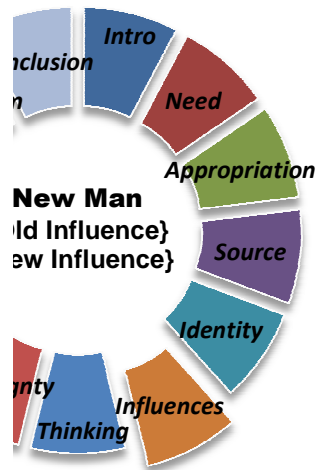


VIII. The New Man – Influences (Ch. 7)



So:

- God's righteousness revealed through wrath shows our desparate hopeless sinful condition.
- God's righteousness revealed through justly justifying us by faith reveals hope.
- Our sinful condition came from Adam and his first transgression.
- Our righteous condition came from Christ and his one act of righteousness.
- God did not justify us only to leave us under the domain of Sin.
- God identified(united) us in the death, burial and ressurection of Christ so that we are in the domain of grace.
- We should not excuse a choice to sin just because we are no longer in the domain where law rules.

Now:

- Our death with Christ frees us from marriage to the law and the fruit of death it produced.
- Law produces death not because it is bad but because we have a sinful influence.
- The sinful influence is not all I am. In my mind I desire to keep the law and in my flesh I am helpless.

This chapter does not end with a full answer to how to produce righteousness. Instead it lays a foundation for chapter 8. In the words of Warren Wiersbe,

"In Romans 6, Paul told us how to stop doing bad tings; in Romans 7 he told how not to do good things."⁴ (emphasis added)

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, quoted from Dr. Thomas Constable, "Dr. Constable's Notes on Romans", ©2009, electronic edition <http://www.SonicLight.org>

Some believe this chapter is a definition of the Normal Christian life. Alva J. McClain has said,

There is one view of this chapter that is terribly mistaken, and that view is the one that says what we find in here is the Christian's normal experience. That is the devil's own method. Some people in churches every Lord's Day stand up and recite, "O, Lord, we have done those things we ought not to have done, and have left undone those things which we should have done," and sit down very well satisfied with themselves, as if they had done something very virtuous. If you ever must say that (and, of course, a great many of us do sometimes); if you are meeting defeat in your life (for that is what it is in this chapter), then at least be concerned enough about your defeat and your lack of victory to cry with Paul, "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" No one ought to repeat that as a litany without the cry of despair that the apostle Paul uttered when he said it. He certainly did not say it unconcernedly.⁵

I have often taken the section regarding our struggle with doing what we hate and not doing what we love in a general sense. Meaning that when I am in my flesh I am unable to do any righteousness I might desire in my mind. However, I do not believe that is being faithful to this passage. In this context he is dealing with the Law and we must recognize the desires in the more restricted desire to produce righteousness by the Law. (Even though I do still believe the more general principle is true.)

- Context of wanting to keep covetousness is the beginning of this discussion.
- Vs. 16 – I agree with the law
- Vs. 22 – I delight in the law of God but...
- Vs. 25 – I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

He desires to not covet but does it anyway.

He desires to keep the Law but doesn't.

The Law is not bad so this leads to a discovery – There is an evil influence in me. But I desire to keep the Law so this leads to a discovery – There is a righteous influence in me. I desire righteousness but I have no ability to produce it in my flesh. I need to be delivered.

Paul then points us back to the fact that we have been delivered from the penalty of Law (even if we are wretched men) through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.)

Application:

Knowing we are united to Christ

- We should count upon this union and yield ourselves to righteousness.
- We should know we died to law, it's bondage and it's penalties.
- It is tempting to think that since we are united to Christ we can now live by the law – YOU CAN'T.
- Thank God – He has another way!

⁵ Alva J. McClain, "Romans, The Gospel of God's Grace", ©1973, pg. 150