

Today's Quick Word Romans 13:14

By Bruce Christian

ROMANS 13:14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

When we realise our need of a Saviour, someone who can rescue us from the power and eternal consequences of our sin-ridden human nature, and when we turn to Jesus in repentance-and-faith, since he is the only One who can effect this rescue through his sinless life, his substitutionary, sacrificial death, and his glorious resurrection from the dead - when we make the decision to acknowledge Jesus as our Saviour-and-Lord, that is when the real fight with temptation and sin begins! Satan is not particularly interested in beguiling the descendants of Adam who are still comfortable in their native, 'fallen' condition. But he IS most concerned about those who have dared to go over to 'the other side'! (C.S.Lewis shows the reality of this spiritual battle in his "Screwtape Letters".) So, just as the Apostles Peter and James felt constrained to warn their believing readers to "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8), and to "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7), the Apostle Paul had to warn the Christians in Rome about the same issue. The

two aspects of his advice/warning are very helpful: "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ", and "Do not [even] think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature". I inserted the word 'even' because I think that is what Paul is trying to get across. Satan knows that he is in the box seat when it comes to tempting us and manipulating our lives, because he knows that our fallen natures are already predisposed to sin; so if he can occupy our mind with these things his battle is half won! James put it like this: "but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (James 1:14-15). The Author of Hebrews summarises both these points in these words: "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1b-2). So let us resolve to remain alert to Satan's schemes, to always 'nip them in the bud' at the 'thinking' stage, and to labour in prayer as Paul prayed for the Philippians that 'Christ will be formed in us' (Galatians 4:19).