

## The Sinful Nature's Agent Provocateur

NOTE: No Bible classes Tuesday, 14 May and Thursday, 16 May, 1996.

### Analysis

The title of our study of Romans 7 is Paul's Behavior Problem: The Neurological Explanation of Paul's Dilemma in Romans 7:14-Romans 7:25. The dilemma Paul faces is now beginning to show itself.

We see in Romans 7:15 that Paul has a desire to produce divine good but confesses that his tendency and trend is to produce sin. In other words, he has the desire to submit to the wishes of his new husband, Jesus Christ, but his propensity is to have a ménage à trois with his first husband, the sinful nature.

Therefore, Paul's good intentions are neutralized by his inability to remain loyal to his new Husband while under the tempting allurements of his first husband. These tempting allurements emanate from the lust pattern, the sinful nature's inside agent in leading the believer astray.

There is another French phrase which perfectly describes the part the lust pattern plays in this battle for control of the soul: agent provocateur.

### Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "agent provocateur":

*\äzh-än-pro-väk-e-ter\ one employed to associate himself with suspected persons and by pretending sympathy with their aims to incite them to some incriminating action.*

### American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. "agent provocateur":

*\a-zhän prô-vô-ka-toer\ A secret agent hired to penetrate some organization to incite trouble designed to make the organization or its members incur punishment.*

Thus, we see the presence of a conspiracy operating within Paul's members: the sinful nature desires to regain control of the body but its power to do so has been broken. In order to reacquire its power, it needs the cooperation of the believer's volition which controls the computer center in the soul's stream of consciousness.

The sinful nature employs its SWAT team, the ten commandos of the lust pattern, to serve as inside agents, or agent provocateurs. The lust pattern fires up vectors from the limbic center which bring into the conscious mind wheel- tracks preserved in long-term memory traces during Paul's time of unbelief. At this point the soul is under assault and volition must make decisions that will either protect the soul or submit to the agent provocateur's tempting proposition.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Paul is reminded of biblical problem-solving devices which serve to defend the soul against the outside adversity presented by the lust pattern. However, according to Paul's testimony, his tendency and his trend is to submit to the temptation. Why?

There are two possible answers:

1. Paul has no doctrinal problem-solving devices stored in long-term memory traces and thus none are accessible to the Holy Spirit's recall ministry.
2. Paul has responded to the Holy Spirit's instruction and does possess doctrinal memory traces in his stream of consciousness but they are not facilitated.

Thus, the allurements of the lust pattern overwhelm Paul's thinking and he decides to take a fling with his first husband.

Volition issues orders to the brain to act on the wheel-tracks of wickedness which have been facilitated into paths of least resistance. Sin is committed, the lust pattern is assuaged, the sinful nature is back in control of the soul, and Paul is doing those things he does not desire to do and which he knows are wrong. In doing so Paul is guilty of a grotesque tryst. He has committed spiritual adultery against his new Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Guilty of a spiritual ménage à trois, Paul has been led astray by his first husband's agent provocateur, the lust pattern. With regard to his marriage to the Lord Jesus Christ, he is a spiritual adulterer. With regard to his responsibility to govern his own soul against outside adversity, he is a spiritual quisling.