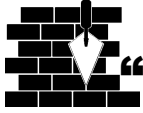


DEMAs - “My Biggest Obstacle To Spiritual Growth” - part 1
(this portion of the Leaders Guide covers questions on pp 4-7a)



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Quote)** This is a vital point in our theology of salvation and sanctification. I call this our “Edenic remnant,” that part of us that we inherited from Adam/Eve. We are now “in Christ” as believers, but we will *always* be “in Adam,” until we leave these bodies.
2. **(Q1-Phil 24)** Paul *loves* this word (*sunergos*), “fellow worker.” It is a word for two people engaged in the same labor. Of its 13x in the NT, 12 are by Paul. His “team” of fellow workers is impressive:
 - Prisca & Aquilla (Rom 16:3)
 - Urbanus (Rom 16:9)
 - Timothy (Rom 16:21)
 - Titus (2 Cor 8:23)
 - Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25)
 - Eudea, Syntyche, Clement, et al (Phil 4:3)
 - Justus (Col 4:11)
 - Philemon, Mark, Luke, Aristarchus, Demas (Phil 1,24)
3. **(Q2)** It is vital to understand what is really happening in all 3 of the uses of this verb. In all three cases, it *was not* that some-one had failed to “show up” to help. There were *already there* and left — at the point of greatest need. (Gk word, *eglataleipo* means to abandon or leave behind). This is the very thing Jesus promises to *never* do to us in Hebrews 13:5.
4. **(Q3)** The Greek word translated “the word” (ESV, NAS) and “this life” (NIV) is the Gk word, *aion*, which refers to a specific window of time; it is sometimes translated “this age.”
5. **(Q5-Jer 17)** In 6 of 8x this Hebrew word appears in our OT, it is translated “incurable.” (e.g. Job 34:6; Jer 15:18; Mic 1:9)
6. **(Q5-Ron 8:6-7)** The Greek word for “hostile” (*ekthra*) is used for Pilate and Herod’s relationship *before* to their mutual alliance against Jesus. They became friends because of their common enemy. My “hostility” with God ends when I declare *my own flesh* my enemy. God and I become agreed on this. We are now committed to destroying the same “enemy.”
7. **(Q5-1 Pet)** Peter combines “flesh” (*sarx*) with “lust/passions” (*epithumia*); this accentuates Paul’s argument that our “flesh” has desires of its own. It has its own longings, and they are and never will be good.
8. **(Q8)** Paul’s argument here is specifically addressed to a group of leaders in Corinth who are undermining his authority, and he plans to unseat them. However, the larger principles about the true nature of the Christian struggle being spiritual rather than material, are insightful and useful to us in our discussion of sanctification.
9. **(Q9)** Often, our biggest distraction from our spiritual transformation is *other believers*, who are less committed to Christ, but very influential in our lives for a host of reasons (social, family, business, etc.)
10. **(Q8)** Paul’s argument here is specifically addressed to a group of leaders in Corinth who are undermining his authority, and he plans to unseat them. However, the larger principles about the true nature of the Christian struggle being spiritual rather than material, are insightful and useful to us in our discussion of sanctification.



“Stumbling Stones”

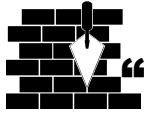
1. **(Q2)** Even though we can never comprehend it, Jesus *was* abandoned by the Father on the cross for our salvation. He endured the wrath of God for sin. It is an insult to His deity to say, “*God the Father could never desert God the Son! Jesus only felt abandoned.*”
2. **(Q4)** Paul’s use of the Greek word, *sarx* is not always consistent. If the context is theological, then he’s speaking of our “sinful nature,” our Edenic remnant. But, in other places, Paul is merely speaking about our physical selves, our bodies (e.g. Phil 16). In short, context must always be my guide in determining meaning on this word (*as any word!*).
3. **(Q5-Jer 13)** Being able to agree with this statement without reservation is essential to understanding the Gospel. My sinfulness is not a description of how I live. It is the definition of who I am. To reject this is to minimize the work of Christ. Paul’s lament at the end of Romans 7, “*...o wretched man that I am...*” must be mine too.
4. **(Q5-Rom 7:22-23)** Paul is speaking here about *two* “delights,” not one. That is the implication of the contrast he portrays. There exists one set of “delights” in me, even as a Christian; a “delight” in sin. Admitting this is a vital first step in knowing *how* to put the “flesh” to death.
5. **(Q8)** This is an excellent example of Paul using the word “flesh” in a *non*-theological manner, even though he’s talking about spiritual warfare.
6. **(Q9)** Isolating and defining the metaphors is crucial for accurately answering this question. Make sure you’ve done so yourself.



