

The battle within...

1. Study Rom 7:14-25. Make a chart of this difficult section by listing the verses paired with the conjugate "but." Summarize your observations of the chart and derive an interpretation. Remember to study the Epistles by paragraphs!

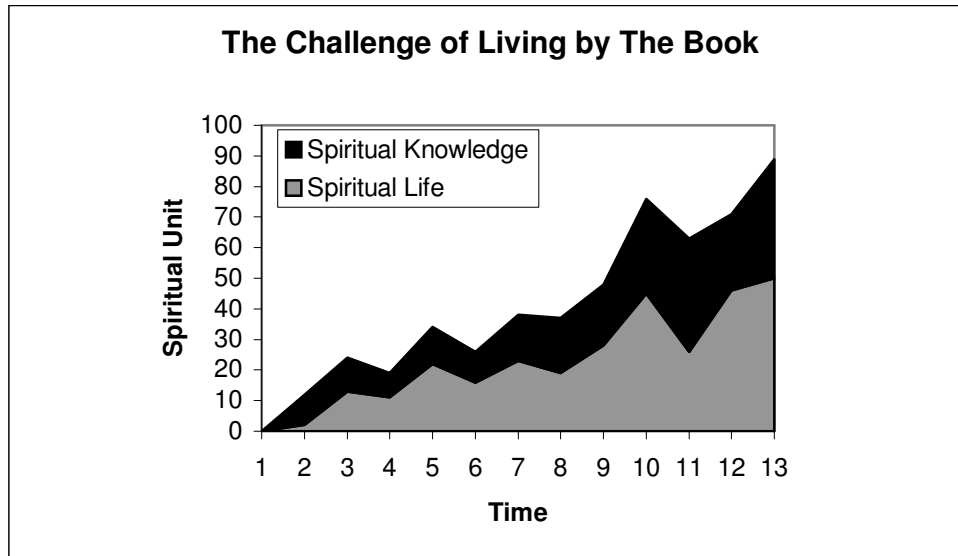
v.14 For we know that the Law is spiritual;	but	I am of flesh, sold to the bondage of sin.
v. 15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do,	but	I am doing the very thing I hate.
v. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.		
v. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it,	but	sin which indwells me.
v. 18 For I know nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me,	but	the doing of good is not.
v. 19 For the good that I wish, I do not do;	but	I practice the very evil that I do not wish.
v. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it,	but	sin which dwells in me.
v. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.		
v. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,	but	v. 23 I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.
v. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?		
v. 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God,	but	on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Some observations that can be seen: a) Paul is talking about himself and the struggles he faces as a Christian. There is a desire to do good, but in fact he does not. b) Symbolism: flesh symbolizes sin and sin is associated with bondage and prison. c) Sin is inseparable from man. d) The opposite of good is not just wrong, it is evil.

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Paul is able to discern what is morally right and wrong, because God has revealed His standard for holiness. Christians, while no longer under the spiritual penalty of sin, must still contend with their sin nature that dwells within. This native impulse, constant and beyond the strength of man alone, is the battle that Christians face. Spiritual life does not match up with spiritual knowledge.

2. The battle for Christians is living by the Book. How would you illustrate this problem to another person?



What does the graph of your spiritual growth look like? What is Paul's solution to this battle that Christians face?

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