

Speaking to the soul



Selfishness

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. Galatians 5:16-17

It's always refreshing when you meet someone who is completely honest. The apostle Paul was such a man. In Romans 7, he gave an astonishingly frank account of how he ticked. He talked about struggling with his sinful nature. He summed it up in this way: "I want to do what is right, but I

can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway" (vv18-19). That all sounds rather bleak, doesn't it? Whoever we are, we all know how easy it is for our selfish nature to dominate our lives, even when we know that that's the wrong way to go, but we don't need to despair because God offers to lead us by his Holy Spirit. He is able to give us the wisdom and strength to choose a better way.

Paul then gave an agonising list of the destructive consequences of leaving our selfish nature in the driving seat. What's fascinating is that he wouldn't need to come up with a different list if he were addressing us today. "Sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties and other sins like these" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Paul's excitement was that it doesn't have to be this way. The Holy Spirit has set us free so that we can live a new life characterised by love and all the fruit of the Spirit. Such a life is open to all of us, but only if we are willing to be, like Paul, absolutely honest about our own weakness and our complete dependence on the Holy Spirit to help us to live this new life. We will never make it by ourselves.

QUESTION

How will you deal with your natural desire to be selfish today?

PRAYER

Loving God, I thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Help me to put him in the driving seat of my life today. Amen

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