

Paul Does what He Doesn't Desire, Romans 7:15b

present - Aoristic; punctiliar action in present time. This structure indicates that on every occasion that Paul practices the behavior pattern developed during his first marriage, he doesn't understand it.

active - Paul produces the action in the status quo of carnality. indicative - Declarative for a statement of fact. This actually occurs.

Please remember the tendential present in Romans 7:15 which serves to introduce us to Paul's behavior pattern. The tendential present says that Paul has a tendency and a propensity to commit sin and behave in a manner similar to his period of unbelief. This does not mean that Paul is carnal when he wrote Romans but that he is using his propensity to demonstrate to all believers that they have this same tendency to submit to their first husband.

Romans 7:15 says to this point, *"For what I do, what works its way out of me, I do not understand ..."*

Beginning with the pivotal *"but"* in the middle of Romans 7:15, Paul has used three verbs, all in the present tense. Throughout the rest of chapter 7 Paul will be using the present tense, a grammatical construction which introduces our recent research on the theology of neurology into the discussion. Therefore, it becomes important for us to take time out and give some attention to the Greek present tense.

a. The Present Tense:

Originally, there were two verb types, one denoting durative or linear action, the other momentary or punctiliar action. Some verbs have two roots, one linear or durative, the other punctiliar or momentary. Later there emerged a third type which expressed a continuation of a completed action.

When the action is regarded as a whole it may be represented by a dot (•). Linear or durative action may be represented by a continuous line (—).

The continuation of a completed action may be represented by a dot followed by a line (•—).

The fundamental significance of the present tense is the idea of linear progress, the continuous line (—). It describes action which occurs in present time and is typically ongoing. We will note seven classifications of the present tense:

- A. The Progressive Present. Action in progress or in a state of persistence. There are three varieties of the progressive present tense in which its fundamental idea of progress is especially self-evident:
 1. **Descriptive:** That which is now going on. This is also called the Pictorial since it brings to the mind a picture of events as in the process of occurrence.
 2. **Existing Results:** Refers to a fact which has come to be in the past but is emphasized as a present reality. Stresses the continuance of results through present time.
 3. **Duration:** Denotes that which has begun in the past and continues into the present.

- B. **The Customary Present.** Denotes that which habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur. In this application the time element is remote. The action is assumed to be true in the past or future as well as the present.
- C. **The Aoristic Present.** Expresses a present fact without reference to progress.
- D. **The Futuristic Present.** An event which has not yet occurred but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.
- E. **The Historical Present.** Employed when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence.
- F. **The Tendential Present.** Represents the idea of that which is inclined to occur or which tends to occur.
- G. **The Static Present.** A condition which is assumed as perpetually existing.

Romans 7:15-Romans 7:25 is studded with the use of the present tense in its various classifications. From many of them we will be able to see the presence of facilitated wheel-tracks which have become paths of least resistance.

There will be, for example, the durative for wheel-tracks laid down in the past but whose effects continue into the present. There will be the customary indicating wheel-tracks whose execution habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur.

The static for wheel-tracks which are assumed to be perpetually existing thus indicating their presence in long-term memory traces. Romans 7:15 begins with the durative progressive present of *katergazomai* speaking of Paul's behavior pattern which works out of him.

It began in the past and endures to the present in a progressive manner and persistently occurs. Paul indicates that he simply does not understand why such a behavior pattern continues to persist in his life after salvation.

CTL: "*For what I do, what persistently works out of me, I do not understand ...*"

Paul now explains the reason for his confusion beginning with the conjunctive particle: *gar* - In this application it is causal and thus translated, "*because.*" This is followed by the pronoun: *hos* - "*what*" Refers to the behavior pattern and lifestyle which Paul truly desires to execute, indicated by the present active indicative of the verb: *thelo* - "*Because what I desire.*"

present - Historical; used when a past event is viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence.

Paul goes back to the moment of his salvation when he changed his mind about Jesus as the Messiah. He believed in the Lord for salvation and with the full intent and purpose of serving Him. This was his desire. But now he finds himself a Christian still doing the things he did before his salvation while in status quo unbelief. He doesn't understand this behavior, especially in view of his desire to do otherwise.

active - Paul produces the action of desiring to do otherwise. indicative - Declarative; a statement of historical fact.

The pronoun "*what*" refers to the behavior pattern which Paul desires to produce. This includes the utilization of the two power options: (1) filling of the Holy Spirit and (2) the grace apparatus for perception. It would also imply those things which are developed from this system of didactics: biblical problem-solving, doctrinal decision-making, and execution of the Royal Family Honor Code.

These are the ways by which a believer serves God and produces divine good. But this is not the way things are working out in Paul's life. He indicates such with another pronoun referring to those things he desires to do, the plural demonstrative pronoun: *houtos* - "*these things.*" "... *because what behavior patterns I desire to accomplish, these things ...*"

Next comes the present active indicative of the verb: *prasso* + *ou* - "*I am not practicing.*"

present - Tendential; used for an action which is proposed or attempted but not taking place.

Remember that in Romans 7:14 when Paul said, “*I am carnal*,” the verb *eimi* is in the tendential present as well.

You will also remember that such a use conveys the idea of what is inclined to occur or that which tends to occur. This revealed to us that Paul was not carnal when he wrote the book of Romans but that he had a tendency and a trend toward carnality.

Here the tendential present of the verb *prasso* + the negative *ou* indicates that Paul is practicing the Christian way of life as he writes the book of Romans his tendency and trend not to do so.

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.

Paul says that he has a behavior pattern which is contrary to the one he now practices as he writes Romans. The potential indicative tells us that it may be reasonably expected to occur although it is not necessary for it to do so.

With all this in view we can now construct a corrected and expanded translation of verse 15 up to this point:

CTL Romans 7:15 - For what I do, what persistently works its way out of me [facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness which have become paths of least resistance], I do not understand, for what I desire, these things I am tendentially not practicing ...