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Meeting location  
Marshall Middle School  
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Pastor:  
John Swanson

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*Declaring the greatness of God and serving  
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*

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July 29, 1999

Dear Friend,

If you are a Christian you have had moments of complete despair as you have seen the ongoing presence of sin in your life. Your heart yearns to love Christ and to obey his commands. Yet, like the apostle Paul, you find that, "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me." (Romans 7:21) What are we to do? How do we overcome the evil that is within us and live obedient lives? In Romans 8 Paul answers that question by saying it is a work of God's grace. God, by his Holy Spirit, causes us to love His laws and then gives us the ability to begin to obey. "By the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body", according to Paul in 8:13.

What does that look like in daily living? I received help in understanding how it works while reading my Bible last week. 2 Chronicles 12:14 says this about Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, who became king after his father died, "He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the Lord." Why did Rehoboam do evil? He did evil because he did not set his heart on seeking the Lord. In other words, he lost the war against sin because he did not aggressively pursue God. **In Christian living, the best defense is a good offense.**

What does it mean to seek something or someone? A seeking person thinks a lot about that which they seek. They plan how they will obtain that which they seek. They spend time and money seeking after what they desire. They feel happy at the thought of obtaining what they seek. They persevere in the pursuit because they are so sure that to obtain what they seek will make them happy. It is easy for a seeking person to say "no" to other pleasures and activities because these do not contribute to finding what they desire. A seeking person is not motivated by external pressures or commands but by an internal desire.

When you become a Christian, you are made into a "seeking person", by the Holy Spirit. You are given a new heart that loves God and desires to know and love and obey him more (Ezekial 36: 26-27, I Peter 1:3-9, II Cor. 4: 6 & 5: 14-17). So, how do you fight against the evil that still dwells within and expresses itself in evil deeds? Give all your energy to seeking God as the treasure that will make you happy. Cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart by reading His word, praying, worshipping God with other believers on Sunday mornings and talking with other Christians on a weekly basis about Christ and his work on our behalf. We don't do these things because we think God will like us more if we do them. We do them because we are seeking to find Him to be the source of our happiness.

Next time you find yourself despairing over the evil you do, run to God and tell him you're sorry for loving sin more than you love Him and ask Him to enable you to be a person whose heart is set on seeking the Lord.

In pursuit,