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q5)** How close is my assessment of my own condition to that of Paul’s in Romans 7:18?
2. **(Q5)** When I read that my heart is “deceitful” what do I think of being deceived *about* first, *myself* or something or someone else?
3. **(Q5)** Am I a sinner because I sin, or do I sin because I am a sinner?
4. **(Q7)** Look at the contrast between God’s command to King Saul regarding the Amalekites and what he actually did (1 Samuel 15:1-3,9). How does this illustrate our typical approach to dealing with sin versus God’s desire for us?
5. **(Q9)** What did you put for these 3 metaphors?
6. **(Q9-2 Tim)** Paul didn’t seem to see “retirement” as a part of the Christian’s life. In what ways are we tempted to “retire” as we get older?
7. **(Q10)** What was your summary?

DEMAS - “My Biggest Obstacle To Spiritual Growth” - part 2
(this portion of the Leaders Guide covers questions on pp 7-9)



“Building Blocks”

1. **(Q5)** How close is my assessment of my own condition to that of Paul’s in Romans 7:18?
2. **(Q5)** When I read that my heart is “deceitful” what do I think of being deceived *about* first, *myself* or something or someone else?
3. **(Q5)** Am I a sinner because I sin, or do I sin because I am a sinner?
4. **(Q7)** Look at the contrast between God’s command to King Saul regarding the Amalekites and what he actually did (1 Samuel 15:1-3,9). How does this illustrate our typical approach to dealing with sin versus God’s desire for us?
5. **(Q9)** What did you put for these 3 metaphors?
6. **(Q9-2 Tim)** Paul didn’t seem to see “retirement” as a part of the Christian’s life. In what ways are we tempted to “retire” as we get older?
7. **(Q10)** What was your summary?



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q1-last)** There is a trend in our culture to always be “working on” some area of my life. This is likely a carryover from the triumph of psychology over faith. Paul’s statement in vs 15 counters this notion with the truth of pursuing “Jesus-ness” and letting *God* be the One who reveals sin or wrong direction to me. Rather than *looking* for weaknesses to fix, or sins to abandon, He wants me to pursue my transformation and leave the revelation of sin to Him! However, this promise of God (via Paul) is *not* unconditional. It is for those who “are mature.”
2. **(Q2)** We must be careful to remind ourselves that Jesus died so I wouldn’t *have to*, but he suffered so that I’d *know how to* (1 Pet 2:21-24; Heb 12:1-3). Suffering is vital for sanctification. To relegate suffering to the “work of the Devil” is to mock the purpose of the suffering of Jesus. He did *not* need to suffer for my sins. He suffered, in a very real sense, for my *sanctification*.



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q4)** Is sanctification “optional” for believers? In other words, is it for those who really want to “go deep with God?” (NOTE: Surely I am free to choose, but this is *not* a choice between two neutral alternatives like flavors of ice cream. It’s a choice between obedience and disobedience.)
3. **(Q5b)** If I am *not* familiar with Scripture, what are the other sources for my knowledge of God and His character? (NOTE: We tend to “deduce” what God is like from our circumstances and our feelings and conclusions.)
4. **(Q7)** How did you respond to both parts of this question?
5. **(Q7 & 8)** Do you see a connection between your responses to these two questions? (NOTE: I will either focus my thoughts/prayers on what *wrong* in me (Edenic), or what God *longs* for in me (Jesus).)
6. **(Q9)** Break-up into pairs and share your responses to Question 9. Pray for each other today and the rest of the week, and set a day this week when you will *call* (not email) each other for accountability.