

Distinction between Production of Sin & Responsibility for It, Romans 7:17

On Friday, May 24, Mr. Paul F. Seals departed to be face-to-face with the Lord. He was 61. Paul endured only a brief encounter with lung cancer. His focus from the first news of his condition was on the eternal future. He was motivated by his knowledge of doctrine to expect God's grace and mercy during his remaining days. His lone prayer request was that he be spared excessive pain and that petition was granted by our Lord's mercy. He joyfully anticipated being in the company of his Lord Jesus Christ and to be reunited with his beloved Thelma who preceded him last August.

Our sympathy is extended to his sons and daughters-in-law: Zane and Eva Seals, Vernon and Tina Seals, and Shane and Lisa Seals. Three grandchildren: Jennifer, Zach, and Tora Seals. Two brothers: Lee and Glen Seals, and five sisters: Inez Walker, Wilma Allen, Opal Lunyou, Pauline Holden, and Vearlie Holden.

Paul's funeral is scheduled for 2:30 P.M., Monday, May 26, at Ruegg Funeral Home in Piedmont, Missouri. The family has requested that memorial gifts be sent to Grace Doctrine Church and designated for Media Ministries.

Romans 7:17

In this verse Paul discusses the end result of granting volitional consent to the first husband's temptations. Once the believer submits to his lust pattern, then the sinful nature is empowered and begins to once more function as the authority over the believer's life.

Once empowered, the sinful nature controls the soul instead of the volition ... just like in the first marriage. The only way the volition can regain control is through the first problem-solving device of rebound. Short of rebound, the believer has re-enslaved himself to the tyrannical first husband. Therefore, it is not the volition which runs the life of the carnal believer, it is his sinful nature.

True, you make the decision about those things you do, but the power of the sinful nature far exceeds the ability of the carnal believer to regain control of the situation. Only through rebound is the necessary power restored through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Romans 7:17 begins with an adverb of time: *nuni* + the post positive conjunctive particle *de* - This is an idiom which is best translated into the English: "*But as the case really stands...*"

ouketi + *ego* - "*I am no longer.*"

Next is the verb, the present active indicative of: *katergazomai* - "*performing.*"

present - Customary; denotes what recurs at successive intervals and is therefore habitual.

middle - Deponent; Paul uses himself to represent the modus operandi of the human race under the control of the sinful nature.

indicative - Declarative; reality

CTL Romans 7:17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer performing this thing...

"*This thing*" is the intensive pronoun *autos* and refers to the habitual production of the sinful nature which now has sovereign control over Paul's soul. Paul indicates that he is not the source of the production and then through the conjunction of contrast identifies the culprit as the sinful nature ... the first husband.

alla - "*But.*" This sets up a contrast between Paul as the source of the production and the true culprit, the nominative singular subject: *hamartia* + *he* - "*the sinful nature which.*"

The present active participle of the verb: *oikeo* - “*keeps on living in me.*”

present - Retroactive progressive; denotes what began in the past at physical birth and continues to the present time even after salvation.

active - Sinful nature produces the action by being the source of carnal fruit: sin, human good, and evil.

participle - Circumstantial; indicates the part volition plays in the process. Without volitional participation the sinful nature would be incapable of producing fruit.

Romans 7:17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing [production of the sinful nature] but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me.

Quite a few questions arise from this corrected translation; let me suggest three:

1. Is Paul projecting his poor volitional decision to submit to the lust pattern's temptation onto his sinful nature?
2. Is Paul thus denying any responsibility for the resultant sin, human good, and evil?
3. Is Paul setting up a rationale whereby he can conveniently ignore his involvement in sin by claiming that it's not really him who does it but the sinful nature?

Definitely not! But what is being said here is very important and, once understood, sheds great light on the inherent challenges of executing the Christian way of life while in a body of corruption.

Let's first take up the question of the part Paul's volition plays in all this.

Paul's statement does not imply lack of culpability on the part of his volition in creating the environment for sinful production.

We are responsible for our own decisions. Decisions find their source in the volition of the soul. Once the volition decides to capitulate to the lust pattern's temptation it must step outside the divine power system in order to issue mandates to the cerebral cortex. The brain is subservient to the volition and once it grants permission, the sinful nature executes paths of least resistance. These facilitated wheel-tracks produce sins which assuage associated lust patterns.

It would be easier to understand the situation by looking on the volition as a gate which permits one of two power sources to energize the soul. The volition may decide to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to control the life or the power of the sinful nature to control the life. In either case, the volition acts as a submissive wife.

Both the Holy Spirit and the sinful nature are vying for control of the soul. Volition must submit to one or the other; it may not assume a neutral position. If positive volition occurs, then the Holy Spirit becomes the source of power which energizes the believer's soul and life. If negative volition occurs, the sinful nature becomes the source of power which energizes the believer's soul and life.

Therefore, with this statement, Paul is dramatizing the conflict between the first husband—the sinful nature—and the second Husband—Jesus Christ—for control of his soul. Emphasis is also placed on Paul's volition as being the subservient wife to the one in charge.

Thus, we have extracted a very important principle from this verse: it is the volition which grants permission for sin to occur but sin's actual production finds its origin in the sinful nature. All volition can do is grant the power. The Holy Spirit enables the believer to execute wheel-tracks of righteousness. Without the Holy Spirit's power, all the volitional desire in the world would not be enough to carry out the objective.

The sinful nature has the power to carry out wheel-tracks of wickedness. But inside the divine power system it is impossible for the sinful nature to accomplish that objective. Consequently, all volition can do is decide—it is the conduit through which power flows.

Execution of the Christian way of life is performed by the power of the Holy Spirit; execution of the cosmic lifestyle is performed by the power of the sinful nature. Granted, no one commits sin, known or unknown, without the permission of volition. But the believer is not the master of his own soul. Rulership of the soul vacillates between the Holy Spirit in status quo spirituality and the sinful nature in status quo carnality.

It's true that volition determines which husband is in control. But once the decision is made, volition never acts independently of the dominant husband. When filled with the Holy Spirit, the believer's volition is enabled to make choices for wheel-tracks of righteousness. The resultant action is divine good and credit must be given to the Holy Spirit.

When under the tyranny of the sinful nature, the believer's weakened volition is intimidated into choosing wheel-tracks of wickedness. Since they are paths of least resistance, it is impossible for the believer to choose otherwise short of rebound recovery. Prolonged recovery is impossible unless the believer utilizes the two power options in order to acquire and facilitate wheel-tracks of righteousness.

Thus, we see the first assault of the first husband in:

Romans 7:15 - For what I do—what perpetually works its way out of me—I do not understand, because what I resolve to do [wheel-tracks of righteousness], these things I am tendentially not practicing, but what I detest [wheel-tracks of wickedness], these things I keep on doing [because they are facilitated into paths of least resistance].

Romans 7:16 - Now if I keep doing this thing which I do not desire to do, I keep on agreeing with the Law that it is advantageous.

Romans 7:17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing this thing [production of the sinful nature] but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me.