

Romans 7:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Analysis

If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.—Symphēmi (σύμφημι, "agree with/consent to") means to acknowledge jointly. The very fact that Paul does what he hates proves he agrees with law's goodness—his will aligns with law even when his performance falls short. This is crucial evidence for the regenerate interpretation: the unregenerate don't consent that law is good; they're hostile to God's law (Romans 8:7).

This verse demonstrates the regenerate heart's fundamental orientation toward God's standard despite failure to achieve it consistently. The problem isn't will-alignment (which regeneration accomplished) but power-deficit (which Spirit-empowerment addresses, chapter 8). The believer's struggle isn't whether to obey but how to accomplish the obedience desired.

Historical Context

Paul continues building his case that this conflict characterizes Christian, not pre-Christian, experience. Agreement with law's goodness marks regenerate hearts; the unregenerate mind is 'enmity against God' (8:7). This distinction matters enormously for pastoral care—believers struggling with sin need encouragement and power (Spirit), not regeneration (they have it).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that your struggle with sin actually evidences regenerate consent to God's law encourage you?
2. What's the difference between failing to achieve what you desire versus not desiring God's standard at all?
3. How might misdiagnosing regenerate struggle as unregenerate rebellion lead to either despair or works-righteousness?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	ὃ	οὐ	θέλω	τοῦτο	ποιῶ	σύμφημι	τῷ
If	then	which	not	I would	that	I do	I consent	G3588
G1487	G1161	G3739	G3756	G2309	G5124	G4160	G4852	
νόμῳ	ὅτι	καλός						
unto the law	that	it is good						
G3551	G3754	G2570						

Additional Cross-References

Romans 7:12 (Word): Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Romans 7:14 (Word): For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

1 Timothy 1:8 (Word): But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

