

**Articles and Sermons :: Be Honest as You Press on to Perfection by Zac Poonen**

**Be Honest as You Press on to Perfection by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2022/4/8 18:19**

Romans 7:14-25 is an important passage for those seeking to press on to perfection. Paul is speaking there about his experience as a born-again Christian, for an unconverted man does not say, "I joyfully concur with the Law of God in the inner man" (Rom.7:22).

Paul's letter to the Romans is written in a sequence describing the gospel as the power of God for salvation (Rom.1:16), beginning from Chapter 1. After speaking about justification by faith in chapters 3, 4 and 5, Paul speaks about victory over sin in Romans 6. Then Paul goes on to the next stage in chapter 7. He is not going back at that point to an unconverted period in his life. No. He is continuing his description of the gospel. Now he talks about the struggle that a person who is interested in pressing on to perfection finds in his inner life. Consciously he has chosen to do only God's will hereafter. He desires victory and has found grace to help him in time of need. Yet he finds two things: (i) that in an unwitting moment he still falls in an area over which he already has light (conscious sin); and (ii) that sometimes he has fallen short of the Christian standard and realized it only after he has fallen (a new area where he did not have light before falling - unconscious sin).

The one who is not interested in total perfection does not have such a struggle, for he has stopped at Romans 5. It is the one who is seeking total victory over sin (Rom.6:14), who finds this struggle and says to himself, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this sinful body that brings me into spiritual death again and again?" (Rom.7:24)

Those who do not acknowledge such a struggle are being dishonest about their inner lives. This is what gives us great hope that even when we have fallen in a moment of weakness, although that is a sin that we must repent of, and forsake, and ask Christ to cleanse in His blood, yet it is not something that we would have consciously chosen. Our subsequent regret over it shows that very clearly. Because we continue to hate such acts of sin and mourn over them, one day we will get victory over them as well.

Read Romans 7 carefully and ask God to give you light on it. Romans 7:1-13 speaks about being free from the Law as our guide. Now we are married to Christ, so that we live by a higher standard than the Law, but not with a legalistic attitude towards God's commandments. We "serve in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom.7:6).

There is no victory for those who are dishonest about their struggles. It is not primarily a question about understanding Romans 7 correctly, but rather a question of being absolutely honest about one's struggles. I would urge you to avoid all those who are not honest about their inner struggles - for they are hypocrites. You must be discerning. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves (Matt.10:16). Remember that the most important thing that God requires from you is honesty. That is the first step to purity.

**Re: Be Honest as You Press on to Perfection by Zac Poonen - posted by murrcoir (), on: 2022/4/9 17:54**

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to allow us to see and then confess

"Oh wretched men that I am"

I remember sitting in the church a "new christian" and thinking about the calling on my life that God had me made aware of and thinking - God has done a great work in me but he will have to do it again, if I am ever going to be fit for that responsibility.

But God has his ways to save the sinner and the sinful man.

We see in Psalm 51 how David cries out after seeing his condition of being a wretched man.

For Peter it was the time in Luke 22:61-62 where he weeps bitterly after he hears the cock crow after deny Christ for the third time.

God must get us to the place where we see we are a sinful men - before we can move on to get the victory.