

You're Okay, I'm Okay...really?

Romans 7:24-25

Decades ago, a physician named Thomas Harris wrote a book entitled "You're Okay, I'm Okay," and it was about just what the title implies, we're all okay. If you take that to its logical conclusion, Hitler was an okay guy. God was an afterthought to Harris if he ever thought of God. And to really appeal to the pseudo-intellectuals of his day, Harris and his predecessor Eric Berne, named their school of thought,

Transactional Analysis.

"With more than 7 million copies sold, and a spot on the New York Times Bestseller list, this pioneering self-help guide transformed the lives of countless readers. "Harris has stripped away the technical language of psychoanalysis and presents with lucid logic a way to self-understanding and change."--"The Los Angeles Times " This is what spawned a generation of people known as "navel gazers."

To the people who hold to Harris' philosophy, it all boils down to nothing more than this, any problem in life can be resolved by positive thinking and positive confession. No one needs the mythological god invented by some primitive Jews a million years ago and still clung to by mindless Christians. There's much to be said in support of thinking positively, but there's more to life and more to our complex make up as human beings than Transactional Analysis suggests.

This was the philosophy behind the late pastor Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's theology of "The Power of Positive Thinking." And the theology of the late pastor Dr. Robert Schuller's "Possibility Thinking" (remember the Sunday morning show entitled "The Hour of Power?") Did you know that Schuller's church, The Crystal Cathedral went bankrupt after he died and their property was bought by the Roman Catholic Church?). And we're all okay is the philosophy behind the positive confession of the very much alive Joel Osteen and Kenneth Copeland.

To these philosophers and false pastors, man is the center of the universe and has within him all he/she needs in order to be happy and successful. Seriously. If what these charlatans teach is true, who needs God? All one needs is to learn to think and speak positive, faith-filled

words and what they desire to come to pass, will. According to Osteen and thousands of pastors/teachers/ evangelists who have been poisoned by his brand of heresy, we can speak things into existence just like God did. That's why their heresy is called "The Word of Faith Movement" which started back in the 1970's. It teaches that there is power in our words so that we can speak our desired futures into existence. As Osteen has said, "Our words prophesy our future."

The question is, "Are we all okay?"

Take your Bible and turn to Romans chapter 7 beginning with v.22. Roms. 7:22, and we will read through to v.25. This is going to get kinda sticky at first, but bear with me.

²² *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,*

²³ **but** *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.*

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?* 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.*

Before we go any further, and this is the sticky part, I want to pull out of our text several key elements that will help us see what Paul wants us to get out of it. I have broken it down this way:

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²³ **but** *I see
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which is
in my members.*

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am!*

Who will set me free (or rescue me) from the body of this death?

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 hand,

I myself with my flesh am serving the law of sin.

It's like this, every believer, as long as he or she is alive, is essentially a POW, physically speaking, and there is no escape from this POW camp called our bodies until they die. And believe it or not, this is good news for all who are in Christ. How so, you may ask? "Pastor Johnny it sounds kinda negative to me." It is telling us that we are the way we are because God designed us to be this way, warts and all, in this life in these bodies and we can rest in the fact that just as we are, we are His, warts and all. And He loves us, and as David Gales says, "And there ain't nuthin' you can do about it."

There is nothing you can do to make Him love you more.

There is nothing you can do to make Him love you less.

I'm going to make at three brief observations as I close.

First, Our sinfulness by nature is our problem, not some sort of negative confession.

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. That is our reality, beloved of God, there is a war going on every minute of the day between the righteous law of God that I know is right and just and good, and the law of sin that is active in my physical body. I can no more change that fact than I can change the color of the sky just by wishing it to change.

Second, "We do not have a split-personality, but we do have a duality."

Within weeks after getting saved, I found myself beating myself up over how sinful I still was. I thought all that was behind me. Was I in for a rude awakening. Then some of my new Christian friends took me to Romans 7 and read this to me, ¹⁵ *For what 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.*

¹⁶ *But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*

¹⁷ *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.* It didn't help. I was still miserable because I still sinned. It would take me years to come to grips with the truths of Romans chapter 7 and 8.

Those two chapters do not tell us the way out of sin and corruption. But they do point the way into total dependence on the finished work of Christ on our behalf. Every believer must acknowledge his or her sins, and then, enjoy the forgiveness that is ours on account of the blood of Jesus.

God has never given anyone permission to sin. But He has made gracious provision for our sins in the blood of His Son.

This morning we will take the two elements of the Lord's table, the two elements that represent His blood and His body. And we do it in a manner worthy of those elements by recognizing them for what they represent.

The Lord's Supper