

WINNING THE WAR WITHIN

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Romans 7:14-25

1. Every true follower of Jesus Christ is indwelt by God in the person of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. "I believe a spiritual person is spiritual because God has created a place for Himself by making a division between soul (mind, emotion, and will) and spirit."
 - b. "It is in our spirit that we worship God, commune with God, learn from God, and are commanded by God."
2. There are numerous passages that support the idea that God literally dwells in those of us who are genuine Christians.
 - a. Rom 8:9

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.**
 - b. Eph 2:11-12

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands —12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and **without God** in the world.
 - c. Col 1:24-29

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. 25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of **the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles, **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.** 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.
3. Paul made it clear that we cannot claim to be "in the faith" unless "(we) recognize this about (ourselves), that Jesus Christ is in (us). 2 Cor 13:5-6

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that **Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test?** 6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.
4. One of the ways we can test ourselves is to ask, "What is going on within me?"
5. Another way of asking the question would be, "Is my life a battleground and is a war going on within me?"
6. If we are going to win the war within there are several things that must be true.

I. We must understand what is going on?

- A. Commentators disagree as to whether Paul is describing a period in his life or an ongoing situation.
- B. I believe that Paul is describing a struggle that will take place in the life of every serious follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. Paul talked about the conflict that went on between “the inner man” and “the law of sin” that was at work in his members (flesh). 22-23
- D. The inner man is that place where the Holy Spirit dwells and where He communes and communicates with our spirit.
- E. In his inner man Paul joyfully concurred with the law of God and desired with all of his heart to obey it.
- F. He was often frustrated because a different law was at work in the members of his body waging war against the law of his mind (which was in agreement with his inner desire) and making him a prisoner of the law of sin that was at work in his members.

II. We must want to win the war.

- A. At some point we must come to the end of ourselves and like Paul cry out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?”
- B. Unfortunately much of the preaching and teaching that is going on in the evangelical church does not lend itself to this happening.
- C. The positive, popular preaching of our day does not help us to understand our “wretchedness.”
- D. Note what Paul said in verse 18.
“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh...”
NOTE: Paul did not say that nothing good dwelt in him because that would have been a denial of the fact that Christ lived in him.
- E. Most people are willing to admit that they commit sins, but relatively few people ever accept the fact that they are sinful to the very core of their beings.
- F. This idea is enforced by our misguided evangelistic approaches that talk about sins while neglecting sin and the doctrine of human depravity.
NOTE: Understanding the spiritual realities that lead to genuine salvation involves struggle and anguish of soul. The goal of modern evangelism is to make the sale any way we can, but our customers are often not getting what we are promising them.

III. We must believe that we can win the war.

- A. We cannot win the war by sheer determination and will power.
- B. We must understand that victory comes only through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C. Through the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus we can be set free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2) and enabled by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body. (Romans 8:13)
- D. Paul believed that the war could be won, and that belief was reflected in his prayer life. Eph 3:14-19
14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 **that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,** 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that

you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

E. It is only as you and I are strengthened with power through God's Spirit in the inner man that we can successfully overcome the challenge presented by our flesh, the world, and the devil.

APPLICATION

1. Is Christ in you?
2. Is He making His presence known by seeking to exercise His lordship over every aspect of your life?
3. Do you joyfully concur in your inner man that Christ's plan and purpose for your life is desirable above all other options?
4. Do you find that you are often frustrated in your attempts to live out what God is working in?
5. Thank God that there is a war going on within because that war is evidence to the fact that Christ in you.
6. Focus on strengthening your walk with and relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Believe that Jesus can do what you and I can't do.
8. Believe and desire that what Paul wrote in Eph 3:20-21 can be true in your life.

20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works **within** us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.