

## The Source of Sinful Action

Some of these inconveniences include:

1. Peer pressure. The ramifications of rejecting parental authority are considered to be far more endurable than bucking the social tiger.
2. Social ostracism. Your personal belief system is considered to be not nearly as important as maintaining status quo within the social whirl.
3. Target of verbal hostility. Criticism, vilification, vituperation, expressions of hatred, demonstrations of anger, name-calling, character assassination, manipulation, maligning, judging. It is one thing to do the right thing. It is quite another to have to pay a humiliating price for it in the form of public ridicule.
4. Violence. Fear of physical reprisal often causes a person to go against his desire to do the right thing. There is no place for fear in the Christian way of life. In fact, fear is eliminated in the third problem-solving device, the faith-rest technique.

Therefore, when one refuses to do the right thing, even though he has a desire to do so, it means that he is failing to apply biblical problem-solving devices to the situation. To condescend to peer pressure, threats of social ostracism, prospects of verbal hostility, or even physical violence indicates a lack of spiritual self-esteem and absence of a personal sense of destiny.

When decisions are made to execute personal acts of perversion, then the failure to honor one's desires is based on having no capacity for self-restraint. In other words, "if it feels good do it," becomes the norm and standard which overrides the biblical mandate against such an activity. These activities would include involvement in drug or alcohol abuse; crimes, such as child molestation, rape, or pornography; sexual sins such as adultery, fornication, or homosexuality.

You know the right thing to do and desire to follow through. But your volition chooses to go with the paths of least resistance: facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness. The wheel-track of righteousness is in a long-term memory trace, but without the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, it cannot be acted upon.

You desire to do the right thing, but you desire to do the easy choice more. Reason? The former carries with it responsibility and ramifications while the latter carries with it, on the one hand, public acceptance and approval and, on the other hand, private stimulation and pleasure.

So, Paul is not projecting blame onto his sinful nature. He is simply saying that he agrees with his ex-husband's trends and decides to allow him his sovereignty back. The end result is threefold:

1. Paul commits a *ménage à trois*.
2. The sinful nature completes its *coup d'état*.
3. The child produced from the liaison is called personal sin.

**Romans 7:20** - Now if, as a result of my personal volitional decision, I am doing what I do not desire to do (and I am), I am no longer the one producing the sinful act but the sinful nature which continuously resides inside of me.

This leads us to the subject of the next verse:

### Romans 7:21: Paul's Discovery of the Law of Evil

This verse begins with the inferential illative particle: *ara* - In the apodosis of a conditional sentence, it is used to express a result and therefore is translated: "consequently." It is followed by the present active indicative of the verb: *hurisko* - "I discovered."

An English interjection has been developed from this verb. The exclamation, "Eureka!" is used to express triumph on a discovery. How this expression came about is a very interesting story all of you have probably heard. It apparently has been a bit embellished but here are the details as best they can be put together:

**The Merriam-Webster New Book of Word Histories, s.v. "eureka":**

*"Some of us perhaps wonder why we often exclaim "Eureka!" at the moment of a sudden discovery, whether it be the finding of a long-lost item or the determination of the solution to a problem. Some may even wonder if they are calling out the name of a city in California (or Missouri) or Ronald Reagan's alma mater. Actually, the elated discoverer is reenacting the legend of an event that is supposed to have happened in the third century B.C. in the Greek city-state of Syracuse in Sicily. The famous Greek mathematician and mechanical inventor Archimedes was asked by Hiero \HI-ah-roe\ II, the tyrant of Syracuse, to test the purity of the gold in a crown that he had commissioned. Hiero suspected that the crown had been adulterated with some other metal, such as silver. For a time, the problem frustrated Archimedes. The solution arrived the day Archimedes patronized a public bath. Upon stepping into his bath, which was nearly full, he observed that some of the water ran over. The thought immediately struck the mathematician that a body must remove its own bulk of water when it is immersed; if silver is less dense than gold, then a given weight of silver would have more bulk than an equal weight of gold and consequently would remove more water. As the idea flashed through Archimedes' mind, he leaped out of his bath, exclaiming,"*

*Heureka!* ('I have discovered it'). Without thinking to dress himself, the euphoric mathematician raced home, eager to put his sudden discovery to the test. While the notion of an absentminded mathematician running naked through the streets has charmed many, that part of the story is in all likelihood pure fabrication. The anecdote of Archimedes' adventure in the baths is traceable to the Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius, who lived two centuries after Archimedes. While Archimedes probably did determine the proportion of gold and silver in a crown for Hiero by weighing it in water, later writers have not been able to resist embellishing the tale.

Eureka or, as it may more accurately be transliterated from the Greek, *heureka* derives from the same Greek root word as heuristic.

*heureka* ('I have discovered it') is the first person singular perfect active indicative of the verb ε ἄυρισκω.

From this verb the Germans derived, by way of New Latin, their word *heuristisch*. Adopted into English in the nineteenth century as heuristic, the word was originally used in logic to refer to assumptions or lines of reasoning that could not be justified but were used as trial-and-error means of arriving at a truth.

Paul does not draw his conclusion that there is a Law of Evil exclusively from a trial-and-error process. The origin of his discovery goes back to personal revelation derived from perception of an absolute principle of divine policy—the Tenth Commandment.

**Romans 7:7** - I was not cognizant of the sinful nature except through the Law. For example, I did not understand the lust pattern except the Law kept on saying, "You will not lust!"

This is an obvious reference to the Tenth Commandment, stated in:

**Exodus 20:17** - You shall not covet [*hamad*: to lust after; an inordinate, unrestrained, and selfish desire along with an intense passion to possess something] your neighbor's house; you shall not lust after your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

This is an imperative of prohibition from the Order Code of the Mosaic Law which establishes divine policy for acceptable human behavior. It is from this absolute principle that Paul discovered the presence of the sinful nature in his members, specifically the neurons of his brain:

**Romans 7:5** - While we were in the flesh [under the authority of the sinful nature as first husband], the sinful trends, which through the Law were operative in our members [the brain], resulted in the production of fruit from the source of our spiritual death.

Having become aware of the total depravity of his body of corruption, Paul begins to observe through trial-and error his inability to control the desires of the flesh eventuating in human good and evil:

**Romans 7:18** - I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), there does not reside any good of intrinsic value, for the desire to do the will of God is present in me but the divine-good production of my desire is not.

**Romans 7:19** - For the intrinsic good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil which I do not desire, this I keep on practicing.

O'Rourke, P. J. "Where There's Smoke There's P. J. O'Rourke." *American Spectator*, July 1996, pp. 44-45.