



The hardest lesson for Christians is found here. We should expect an intense, internal struggle. We will never arrive at a stage (in this life) where we do not wrestle with the deceitfulness of sin.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Romans 7:14-8:4

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do -- this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God -- through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

What is the significance of the shift in pronouns from 7:1-6 and this section?

How many times is the pronoun "I" used here?

Is there any difference in Paul's use of "I" here as contrasted with Galatians 2:17-21?

How does the law, which is supposed to lead to life, actually lead to death?

How do verses 14-20 answer this question?

Prior to Paul's conversion, how must he have felt about the inner struggle described here? How did he try to deal with it then (see Philippians 3:4-6)?

What did he find in Christ?

From 8:1-4, how would you explain the gospel to someone who senses he or she is not "good enough" for God?

How is "no condemnation" related to the idea of justification?

What is difference in the question, "Who will rescue me?" (vs. 24) from, "What must I do?" Why does Paul ask the first one?

Why are there no "I's" in chapter 8?

Since we are not "under the law", how should a Christian relate to the Law? (see 8:4)

LIFE RESPONSE: What Does it Mean to Me?

In verse 18, Paul comes to the real conclusion: “There is no good in this flesh.’ As long as we are in these bodies, sin is in them, too.

In what ways, or areas, are you aware of this struggle in your life? (i.e., the harder you try, the worse it gets?)

What, or who, has helped you see some progress?

The Problem:

paraphrase 7:14-25 in one sentence.

The Solution:

paraphrase 8:1-4 in one sentence.

“There are teachers who teach that this passage in Romans 7 is something a Christian goes through but once. Then he gets out of it and moves into Romans 8, never to return to Romans 7 again. Nothing could be further from the truth! Even as mighty a man as Paul went through it again and again. This is a description of what every believer will go through many times in his experience because sin has the power to deceive us and to cause us to trust in ourselves, even when we are not aware we are doing so. The law is what will expose that evil force and drive us to this place of wretchedness that we might then, in devotion of spirit, cry out, Lord Jesus, it is your problem; you take it!”

Ray Stedman

“In Romans 7 & 8, Paul shows us what it means for a flawed human being to love a holy God. In Romans 7, Paul pulls out all the stops. With remarkable candor, the apostle exposes in himself the rationalizations most of us revert to after failure.

Bible scholars differ on exactly what time period Paul is describing (pre-, mid, or post-conversion) but his personal struggle moves the discussion from the question “Why be good?” to the next level, “How can we be good?” Even if we want to love and follow God, and have the purest motives, sometimes it seem utterly impossible.

Reading Romans 7, I hear echoes of the stories I have heard while visiting 12-step groups. “I mean well, but something just takes over ... I know I made a vow last week, but I just slipped, that’s all ... This thing’s a disease, and it won’t go away.” Anyone who has struggled with addiction can recognize the raw reality in Paul’s struggle with sin. We are born on an incline slanting away from God. Sin, like gravity, presses down relentlessly.”

Philip Yancey