

Incessant Warfare
Romans 7:14-25

...the very center of our deliverance from sin is the slaughter of the Son of God. If we had been saved from the penalty and power of sin another way—a peaceful way, a pleasant way, a tender way—the Christian life might not be such a blood-earnest affair. But with a bloody crucifixion at the center of everything, we are not to be surprised that in dealing with sin that Christ died to destroy, we are drawn into some very serious conflict. Warfare.” John Piper

- I. The Christian life means a lot of different things; a life of being blessed and in a right relationship with God, a life of joy, expectation and hope, a life of being adopted as sons and daughters of God himself, and a life of living under the umbrella of his grace. It is also a life that involves doing battle with our sin nature. It is a warfare that Jesus expects us to fight in the power of the Spirit. To fight it in our own power is to assure defeat.

Rom. 7:14-20

Rom. 8:9,13

Gal. 5:16-18

σάρκινος sarkinos = wholly given up to the flesh, rooted in the flesh as it were

“A mature Christian knows that he [or she] is always in Romans 7 apart from the Holy Spirit. Moreover, he [or she] knows that dependence on the Holy Spirit is not something that is attained once for all but is a result of a daily struggle and a constantly renewed commitment. What is sanctification? Is it an awareness of how good we are becoming? Or is it a growing sense of how sinful we really are, so we will constantly turn to and depend upon Jesus Christ? If we are mature in Christ, we know that it is the latter.”
Boice

- II. Paul's anguish over his sin comes from a strong desire to live a life pleasing to the Father. He knows that in his own power he can't reform his sin nature to bear the fruit of righteousness, so he looks for someone to deliver him from his hopelessness. He understands that his only escape is to take his eyes off himself and the weakness of his flesh, and put them where they belong.

Rom. 7:21-24

Heb. 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

- III. In the midst of his despair, Paul knew that God was for him and not against him. He knew that Jesus rescued us from the penalty of sin (God's judgment and wrath), and from the power of sin by making us aware of it and by giving us the Holy Spirit to put into practice perseverance and self-control. The understanding that he would someday be free from his sin nature motivated him to daily embrace the grace that Jesus so freely offers, the grace of forgiveness and renewal in the Spirit.

Rom. 7:24-25

Rom. 8:1-2

2 Tim. 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

"For Paul is saying that, although he is assured of final victory over sin, he nevertheless knows that he must continue to fight a vigorous battle against sin daily until he dies. He has been saved from sin. He will yet be saved from sin. But until the day of deliverance it is his continuing responsibility to fight on." Boice