

# THE PROFESSOR

## III. The Law of My Mind

Many scholars believe the soul is the seat of the mind, emotions and will. All three faculties are mentioned in this chapter. Verses 15-20 present the most helpless, hopeless picture of human nature ever written. In summary, Paul says, "When I don't want to do evil, I can't help it. When I want to do good, I can't do it." Yet, in verse 22, he says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

**Delight** - gr. *sunedomai* – *sun hedone* – with pleasure (hedonistic, sensual)  
(Even this "delight" lacks any spiritual connotation.)

This is what Paul calls the law of the mind. In other words, Paul could see that the Law of God is good and its observance would result in a pleasant lifestyle. However, the law of sin in his members was more powerful than the law of his mind. It is clear there is no hope for right living in the soulish realm. Thinking, feeling and willing can never bring sinful man into a relationship with a holy God.

After recounting the hopeless struggle between his mind and his flesh and finding no solution, Paul cries out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" His own answer is clear, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" That is to say, "God will, through the Lord Jesus Christ."

**Colossians 1:13** For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

**Deliver** – gr. *rhyomai* - to draw, hence prop. to draw to one's self, to rescue, to deliver:....  
(Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T. p. 564)

The remainder of verse 25 bothered me for a long time. "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." It is clear that Paul is still talking about the battle between the mind and the flesh. I believe the New English Bible translation says it best: "In a word then, I myself, subject to God's law as a rational being, am yet, in my unspiritual nature, a slave to the law of sin."

This idea of being a slave to sin is introduced in verse 14. "For we know that the law (God's law) is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

**Sold** – gr. *piprasko* - "To dispose of as merchandise or into slavery." (Strong's Concordance #4097)

The final problem in solving the question of Paul's perspective in Romans 7 is this: Are Christians slaves to sin?

That question is settled unequivocally in Romans chapter 6.

**Romans 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?  
<sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

**Vss 6-7** Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be **done away with**, that **we should no longer be slaves to sin**; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.

**Done away with** – gr. *katargeo* - "It was done away with in the sense that it was rendered inoperative." (Treasures from the Original, Berry, p.3)

**Vs 12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts...

**Vs 14** For **sin shall not be master over you**. [Sin shall not "lord it over you." (Interlinear Greek New Testament)].

**Vs 18** having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

It is as impossible for the believer to reconcile these statements of Paul's from Romans 6 with the Paul of Romans 7:14 as it is to reconcile Paul's incorrigibly positive Christianity in the rest of the New Testament with Romans 7 if, indeed, Paul was speaking from the perspective of his Christian life.

In his very next sentence (following 7:25) Paul introduces an entirely new relationship with Christ. He had alluded to it earlier.

**Romans 7:4** Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, **that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.**

In Romans 8:1 he describes the relationship as being "in Christ Jesus."

**Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus.**

This theme is developed in several other places.

**II Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man is **in Christ**, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**II Corinthians 5:21** He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God **in Him.**

**In Christ** there is no condemnation. **In Christ** I am a new creation. **In Christ** I am made the righteousness of God. We could go on but the point should be clear, everything changes **in Christ** because, "...The law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus** hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (**Romans 8:2**). Being in Christ means:

**I am crucified with Christ - Galatians 2:20**

**I am buried with Christ - Romans 6:4**

**I am quickened with Christ - Ephesians 2:5**

**I am raised with Him - and**

**I am seated with Him in Heavenly places - Ephesians 2:6**

Now Romans 8:3 explains how we were set free from the law of sin.

**Romans 8:3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

Jesus came in "the likeness of sinful flesh," to condemn sin in the flesh. One must tread very softly here. The question of the possibility of Jesus sinning elicits strong emotional reactions. Contained in the answer are implications regarding the sovereignty of God, the foreknowledge of God and the free will of man.

We must first decide if Jesus had a will which **could be** contrary to the Father's will. The basis for discussion must be the Bible, not logic and/or personal experience.

**John 5:19** Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself."

**John 5:30** "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

**John 6:38** "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

**Luke 22:42** "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet **not My will, but Thine** be done."

**"We are here in full view of the deepest mystery of our faith: the two Natures in One Person. Both Natures spoke here, and the 'if it be possible' of St. Matthew and St. Mark is in St. Luke 'if Thou be willing.'"** (Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah vol. ii, p. 540)

In order to attempt to comprehend this mystery let's analyze Philippians 2 where Paul described the process by which Jesus took on the nature of man.

**Philippians 2:5-8** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

**He existed in the form of God:**

ASV - Existing in the form of God

TCNT - Though the divine nature was his from the beginning

Phi - Who has always been God by nature

NIV - Being in very nature God

AMP - Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God].

**Colossians 1:15** And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

**Colossians 2:9** For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form

**Hebrews 1:3** He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature

### **Emptied Himself:**

ASV - emptied himself

TCNT - impoverished himself

Phi - stripped himself of every advantage

NIV - made himself nothing

AMP - stripped himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity]

**John 1:14** And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,

**Romans 1:3** ....His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.

**Galatians 3:13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."

**Galatians 4:4** But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

**II Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

**John 17:5** "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

### **Taking the form of a bond-servant:**

Con - took upon him the form of a slave

Wey - the nature of a bond servant

NEB - assuming the nature of a slave

Phi - consenting to be a slave by nature

**Hebrews 2:9** But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus,

**Isaiah 42:1** "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

**Matthew 12:18** "Behold, My servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the gentiles."

**Matthew 20:28** "...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

### **Being made in the likeness of men:**

Ber - became like human beings

NEB - bearing the human likeness

AMP - became like men and was born a human being

**Romans 8:3** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

**Hebrews 2:14** Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

**Hebrews 2:17** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.

### **He humbled Himself:**

Con - He abased Himself

Wms - He finally humiliated Himself

**Hebrews 5:8** Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

**Philippians 2:5-8 (MSG)** Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. <sup>6</sup> He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. <sup>7</sup> Not at all. When the time came, **he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!** <sup>8</sup> **Having become human, he stayed human.** It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.

**Next: The Mystery of the Incarnation**

