

# Romans 7:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

## Analysis

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**For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.**

—This verse reinforces v. 15's chiasmic structure, emphasizing the painful contradiction between regenerate desire and imperfect performance. Agathon (ἀγαθόν, "good") contrasts with kakon (κακόν, "evil")—moral opposites that mark the battlefield of Christian experience.

The repetition isn't redundant but emphatic: this conflict is real, ongoing, and characteristic of authentic Christian life. Paul doesn't minimize sin's remaining power or pretend sanctification means instant victory. Instead, he honestly portrays the warfare described in Galatians 5:17: "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This realism prevents both perfectionist pride and antinomian resignation.

## Historical Context

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Paul's transparent acknowledgment of ongoing moral struggle would resonate with honest believers while exposing perfectionist pretensions. The New Testament consistently portrays sanctification as progressive warfare (Philippians 3:12-14, 1 John 1:8), not instantaneous arrival. Paul's realism provides pastoral comfort without excusing sin or lowering God's standard.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's repeated emphasis on this conflict help you avoid either perfectionist presumption or defeatist resignation?
2. Where do you most acutely feel the gap between what you desire (good) and what you accomplish (sometimes evil)?
3. How might accepting this tension as normal Christian experience free you to fight sin vigorously without crushing self-condemnation?

## Interlinear Text

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οὐ	γὰρ	ὃ	θέλω	ποιῶ	ἀγαθόν	ἀλλ'	ὃ	οὐ	θέλω
<b>not</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>I would</b>	<b>I do</b>	<b>the good</b>	<b>but</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>I would</b>
G3756	G1063	G3739	G2309	G4160	G18	G235	G3739	G3756	G2309

κακὸν	τοῦτο	πράσσω
<b>the evil</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>I do</b>
G2556	G5124	G4238

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 7:15** (Parallel theme): For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.