

Romans Chapter 7
New American Standard Bible®

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Romans Chapter 7

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

¹⁶But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. ¹⁷So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵Thanks 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.

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¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

Paul points out our chief problem with obedience. The law is spiritual (it goes to the very heart of our being) and we are of the flesh. Our spirit understands the Law and the need to follow God's desires for us. The Law shows us exactly how powerful and dangerous our nature is. It convicts us of our need for help. We can understand why our lives would be better through obedience to the Law, but that is not our nature. By nature (the sin in us) we do the very things we know are wrong. They are not the way we want to be, and we wind up doing the exact things we hate.

In previous sections, Paul has written to the Romans in the past tense, commenting on what they were. He now writes in the present tense. How he is and how they (we) are.

The Law is spiritual and we are carnal. Paul describes the carnal side of our lives very well.

- We were sold into bondage into sin
- We do things we do not understand (the what we do and the why we do it)
- There is a way we want to live, yet we do not live that way.
- Instead of living the way we want, we act exactly the opposite

We know better. We know the outcome and yet we still sin. How can this be explained?

¹⁶But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. ¹⁷So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul says that after accepting Christ as Lord and Master, it is no longer his old nature, but the sin that dwells in him. This is the problem with Christians who try (on their power) to base their lives on compliance with (obedience to) the Law, thinking that everything is based on that measure.

As redeemed (saved) spirits, we have the desire to do what God wants – to follow the Law, and we find we are still unable to meet His desire for our lives – obedience to the Law. And there is something else in us that rises up and under its control, we find ourselves doing the very things we know are wrong – the very things we do not want to do. Paul says, this is the sin in us that is acting. As the redeemed, we are two natures:

1. The “I” that wants to do what God wants
2. The “I” that still does the exact things God doesn’t want

How can this be? We are spirit, soul and body. The redeemed spirit never wants to do what is in opposition to God’s desire, but the body is still captive (under the influence) of sin. There is a great power within us and that power absolutely wants things other than God’s desire for us.

Jesus likely said exactly this in Matthew 5:30

“And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

In Christ’s opinion, there are things inside of us that cause us to stumble. They are serious and we must deal with them.

¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul would not have written this without long thought and self contemplation, but he writes the exact truth about us when he evaluates himself. At our core, we are flawed. Our body is subject to all of the problems of a lost world and we (body – not spirit) are subject to those pulls that would take us away from God. Paul says it very well:

“the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”

So we must deal with this sin in us that constantly pulls us away from what the spirit knows is good and right for us.

²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Here is the fight we fight each day. We know what is inside of us. Our Spirit wants God's will for us and our Body seeks the opposite.

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

Here is our cry of desperation. "I am wretched!" "There is no way I can win this battle." Who will help me?"

Paul knows there is no way he (or we) can win this battle alone. He must have help. By himself, his strength, his power, he will lose the battle.

Jesus gave us the answer in the sermon on the mount:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," (Matthew 5:3)

And Paul knows this, too. We find ourselves at a point of self failure and at that point we call out for help. We confess that we are not enough alone for the battle, and at that point, God gives us the answer.

²⁵Thanks 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.

Here is the answer:

God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

As long as we are self sufficient, we doom ourselves to ongoing failure of self against sin. It is only when we reach out to God that we achieve victory. It comes only from Him, through the Lordship of Jesus Christ

"Who will set me free from the body of this death?"

Jesus Christ – He has already done it. We attain victory when he becomes our Lord.

Not my words:

"We are no longer under the Law. That is the fact. We have arrived at a different situation; we are married to Christ, Christ risen from the dead. That means we must no longer think, "I am a poor, struggling, bewildered disciple, left alone to wrestle against these powerful urges." We must now begin to think, "No, I am a free son of God, living a normal human life. I am dead to sin, and dead to the Law, because I am married to Christ. His power is mine, right at this moment. And though I may not feel a thing, I have the power to say, "No!" and walk away and be free, in Jesus Christ."

Romans Chapter 7 is our life as Christians. It is the word we need to wrap our heart and mind and lives around. We are no longer married to sin. We are no longer under the certain failure of compliance with the Law. We have Christ as our savior and Lord. We live, able to call on him at any moment, in any circumstance and receive his power,

power that we will never have on our own and power that is more than sufficient to overcome and pull of the world on our spirit and soul.

That is Chapter 7 of Romans.