in Holmes County. I've been up there several times. Actually. It's one of my favorite places. I really enjoy the Amish countryside.
- And nobody puts on the table spread. Like the Amish. I tell you. They're great cooks. Really. Really enjoy them. So. Any other thoughts about this? Yeah. Kevin.
- [28 : 54] Yeah. Yeah. Can I say something wrong? You said one word. You said the word. Karma. And then the word faith. Comes to my spirit.
- Which. They are two different. Totally opposite. Oh yeah. Totally opposite. Yes. Now. Once you receive Christ Jesus.
- You've been baptized. You've been washed in the blood. And now you carry his DNA. So now you are a son. Mm-hmm. You still can be a son.
- That's about to. But still carry a carnal mind. Oh yeah. And be saved. The Corinthians did. Yes. And you can still carry a car. For years. You can carry a carnal mind.
- Something has to take place for that. You can carry a carnal mind. Now. You go to Abraham. As evidence. When God told Abraham.
- [29 : 52] He said. Take your son. And put him up when he's dead. And use him as a sacrifice. That's what I mean. An individual with a carnal mind.
- Would have said. Is you crazy Lord. I'm not going. Uh-uh. That's not going to happen. That's right. Does anybody agree. That. That. If you're in your carnal mind. You're not going to take your son up there.
- And put him up. You know what I mean. Uh. Uh. Uh. Anybody in here is not going to do that. No way. No way. No. Because your mind is carnal. But Abraham said. Yes Lord. Yo. Let your will be done. But he told the people.
- He told the people. When he left. Remember this. If anybody remember. When he said. He didn't say. I'll be back. He said what. We'll be back. Amen. Amen. We'll be back.
- So he wasn't. Thinking carnal. And as the Bible said. Now get this. The Bible said that. Abraham. Was a friend. Of God. We're talking about the friends nowadays.
- [30 : 50] I ain't talking about these friends in 2016. I'm talking about. Back in the day. You're talking about. You're a friend of God. And for you to be a friend. Of anybody.
- What you call a real friend. You're going to have to spend some time with. Amen. No. What God is asking us to do. Is to give up our Isaac. That thing that we really love.
- To become more spiritual than carnal. With what God is asking us to do. What mainly basically. What our carnalism is.
- That Isaac that he's asking us to give up. Is our time. Is our time. If we give God. Give that thing up.
- That we love. And spend our time with. If we give God our time. Then. The carnal will become spiritual. Because. Whatever you devote. The majority of your time to.
- [31 : 46] Is what you're going to be. Is anybody agree with that. Whatever you spend. The majority of your time with. Is what you're going to be. In life. And if you. Spend all your time with God. Then the carnal.

Will be going to turn into. That's our Isaac. That's our Isaac. Our Isaac. Is our time. Whatever you spend. The majority of your time. Is what you're going to be. I'm like that.

I'm 57. I know. There's times. I don't spend time with. A whole lot of things. And that's what I turned into. Does anybody agree? It makes sense. Amen. Whatever you spend.

Your time. Is what you're going to be. If you spend. The majority of your time. In Christ. That carnal. Is going to turn into. That's your priority. There's an old saying. That says. You are what you do.

And when you don't. You're not. You are what you do. And when you don't. You're not.

[32 : 40] Amen. Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Well Paul continues. Recognizing this. This struggle. This dilemma. That's going on.

And he says. For we know. That the law. Is spiritual. But I am carnal. There is. There is. Kevin's difference. Sold under sin.

For that which I do. I allow not. For what I would. That do I not. But what I hate.

That's what I do. Now you talk about. A conflicted individual. We are all conflicted. In this world. The temptation is there. The draw is there.

The attraction is there. We know. We don't want to do that. We shouldn't want to do that. But we are pulled. To that thing. And you know. I can't think of anything.

[33 : 37] That is more powerful. In this direction. Than something we are dealing with today. Big. Big. Big time. And that is addiction. Whether it is drugs.

Or booze. Or sex. Or pornography. Or whatever it is. This thing can get a hook in you. And absolutely control your life.

And we all know of sad, sad stories. There probably isn't a family here. That doesn't have somebody. That they know well. Some family member. Some neighbor.

Somebody. Who is hooked. Addicted to something. And it is a devastating thing. This is exactly what Paul is talking about. He says.

Yeah. I'm sorry. When you said that. You know what. What kills me. I mean. But basically. When people say addiction. All they think about.

[34 : 35] First thing they throw at you. Is either sex. Porn. Drugs. And alcohol. What about obesity? I mean. What about. Now you quit preaching.

And go on the meddling. What about the food? What about the lottery tickets? What about the lottery tickets? I'm talking about the saints of God. I ain't talking about the people of the world.

I'm talking about the saints. When they go in and pay. They do so called lottery tickets. Or they'll sit up and eat up. Just eat this. And there's a lot of things. Oh yeah. Television. Oh yeah.

We can become addicted to almost anything. I remember hearing Donald Gray Barnhouse. At the time. He was pastor. Tenth President. Philadelphia. And he said that he was going to preach a series of messages.

And he looked down the list that he was going to cover. And gluttony. It was on the list. And he said I couldn't preach on that until I lost 30 pounds.

[35 : 30] Because it would be convincing him. All the way. You know. And hey. We all have our besetting sin. And the writer of Hebrews talks about let us set aside our besetting sin.

And run the race that is set before us. That Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. And we all have areas of softness. Of vulnerability. And.

The devil knows every one of them. He knows where to go after you. He knows what your strong points are. He'll leave you alone there. But he knows where your weakness is. And that's where he chooses to attack.

Yes. I heard on the radio this morning. I heard on the radio that one out of South America. He's going to come to addiction. And I'm sure they were talking about drugs and alcohol.

Yeah. Well sure. And you know. And it's a huge problem. And now. Now we're talking about. And we've been talking about this for a long time. How that. Some want to treat. Drug and alcohol addiction.

[36 : 29] As a disease. Disease. And. And there is a disease factor. Because. And here's where it gets complicated guys. Because. It didn't start out.

To be a disease. It started out to be. Yes. An act of the will. Yes. Something that people wanted to do. But once it. Gets you hooked.

Then it takes on. A disease motif. Yes. And it affects your body. And your mind. Your brain. Physically. And mentally.

And spiritually. In every way. So. In a sense. In a sense. It didn't begin. As a disease. It began. As something. Somebody. Voluntarily. Took to themselves.

Whether it was alcohol. Or drugs. Or whatever. But once it gets that hook on you. Then it becomes a disease. And it's devastating. To the body. And we all.

[37 : 25] See pictures of people. Who have been on drugs. For years. Yes. One last thing. One thing I appreciate about you Mark. Is. Quite. Numerous times. We'll take a word. And say.

Well this is the real word out there. And so. It helps me. With understanding the meaning. Of words. So I do appreciate that. Well. Well thank you. Words. Words mean things.

They are important. They are important. Yes Mark. You said man. This is very interesting. This morning. I mean. Why did you just start talking about. The addiction.

But the Bible says that everything was clean. From the beginning. These things that you're talking about. These were medicines. Before man came and put his hand on it. That's right. That's right.

Am I right? Amen. Amen. Amen. God had put it here. But the Bible just says. Don't tarry long at nothing. When you tarry long at nothing. Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

[38 : 18] Then it becomes. Tarry long at nothing. Absolutely. You can take a little wine for your stomach's sake. But if you. Carry that bottle with you. And you're going to be proud. Okay guys.

Hey.