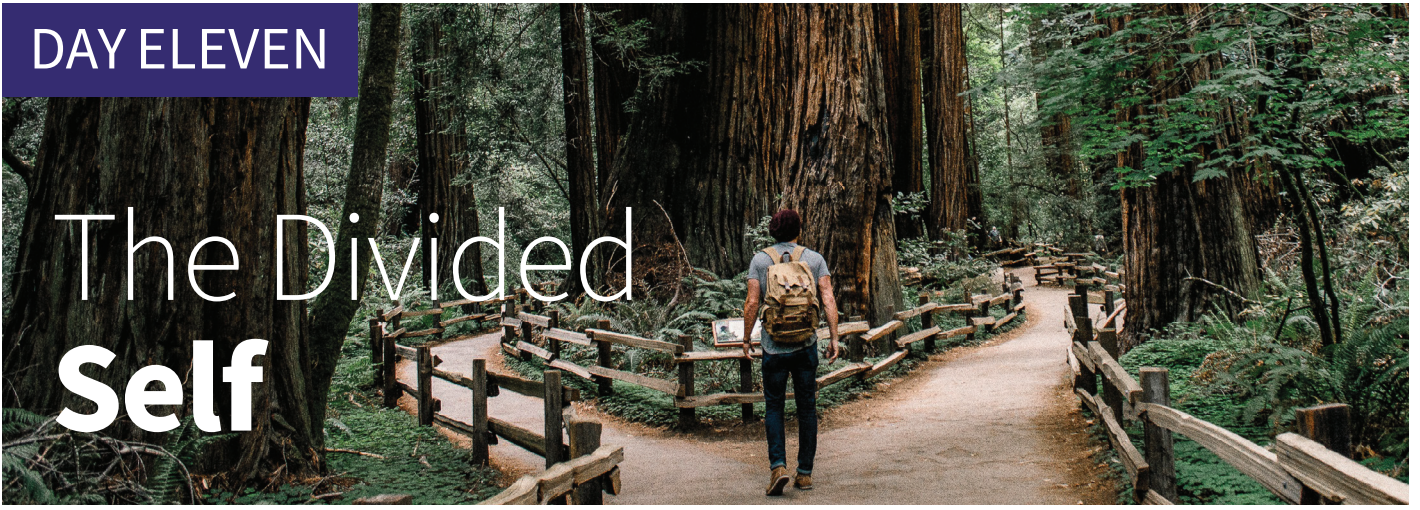


# The Divided Self



*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

*So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

*So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.*

### ROMANS 7:15-25

Have you ever said, “I’m in two minds about that!”? Sometimes we find ourselves torn between what we’d like to do, and what we think we should do. Most of us can remember times when we made the wrong choice. We were selfish, and others paid the price; or we went for short term gains, knowing full well that we would regret it long term.

Human beings have a unique capacity to reflect upon their own actions and to wish that they were other than they find themselves to be. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous are told: you cannot do this on your own,

we need a “higher power” to rescue us from ourselves. As Christians, this is foundational to our faith. St Paul found this help in the grace of God that he encountered in Jesus.

Being a Christian does not mean that the struggle is over. In a sense, we are all addicted, and we all need this grace; we all struggle within ourselves against the “evil that lies close at hand”. Being a Christian is about recognising our need for that grace, about seeking it out, and welcoming it into our lives. God wants to be partners with us in rescuing us from ourselves.

## A “Have a Go” habit: An honest emotional inventory

- Step 4 of the 12 step programme is “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” Try making your own moral inventory. Perhaps just look at the last 24 hours, or limit your inventory to one area of your life (work, family, or friends). Be honest – and be sure to include the positive as well as the negative.
- Write down one thing that you really like about yourself, and one thing that you dislike. Sometimes it can be hard to accept that we are not perfect. Ask God to help you to develop your strengths and to find ways to overcome your weaknesses.
- Use [Psalm 103:1](#) “Bless the Lord Oh my soul and **all that is within me** bless His Holy name” to offer God all that is within you.