

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Romans 7:21-24 “I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, *warring* against the law of my mind, and *bringing me into captivity* to the law of sin which is in my members. *O wretched man that I am!* Who will deliver me from this body of death? *I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!* ”

“The believer may sin the worst of sins, it is true; but to remain in the love of sin, or to be comfortable in the atmosphere of sin, is a deadly sign, for only repenters inhabit heaven.” Jim Elliff

Corpses don't care about anything! The same is true of those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins. As stated in our last IMPACT, true Christians know *experientially* about the warfare that rages with their flesh that began when they became spiritually alive! Paul addressed this on-going warfare between the flesh and the indwelling Holy Spirit when he wrote, “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, *so that you do not do the things that you wish.*”¹ Friend, if what Paul wrote is not true in your life, *then be alarmed!* Don't confuse the periodic discomfort of a guilty conscience with the conviction that a Christian experiences after offending God. Make no mistake, Paul's statement strikes a chord in the heart of every true Christian and demands that we take the warfare with our flesh seriously. The Bible states that our “old man,” or our state of being prior to conversion, was “crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” The Greek word for “‘done away with’ literally means ‘to render inoperative or invalid,’ to make something ineffective *by removing its power of control.*”² Although those who are placing their trust completely in Christ are a “new man” spiritually, we remain in a body with corrupted desires that are part of being human. Sandwiched between *being* declared justified once-and-for-all by God through faith in Christ and *being* glorified when God conforms us to Christ's image at His return, we are *being* sanctified or developed by the Holy Spirit

through the study of God's Word. It is during this process of growth that the battle rages between the lingering desires of our flesh and the influence of Holy Spirit within us.

Paul warned, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”³ Those who are spiritually alive and who truly care about spiritual things must beware of callousness or carelessness when it comes to temptation. Let me illustrate. While working for a surveyor, I nearly stepped on a Copperhead. Instinctively, I knew that the

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snake was dangerous as I watched it slither off. The surveyor promptly cut it in half with his bush ax. He then severed the head from the writhing stub. As

he touched the snake's mouth with the ax blade, it tried to bite the steel! Once decapitated, the snake's *power to strike* was rendered inoperative. It could inject its poison in me only if I exposed myself to its fangs and the residual reflexes of its nervous system. In the spiritual realm, a similar “reflexive response” can occur after conversion. Although sin has been rendered a fatal blow and we are freed from its penalty and its power as a slave master,⁴ there remains a propensity within us to be careless with temptation and then reap the consequences.⁵ Every Christian knows the tension between the remnant desires of the “old man” that was put to death with Christ our Substitute and the righteous desires of the “new man” who is alive in Christ our Savior.⁵ Although sin has been rendered powerless to strike, we must “flee youthful lusts that war against the soul” and “make no provision for the flesh” as we take the means of escape that God always supplies.⁷ Carelessness or cockiness will result in us “getting bit.” Although true Christians cannot die spiritually from the “venom” of sin, they will be sickened by conviction and broken fellowship with God. They may also experience the “death” of reputation, relationships and opportunity. Those who are alive in Christ *care enough to beware!*

1 Galatians 5:17 2 J. MacArthur 3 II Cor.10:12 4 II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Romans 6:6; 6 Colossians 3:9 Eph.4:17-24; 5 Galatians 6:7 7 I Corinthians 10:13; Romans 8:13; II Timothy 2:22