



Paul's Behavior Problem: The Attacks of the First Husband (vv. 15-21); Rom 7:15: What Paul Does He Detests but Does Anyway

B. The Attacks of the First Husband (vv. 15-21):

Romans 7:15:

1. The first assault on the soul described by Paul begins in verse 15 which reads this way in the New King James Version:

Romans 7:15 - For that which I do (a. accomplish) I understand not; for what I would, that do (b. practice) I not; but what I hate, that I do (c. perform).

2. Verse 15 contains three verbs that mean “to do.” Each has its own nuance and I have chosen three appropriate English words to translate them in order to avoid confusion:

- a. **κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai***: “to accomplish”
- b. **πράσσω, *prassō***: “to practice”
- c. **ποιέω, *poieō***: “to perform”

3. The first verb of these three is the present middle indicative of:

(#1) **κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai***: “to accomplish”

This verb means to work at something until you accomplish a task.

present: durative, or retroactive progressive **[R(1)c.]**: denotes something that happens in the past with results that continue into present time.

1. The progressive aspect of the tense shows that the action in question is in a state of progress.
2. Thus the durative says that what works its way out of Paul began in the past and continues to the present in a progressive manner.
3. We may insert at this point information which we have gleaned from our study of *The Theology of Neurology*: during the period of Paul's first marriage, his sinful nature developed wheel-tracks of wickedness which were progressively facilitated into paths of least resistance and which now reveal themselves as behavior patterns and character traits.

middle: Deponent; active in meaning. Paul produces the action of the verb by exhibiting behavior patterns developed during his first marriage under the authority of the first husband, the sinful nature.

indicative: Declarative; a statement of fact. This is the propensity which Paul faces in his post-salvation life. Wheel-tracks of wickedness work their way out of him.

4. As a believer, Paul becomes confused over the fact he continues to behave as a believer in the same manner he did as an unbeliever. He confirms this with the negative adverb **οὐ, *ou***, translated “not,” plus the present active indicative of the verb:

(#2) **γινώσκω, *ginōskō*** - “I do not understand”

Romans 7:15 - For what I accomplish [*katergazomai*]—what works its way out of me—I do not understand [*ginōskō*] ...



- present: Aoristic; punctiliar action in present time [S(1)]. This use indicates that on every occasion Paul accomplishes the behavior pattern developed during his first marriage, he doesn't understand why he does it.
- active: Paul produces the action in the status quo of carnality.
- indicative: Declarative; a statement of fact.
5. Verse 15 begins with the durative present of *katergazomai*, a behavior pattern that works its way out of Paul. It began in the past and endures to the present in a progressive manner and persistently occurs.
6. Paul indicates that he simply does not understand why such a behavior pattern continues to persist in his life after salvation.
7. Next Paul explains the reason for his confusion beginning with the causal conjunctive particle **γάρ, gar** followed by the present active indicative of the verb:
- (#3) **θέλω, thelō** - "because what I desire."
- present: Historical; used when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence [S(3)].
- active: Paul produces the action of desiring to do otherwise.
- indicative: Declarative; a statement of historical fact.
8. Paul goes back to the moment of his salvation when he changed his mind about Jesus as Messiah.
9. He believed in the Lord for salvation and with the full intent and purpose of serving Him.
10. This was his desire. But now he finds himself a Christian still doing the same things he did before his salvation in status quo unbelief.
11. Paul does not understand this behavior, especially in view of his desire to do otherwise.

Romans 7:15 - For what I accomplish [*katergazomai*]—what works it way out of me—I do not understand [*ginōskō*], because what I desire [*thelō*]

...

12. The pronoun "what" refers to the behavior pattern which Paul desires to practice.
13. Paul is aware of the details associated with executing the Christian way of life: (1) the two power options, (2) the three spiritual skills, and (3) the problem-solving devices. This is the system by which the believer produces divine good.
14. But these behaviors are not consistently operational in Paul's life. He indicates such with another pronoun referring to those things he desires to do: the plural demonstrative pronoun **οὗτος, houtos**, "these things," along with the negative adverb **οὐ, ou**, translated "not" plus the present active indicative of the verb:

(#4) **πράσσω, prassō** - "these things I am not practicing"

present: Tential; used for action which is proposed or attempted but not taking place [S(4)].



- active: Paul has a tendency and a trend which does not produce divine good, but rather sin, human good, and evil.
- indicative: Potential; indicates the element of contingency which introduces the concept of free will as the culprit.

Romans 7:15 - For what I accomplish [*katergazomai*]—what works it way out of me—I do not understand [*ginōskō*], because what I desire [*thelō*], these things I am not practicing [*prassō*] ...

15. Back in verse 14 Paul wrote, “I am carnal,” using the verb *eimi* in the tendential present. This reveals that Paul was not carnal when he wrote the book of Romans but he had a tendency and a trend toward being so.
16. In verse 15 the tendential present of *prassō* plus the negative *ou* indicates that as Paul writes Romans he is filled with the Holy Spirit. He desires to do those things common to the Christian way of life but he has a tendency to do quite the opposite.
17. The potential indicative of *prassō* tells us that Paul’s carnal wheel-tracks may be reasonably expected to occur although it is not necessary for them to do so.
18. Paul now amplifies his frustration by setting up a contrast between what he desires to do as the wife of the second marriage and what he actually does in his *ménage à trios* with his first husband. This *ménage à trios* is referred to by the pronoun **ὅς, hos**, translated “what,” followed by the present active indicative of the verb:

(#5) **μισέω, miseō** - “to hate; to detest”

- present: Descriptive; that which is now going on. It presents to the mind a picture of events as in the process of occurrence, sometimes called the “pictorial” present. [R(1)a.]
- active: The attitude the positive believer should have toward his *ménage à trios* with the first husband is to be repulsed by it to the point of detestation.
- indicative: Potential; showing contingency. Whether the believer is actually disgusted by his behavior is dependent upon his volition. In carnality, the believer should be disgusted to the point of rebound. But in reversionism, his insensitivity reached the point of callousness.

19. Next comes another pronoun which introduces Paul’s behavior during the *ménage à trios*: **ὅτις, houtos**, translated “these things.” It refers to wheel-tracks of wickedness which are acted upon during the time of spiritual adultery. It is followed by the present active indicative of the verb:

(#6) **ποιέω, poieō** - “I continue performing”

- present: Durative (retroactive progressive); action in progress or in a state of persistence. It denotes what has begun in the past and continues to the present, thus indicating strong linear action. These are facilitated wheel-tracks. [R(1)c.]
- active: The carnal believer produces the action by becoming involved in a spiritual *ménage à trios*.
- indicative: Declarative; a statement of biblical reality for believers in status quo carnality,



20. We are now able to develop a corrected and expanded translation of:

Romans 7:15 - For what I continue to accomplish [*katergazomai*]—what works its way out of me—on each occasion, I do not understand [*ginōskō*], because what I desire [*thelō*] on such occasions, these things I have a tendency not to practice [*prassō*]; but what I keep on detesting [*miseō*] I continue to perform [*poieō*].