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SISTER SANDPAPER

We have all had that person in our lives that rubs us the wrong way. You know the one, that we avoid if we see them. Perhaps we walk on the opposite side of the street, so we don't have to speak with them. Or maybe we sit away from them in church because we want to avoid any conversation with them.

They seem to always rub us the wrong way. They show up at work, and at church, and at school and restaurants. It seems that we just can't get away from them.

Years ago, a preacher gave a sermon about this. He shared that there will be two kinds of people that come into our lives. One will always say the right thing and make us feel so good, while the other rubs us the wrong way. But that person is sanding off our "rough edges." He called them "sister sandpaper."

People laughed at this statement, but it is true. When something irritates us, it is a giant in our life that controls us. We may react with anger or become very defensive. It shows us our maturity level.

You see, my friend, it is our old nature that is being irritated. You know that nature, the one that we are supposed to crucify daily, and not let us be controlled by it. Paul talked about this in Romans 7:23-24, ***"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"***

Paul's old nature tried to "resurrect" also, and he struggled with it. He wrote this to the Roman Christians to let them realize that there was hope. In Romans 8:1-2 he continues on with this same thread, ***"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."***

Paul is letting us know that sin is wrong but that we are not to be condemned by it if we repent and walk in the Spirit. There will continually be a war between the old and new natures until we leave our mortal bodies at death.

I believe that God allows "sister sandpaper" in our lives so we can see that we have not crucified certain areas of our lives. When "sister sandpaper" does rub us and we don't react to it then we know that our flesh is crucified. This is the body of death Paul spoke of. He wanted that old nature to stay "dead."

God's word gives us the hope that Paul also had these issues, but that when we follow after the Spirit and not the flesh then we aren't condemned. Some bibles (NIV and others) leave out part

of verse 1. I find that very wrong. They read, ***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*** They leave out the part about that says, ***“that walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”*** When we continuously follow after the flesh as Paul puts it in Romans 7:23, it puts us back under the law, then condemnation comes. This will only change when there is repentance.

I must say we should be glad then that “sister sandpaper” is allowed in our lives, so we grow in faith and walk after the Spirit, and not the flesh.