

From Pastor Ed: The 21 Day Wesley Challenge

For the next 21 days Crossroads is being challenged to daily reflect on a different question every day that will help us focus on our spiritual life during Lent. These questions were developed by the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. In weekly small groups Wesley would ask participants to reflect on and answer these questions.

Every day we will send the question of the day with a devotional to help you reflect. Please take a few minutes each day to read the devotional and write down your thoughts, reflections or answers to the question.

On Sunday we will be gathering for a brief thirty minute OT (overtime) in Wesley hall where we will have a chance to meet with others and discuss our thoughts/answers to at least one of the questions.

Day THREE Question THREE

“Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?”

Day THREE devotional THREE: (My thanks to Mike Brooks: Pocket Devotions)

Romans 7:15

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

If you will notice, there are a lot of "I"s in our passage today, so let's identify each one. The basic idea is the conflict we all experience between our two natures: the old and the new. The first "I" ("I do not understand what I do") is the old nature when it asserts its demands. The second "I" ("For what I want to do") is the good intention of the new nature. "I do not do" is the old nature's rebellion against the new nature's desire to do what is right. "What I hate to do" is the old nature having its way in the end. Sounds pretty hopeless, doesn't it. Dieters, can you relate? I sure can.

I got up a few mornings ago and climbed on the scale. It was something I have been avoiding for weeks because I knew it was going to report bad news. Sure enough, the bathroom scale confirmed what my pants have been telling me all along: I have now reached the heaviest weight of my life.

I resolved to make some changes: First, I exercise regularly, but I decided to double my routine. Then, I faced what I considered to be the real source of my problem -- eating, or rather over-eating. I told my wife: "No food will cross these lips except vegetables until I am once again below 200 pounds." Then I asked: "Do I look fat?" She didn't really answer the question, instead offering: "You look really strong and very broad." That's wife-talk for "You could lose a few pounds."

The first day I did well, that is until the afternoon when I arrived home from an errand. I wasn't particularly hungry, I just wanted to eat. And the only thing that was going to satisfy my craving was one of those chicken tamales in our refrigerator. My wife asked: "Can I make you a salad?" "No," I answered, "I think I'll have a tamale." True to her nature she didn't criticize or judge. Instead she said: "Then let me make it for you."

I have to admit that tamale tasted really good -- until this morning when I climbed on the scale again. Disappointment set in and I repeated in frustration Paul's words from our passage today: "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." Confusing isn't it? Sometimes I feel so out of control. Can you relate?

DiETING may or may not be your particular problem. In fact, some people may even be offended I picked such a silly example (dieting and tamales) to make a serious point about the harmful influence

of the sinful nature. But is dieting ridiculous? Doesn't over-eating lead to death just as sin does? We may consider over-eating or smoking cigarettes to be suicidal related to the health of our physical bodies, yet how much more so is sin to our spirit nature if left untended?

Mike gave us something to think about! So take a few moments now and consider the question or today...“Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?”

If you do insist on doing something about which your conscience is uneasy consider “why” you do it? What draws you? Where is the REAL struggle?

Don't forget to write down your reflections.