

The Attackers: Paul's Behavior Problem, Rom 7:15: the Development of Facilitated Neural Traces; Illustration: Hebrew & Greek Words for Wheel-tracks: Behavior Patterns, Character Traits, & Lifestyle; Paul's Struggles with Wheel-tracks of Wickedness, Rom 7: 21–25; the Power Struggle for the Soul: Intrinsic & Extrinsic Fifth Columns: Spiritual Growth Inside the Bubble; Divine Discipline Designed to Lead Believers to Wheel-tracks of Righteousness, Heb 12:7–13

Romans 7:15 - For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (NASB)

40. What Paul was doing was submitting to facilitated behavior patterns that were the paths of least resistance in his brain's neural pathways.
41. Neural pathways become dominant in a person's soul through repetitive use. Their use by an individual defines his character traits, behavior patterns, and lifestyle.
42. These manifestations are described in Scripture by words that relate to the cutting of ruts by the wheels of a wagon. The more trips made over those ruts the deeper the cut and the more defined the pathway becomes between one location and another.
43. Several Hebrew words communicate this idea as an illustration of a person's behavior patterns: (1) **IG*u=m^ (ma'ghal)**: "track, course, rut, path, and (2) **Er\DI (derek)**: "path, way, to walk; a path that is traveled. Most often used metaphorically to refer to the pathways of one's life, suggesting the pattern of life; the righteous life; the wicked life."¹

¹ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 638, 248–49.

44. The same is true for the New Testament Koine Greek: **(1) ἁδὸς (hodos)**: “Metaphorically meaning way, manner or means. Way of thinking, feeling, acting, manner of life and conduct. Followed by the genitive of person, the ways of someone, meaning his way of life, conduct, actions.” And **(2) τροχία (trochiá)**: “A wheel track, rut. In the New Testament, a way, path. Figuratively, ways of life and conduct.”²
45. These words’ literal and metaphorical meanings convey the idea of a person’s thinking dictating his true personality that is revealed by his behavior patterns, character traits, and lifestyle.
46. Just as wagon wheels carved wheel-tracks into the prairie between Kansas City and Santa Fé, so also the thoughts of one’s soul blaze neural “wheel-tracks” in his brain.
47. When these applications are considered while reading passages in which these words appear, we are informed about the divine opinion regarding how we think and how we act.
48. If we are in opposition to the will of God, then our brain has been programmed by our volition to facilitate what may be characterized as “wheel-tracks of wickedness.”
49. If we are in compliance with the will of God, then our brain has been programmed by our volition to facilitate what may be characterized as “wheel-tracks of righteousness.”
50. Paul relates how he came to grips with this dilemma when he wrote retrospectively in Romans 7:15. He knew his decision-making was in error: he did what he knew he shouldn’t do, but, frustrated, he did it anyhow.

² *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1026, 1396.

51. He expresses his frustration by concluding:

Romans 7:21 - I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

v. 22 - For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

v. 23 - but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

v. 24 - Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

v. 25 - Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other with my flesh the law of sin.

52. Verse 25 gives a synopsis of Paul's behavior problem:

- (1) An ongoing conflict consistently rages in the person of a believer: the sin nature is based in the body but is habitually attacking the soul.
- (2) The Word of God is retained in the *kardía* of the soul and is designed to control the body by means of resident doctrine.
- (3) For doctrine to control the body there must be the enabling power of the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- (4) This results in "serving the law of God"; the word "serve" is the present active indicative of the verb **douleúw (douleúō)**: "serving as a bond-slave."
- (5) The present tense is iterative which is "used to describe that which recurs at successive intervals, sometimes called the present of repeated action."³

³ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 184.

- (6) This indicates a facilitated wheel-track of righteousness that responds to the Holy Spirit's direction regarding the application of a pertinent doctrine.
 - (7) On the other hand, Paul confesses to the influence of the sin nature on the soul through its lust patterns.
 - (8) When a facilitated lust pattern attacks the soul the person's volition is tempted to submit to its allurements.
 - (9) If that behavior pattern remains facilitated as a path of least resistance, then the volition will usually respond and commit the sin.
 - (10) This results in the soul serving as a bond-slave to the flesh; sin is committed, fellowship is lost, the filling of the Spirit is removed, and the believer is in status quo carnality.
 - (11) Confession alone to God alone restores these divine operating assets and the believer again functions inside the bubble.
 - (12) However, until the soul is programmed with facilitated wheel-tracks of righteousness in every category of systematic theology, he is vulnerable to the attacks of the lust patterns' agents provocateurs on his soul.
 - (13) These attacks are reduced to a minimum when the believer acquires experiential sanctification (or capacity righteousness).
53. Paul relates in Romans 7 his struggles during the growth process. Some facilitated wheel-tracks were doctrinal while some were sinful.
54. The writer of Hebrews compares divine guidance with the disciplinary function of a father to a son. Just as we are corrected by our earthly fathers we in like manner are corrected by our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 12:7 - It is because of constructive discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with adult sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

v. 8 - But if you are without constructive discipline, of which all believers have become participators, then you are bastards [**unbelievers**] and not sons [**royal family of God**].

v. 9 - Furthermore, we had parents when we were young for discipline, and we respected them. To a greater degree, shall you not become subordinate to the heavenly Father of our human spirits and continue living [**avoid the sin unto death**]?

v. 10 - For our earthly parents for a short time disciplined us according to what seemed appropriate to them, but God disciplines us for our benefit in order that we might receive a share of His blessings.

v. 11 - On the one hand, all discipline while being administered seems not to be an occasion for happiness, but of sorrow. On the other hand, after having been trained by it, as is the case with physical exercise, resulting in reversion recovery, it pays back with interest facilitated wheel-tracks of righteousness.

v. 12 - Therefore, build up lost strength in the hands [**rebound reacquires divine power inside the bubble**] and the knees that are feeble [**spiritual growth restores the ability to walk in a straight line**],

v. 13 - and begin making straight paths [**troci£ (trochiá): wheel-tracks**] with your feet [**consistent renovation of the soul**], so that as a crippled believer you will not deviate [**from the Lord's purpose for your life**], but rather be healed [**through spiritual growth**]. (EXT)

55. The wheel-track illustration for facilitated neural traces in the brain was developed primarily by this clause in verse 13: "begin making straight paths with your feet."