

## Dan's Devotion: The Polar Bear Club (Take 2)

Some of you might remember last year in one of my devotions I told you about my polar bear club experience. This is where you jump into extremely cold water. I'm not quite sure the reasoning behind this other than brain damage, but recently I was back at it again. We were down in Joplin, Missouri for a family gathering of my wife's side of the family. It was the weekend that it was really cold here in Iowa. It wasn't quite as cold there, but it was still plenty cold at about 20 degrees F., which was quite a bit colder than it was last year when I made the plunge. Several of the guys in the family dove in and swam across the pool once again. We at least were smart enough to take the tarp off the pool this year so we could pop up if we needed to. I was able to make it the whole length of the pool underwater though, so my brain was good and frozen by the time I popped out. I know. I know. Some of you are saying, "Dan, you really are part of the slow learners club. What is the matter with you?" Well, I often ask myself that same question, but I haven't come up with any good answers yet.

Physically, I am part of the slow learners club, but sometimes I feel that way spiritually as well. Why do I continue to struggle with things that I have struggled with for a long time? I don't think I'm alone. In fact, Paul asked this same question in Romans 7. Here is part of the passage, "*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.*" (vs. 15-18).

Sin can be a pretty frustrating thing at times. Thankfully, we have a God full of grace and mercy who doesn't throw us out even when we fail him over and over again. We need to just keep giving our struggles over to God and let him help us instead of trying to take care of it on our own power. There is hope as we are promised in the very familiar verse of Philippians 4:13 "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" Don't give up. Lean on God and he will carry you through even when you are a little brain damaged like me.

Keep on servin'

Dan Toney