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The Reality of the Inner Conflict

7: 14-17

The reality of the inner conflict DIG: Why does Paul introduce a first person plural here? In what way is the Torah spiritual? Prior to Paul's conversion, how must he have felt about the inner turmoil described here? How did he try to deal with it (Philippians 3:4-6)?

REFLECT: In light of your own struggles with sin, how do you feel about Paul's struggle? How is this a model for a healthy, realistic self-image? How are you doing with the wrestling match on a scale of one to ten? If you fall, what can you do to get back on your feet?

Our sin nature and our spirit are in a wrestling match; it is a constant, life-long struggle.



Throughout these verses **Paul** continues to write in the first person singular, as **he** portrays **his** own typical experience as an observant Messianic Jew. Yet, here, **he** breaks this pattern with a first person plural: **We know**. This serves to draw **the** readers of **his** letter into the discussion.¹⁸⁶

We know that the Torah is spiritual (7:14a). This means that **the Torah** deals with our inner being, the **spiritual** part of us, as well as with the other actions. In the original giving of **the Torah** in **Exodus**, the emphasis was on the outward actions. But when **Moshe** restated **the Torah** in **Deuteronomy**, the **spiritual** emphasis is clearly stated (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy**, to see link click [Cn](#) - Circumcise Your Hearts). And

when **Yeshua** gave **His** sermon on the mount (see [The Life of Christ Cz - Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount](#)), **He** emphasized the **spiritual** aspect of **the Torah** as well.

But I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to my old [sin nature] (7:14b). It is important to note that **the apostle** doesn't say **he** is actively involved in a specific **sin**, but that **he** continually has to live with **his old [sin nature]** inherited from Adam. **He** has already explained that **the old [sin nature] had died with Yeshua (6:5)**, and **he** received a new divine nature at salvation. From then on, **he** had a choice. **He** could choose to obey **the old [sin nature]** or **his** new divine nature. That was the nature of **his** inner conflict, and that is the nature of our inner conflict. Even as an apostle of **Yeshua Messiah** **he** possessed a remnant of the **sinfulness** that characterizes all human beings, including those of us who, in **Messiah**, are saved from its total mastery and its **condemnation (8:1)**.

Just because we struggle with **sin** doesn't mean we are not saved. It takes self-control and discipline to overcome the temptations that the world around us presents. **Messiah** fought and won that final battle over **sin**, but we need to apply that victory to our daily lives. Satan loves to whisper in our ear, saying we deserve this or that and making evil look like a reward. Often, we find a set of legalistic rules easier to follow than examining and changing our wrong attitudes and actions. In **Chapter 8, Paul** will give us some very valuable information about how to overcome **sin**.¹⁸⁷

We must always remember that our **spirit**, our inner self, has been completely and forever cleansed of **sin**. We have been justified (see [Ay - The Definition of Justification](#)). It is for that reason that, at death, we are prepared to enter **God's** presence in perfect holiness and purity. Because our **spiritual** rebirth has already happened, our **flesh**, with its **[sin nature]**, will be left behind.

In one of the most famous passages in **Romans**, **Paul** now graphically portrays the reality of this inner conflict. **I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do - I do not do, but what I hate - I do (7:15).** **Paul** wonders why **he** can't control the advance of **sin** within **him**. **He** has the right attitude - **he** wants to do what is right and good. Every mature believer is aware that his life falls far short of **God's** perfect standard of righteousness and that he falls back into **sin** with disturbing frequency. Yet he cannot be happy with his **sin**, because it is contrary to his new nature and because he knows that it grieves his **Lord** as well as his own conscience. This is not to say that believers have a split personality, because we do not. Salvation makes us whole. But it does indicate that our mind, will, and body can be controlled either by **the old [sin nature]** or the new **divine nature**, either by **the flesh** or **the Ruach**.¹⁸⁸ The reality of this inner conflict is that the battle with our **[sin nature]** is

strenuous and life-long.

When we do succumb to **the old [sin nature]**, Paul gives us the antidote: **If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we acknowledge our sins, since YHVH is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing (First John 1:8-9).**

And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the Torah is good because it points out my **sin. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is my [sin nature] living in me (7:16-17).** This does not mean that Paul was avoiding personal responsibility for **his** actions; **he** was speaking of the inner conflict between **his** godly desires and **the [sin nature]** within **him**.

The question people in the world need to ask themselves is this, “Is it working for me?”



*Dear Holy and Wonderful Heavenly **Father**, I **love You** and want to please **You** so please help me to have **Your** same attitude about **sin's** awfulness. **Let love be without hypocrisy—detesting what is evil, holding fast to the good (Romans 12:9).** **Sin** broke **God's** original **loving** relationship with man when Adam and Eve chose to follow their own way. **Sin** hurts any relationship. When a child **sins** against his parents, he is still their child but there is a separation, a wound between them that needs healing. Praise **You, Yeshua**, for healing that separation wound between mankind and **God** by **Your** death on the cross as*

*the sacrificial **Lamb of God (John 1:29)** who bore the **sin** punishment of mankind. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).***

*I want to be careful to not **sin** because **sin** hurts you and me. I am very concerned about family members and friends who claim to be “Christians” but who live in continual **sin** and it does not bother them. I do not mean that they **sin** once in a while, everyone **sins** some, but when a **sin** is brought before their eyes, they would rather ignore it and concentrate on **God’s love**. They forget that **You** are a Holy **God**. Their pride is big. **Children, let no one mislead you! The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as Yeshua is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. Ben-Elohim appeared for this purpose - to destroy the works of the devil (First John 3:7-8).***

*Please develop in me, in family and in friends a deeper awareness of doing anything, big or small that offends **You, God**, in any way, for **You** are so awesome! I want to please **You** in everything I do, even in my thoughts and finances. In **Yeshua’s** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*