

Title: It's Easy – Romans 7 13-25

Read:

¹³I can already hear your next question: "Does that mean I can't even trust what is good [that is, the law]? Is good just as dangerous as evil?" No again! Sin simply did what sin is so famous for doing: using the good as a cover to tempt me to do what would finally destroy me. By hiding within God's good commandment, sin did far more mischief than it could ever have accomplished on its own. ¹⁴⁻¹⁶I can anticipate the response that is coming: "I know that all God's commands are spiritual, but I'm not. Isn't this also your experience?" Yes. I'm full of myself—after all, I've spent a long time in sin's prison. What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary. ¹⁷⁻²⁰But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. ²¹⁻²³It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. ²⁴I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? ²⁵The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

Think:

Wow these people are in a bad way. They decide to do the right thing, but when it comes down to it they stuff up and do the wrong thing. It's a good job that we would never do that. I mean we would never decide to help our family out and not get mad with them, and then the next minute shout at our brother or sister, would we? I don't know about you but I would never decide to read my Bible every day and then wake up in the morning too tired to get out of bed. Ok, ok I hear what you are saying. Yes I know I frequently decide to do the right thing, but when it comes down to it I am too scared, tired, frustrated or plain lazy to do it. That's because I like you have a natural tendency to take the easy path, and doing the right thing isn't the easy path. Chatting to someone at college who everyone else ignores isn't the easy thing to do. Praying for someone when they tell you about their problems isn't the easy thing to do. But these things are the right things to do, and often we need more than our own strength to do them. Just as we are told here, it doesn't matter that we find it hard to do the right thing, that's why Jesus came. When you are offered drink or drugs that you know you shouldn't have and you feel that you are going to do the easy thing, cry out at that moment and ask for his help. Whenever you face a decision that is hard to resist, the good news is that you have help from the creator of the universe. Now that makes making the right decision the easy thing to do.

Pray:

. Lord I simply ask that in the times when I am going to take the easy option rather than the right option that you use your Holy Spirit to prompt me and help me. Amen.

Action:

Have you checked out the aftershock website. Go to aftershock.org.uk and check it out. You can read or listen to more devos and leave your thoughts on what they mean to you. Go on check it out and leave a comment today. Bye.