



Habits Occur by Submission to Paths of Least Resistance & Can Only Be Overcome by Doctrine: Paul's Behavior Problem: Verb Use in Rom 7:14-25

33. Although saved, his sinful nature has for so long dictated his belief system that the lie has achieved maximum influence in the development of his behavior patterns and character traits.
34. This has resulted in a lifestyle that follows these paths of least resistance. The soul has a worldview, a philosophy, or a disposition that is in opposition to biblical truth and corresponding behavior patterns are developed in the brain.
35. The brain is an organ which is amoral. One's conscience is in the soul and gives guidance as to what is acceptable or unacceptable. When the soul's volition sends out an order to the brain, it automatically directs the body to commit the desired act. Since the brain has no veto power it does what it is told by the soul.
36. All thought, decision, and action must rely on memory that is stored in the brain's electrochemical neural pathways, i.e., its wheel-tracks.
37. When the soul repeatedly instructs the brain to execute a certain thought or action it results in the memory trace becoming larger and more efficient. This is called facilitation.
38. Continued repetition causes this memory trace to enlarge to the point that it overrides all other competitors and thus becomes the path of least resistance. Under a given set of circumstances this individual will habitually respond to given stimuli in a predictable way.
39. When this individual becomes a believer and starts to attend Bible classes he begins to inculcate doctrinal principles that call into question these facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness. These competing ideas are developing wheel-tracks of righteousness.
40. However, when certain circumstances present themselves he habitually goes back to his old way of doing things. He knows what he should do but, when under pressure, he doesn't and this becomes a source of great frustration.
41. However, continued spiritual growth will eventually facilitate the soul's wheel-tracks of righteousness to a position of dominance and they will become the paths of least resistance.
42. When this occurs it is a victory in the spiritual life as Bible study has made available to the believer the information necessary to renovate his soul and thus change his behavior, character, lifestyle, and worldview.
- 43- The coordination between the soul and the brain in the alteration of a believer's thought process and his ability to overcome habitual decisions is illustrated in the writings of Paul.
- 44- In Romans 7 we find Paul struggling with facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness while he is in the process of developing wheel-tracks of righteousness. In order to grasp the impact of this passage on our subject we must review it with an emphasis on key grammatical constructions.

Paul's Behavior Problem: the Neurological Explanation of Paul's Dilemma in Romans 7:14-25.

Restak, Richard M. *The Modular Brain: How New Discoveries in Neuroscience Are Answering Age-Old Questions about Memory, Free-Will, Consciousness, and Personal Identity.* 1st ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 120-21:



The concept of ourself as a unified, freely acting agent directing our behavior is firmly entrenched in our written and spoken language. But even a casual effort at introspection reveals that even the most balanced of us are often of two or more "minds." One part of us wants desperately to do something, while another part resists with a ferocity that leaves us feeling disjointed and conflicted. At such times we wonder if more than one person occupies our bodies.

1. Mr. Restak's "two or more 'minds'" is really the soul and brain at conflict over which worldview a person will accept. Such was the case for Paul as his emerging doctrinal inventory, which had not yet become the paths of least resistance, was being defeated by a dominant cosmic inventory which was highly facilitated.
2. This problem is presented by Paul in the grammar of Romans 7 with special emphasis on the present tense, four of which have great influence on the interpretation of this passage:
 - 1) The Progressive Present of Duration: Also called the durative present, it denotes that which has begun in the past and continues into the present.
 - 2) The Customary Present: Denotes that which habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur.
 - 3) The Tendential Present: Represents the idea of that which is inclined to occur or which tends to realization; a proneness, and inclination amounting to an impelling force. A nature characterized by having a tendency.
 - 4) The Static Present: A condition which is assumed as perpetually existing.
3. Romans 7:14-25 is studded with the use of the present tense in its various classifications. From them we will be able to see the presence of facilitated wheel-tracks which have become paths of least resistance.
4. There will be, for example, (1) the **durative** for wheel-tracks laid down in the past but whose effects continue into the present; (2) the **customary** indicating wheel-tracks whose execution habitually occurs or may be reasonably expected to occur; and (3) the **tendential** indicating a trend that causes one to become inclined toward one set of wheel-tracks as opposed to another; and (4) the **static** for wheel-tracks which are assumed to be perpetually existing thus indicating their presence in long-term memory traces.
5. As these occur in the passage we will note them and emphasize their impact on the premise of our study that the soul coordinates with the brain to facilitate behavior patterns that can only be altered by volitional consent to biblical revelation. Here we go:

Romans 7:14 - Consequently, we know, that the Law is spiritual but I am tendentially carnal [**tendential present of εἰμί, *eimi*: Paul is not in carnality as he writes but he has a tendency to become so**], I am inclined toward the trends of the sinful nature, when I have been led astray by the authority of the sinful nature.

v. 15 - For what I continuously do [**durative present of κατεργάζομαι, *katergazomai***], 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 to do [**wheel-tracks of righteousness**], these things I am tendentially not practicing [**tendential present of πράσσω, *prassō* plus the negative οὐ, *ou***], but what I detest [**wheel-tracks of wickedness**], these things I keep on persistently doing [**retroactive progressive present of ποιέω, *poieō*: action in a state of persistence**].



v. 16 - Now if I keep persistently doing [**progressive present of ποιέω, poieō**] this thing which I do not desire to do [**customary present of θέλω, thelō plus the negative οὐ, ou indicates Paul habitually desires not to do wrong but does it anyhow**], I agree with the Law that it is advantageous [**in pointing out my error**].

v. 17 - But as the case really stands, I am no longer habitually performing [**customary present of κατεργάζομαι, katergazomai**] this thing but the sinful nature which keeps on living in me [**once volitional consent is granted the sinful nature dictates the life**].

v. 18 - In fact, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh [**the sinful nature including the neurons of the brain**], there does not reside any good of intrinsic value, for the habitual desire [**customary present of θέλω, thelō**] to do the will of God is present in me, but habitual divine-good production [**customary present of κατεργάζομαι, katergazomai**] of my desire is not.