

Chapter 7

Verse 13- *Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.*

How can something good and holy like the law bring death? It doesn't. It is our transgression of the law (sin) that brings death. The law unmasks sin and gives it definition. It draws boundary lines that people cross.

The law simply shows us that sin is inescapable.

Chapter 7

Verse 14- *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin.*

Paul's thesis in verse 13: The law is not bad, it's good and holy because it shows us our true relationship to God.

A lost person? An immature believer? A mature believer?

Paul's problem is our problem. We were once dead in sin. Once we are saved, we have a new, spiritual nature that now wars with our old sinful self. Before there was no option- we were a slave to sin. Now, there is an option, but also a battle that is never won until we are glorified by Christ at death or the rapture.

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Verse 15- *For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate.*

For - Paul uses this a lot to show that what is coming is connected to what he just wrote. Although we have been freed from sin's power and authority, we continue to live under its powerful influence voluntarily.

We don't do what we want to do, and we do the things that we hate because we are divided by our desire to do right and wrong.

Romans 8:23- "We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, **the redemption of our bodies.**"

Chapter 7

Verse 16- *However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good.*

Even though we do things we know are wrong, it doesn't make the Law bad because the Law reflects the nature of God, which is good.

We know the Law is good, but we do bad anyway at times, even when we don't want to.

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Verse 17- *But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.*

Even though we are no longer slaves to sin, it can have a powerful influence over us.

Paul is not saying that he is not responsible for his sin. His problem is that at times, he succumbs to his flesh and commits sin against the law.

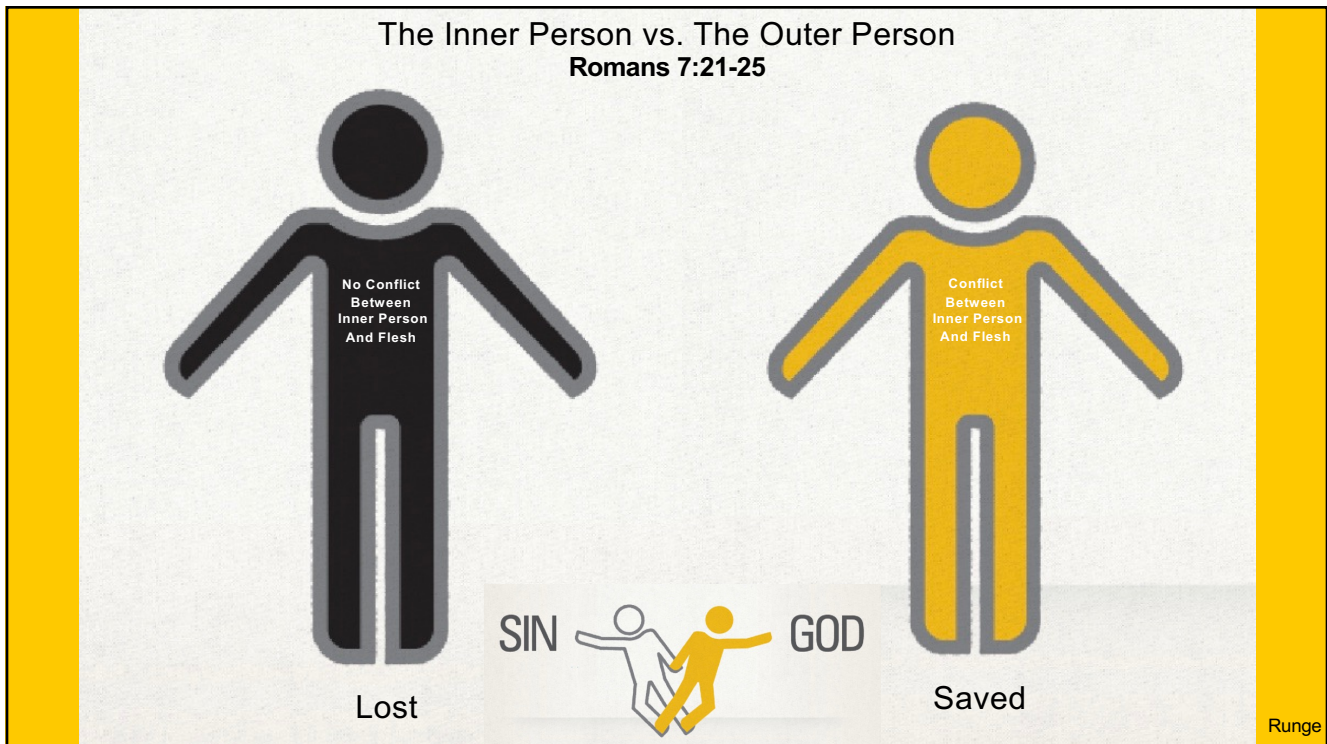
Paul used to be a slave to sin- it was the landlord in his body, but now it acts as a squatter who won't leave. (Morris)

Chapter 7

Verse 18- *For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

Paul describes his flesh, but not in a Gnostic sense (flesh is inherently evil). We might do good deeds in the flesh, but our flesh cannot fulfill the requirements of the law.

We have an inner person (soul) and an outer person (flesh). Our inner person was dead, and our outer person was decaying, so there was no conflict between the two. God provided life for our inner person, but our outer person is now at war with our inner person.



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Verse 19- *For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.*

This is a restatement of verse 15. It is the struggle of every believer to voluntarily give into our fleshly desires. We want to be at peace, but we get angry. We want to be committed to the truth but lie. We want to be honest but steal, etc. We allow our flesh to lead us into sin.

Chapter 7

Verse 20- *But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.*

Paul repeats the idea in verse 17. It's true that Paul (and every believer) has been freed from slavery to sin, but he continued to experience the powerful temptation to sin to which he sometimes succumbed.

It was Paul's flesh that desired to sin and then sinned.

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Verse 21- *I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.*

Even after we are saved, we still battle our flesh. There is a law in the sense of the Mosaic law, but here, Paul writes of a principle greater than the ten commandments.

The principle is: When we want to do what is right (the law), evil is nearby and tempts us to do wrong.

Every time Paul wants to do right, evil is right there with him to offer an alternative.

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Verse 22- *For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person,*

Only someone who is saved would agree (“delight”) and want to follow God’s commands. Paul had a true desire to do what was right in his inner person.

This “inner man” is not the same idea described by Greek philosophers (Plato- *The Republic* – “the just man”). It is his heart, his true desire, his saved soul that now is a slave to Christ.

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Verse 23- *but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body’s parts.*

There is a law of sin and a law of God. The law of sin is “in” but not “of” the parts of Paul’s body. Our bodies are not inherently evil but a tool evil uses (not Gnosticism).

For the lost person, there is no war, just captivity, and surrender. When we are saved, we begin to war against evil which begins in our mind and is enacted in our body.

Chapter 7

Verse 24- *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

Grammatically, Paul uses the first-person, singular, present-tense voice in this passage. He is describing himself after salvation. Although he has been freed from slavery to sin, he has not lost his desire to sin, but he now has a choice to volunteer to sin or not.

He is either crying out to be released from his flesh beyond the reach of his own sinful desires or for the Holy Spirit to give him the power to overcome sin. The answer is in the next verse!

Chapter 7

Verse 25- *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

Who will set Paul free from his body of sin? The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord!

Jesus is the answer before and after salvation. Only God can release a lost person from the slavery to sin or to a Christian the power to set aside the desire to sin and to do what is good and right.

Next week...
Chapter 8a:
**“Deliverance From
Bondage”**

