

## [Romans 7:7 – 25]

-----

~ Do you remember how enthused you were when you first became a Christian? Do you remember thinking to yourself, “.... *I wonder why no one has ever seen these spiritual truths before?*” You probably felt like you could handle the world on your own. Then, there came a failure or disappointment in your life, and that outlook somehow diminished and faded. I have come to the conclusion that this is the process God uses in the testing of every genuine believer; and it repeats with diminishing cyclical frequency as we grow in the grace, knowledge and discernment of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ in the Word of God. If we do not rightly divide Holy Writ, our problems compound continually in myriad ways until every aspect of our existence is absolutely beyond control.

That’s the problem the apostle Paul had as he struggled to write through this section of Romans. We could title this report “***The Struggle of the Saved Soul!***” Most people know this section of Scripture but I *NEVER – NEVER* see this collection of verses or this theology quoted in any meaningful connection in the church today. In fact, the doctrine we are going to examine in this report has been totally and completely shut out from society; and you can forget about discussing this part of the Bible in *ANY* religious circle. Interestingly, most fundamental conservative scholars consider this the key chapter in the epistle to the Romans. Our safari reports in Romans have been blunt, stark, terse, hurtful, real and almost complicated. This report will be all of those things to the tenth power — except this one *won’t* be complicated. This one may read a bit *too* simply for some readers.

Our previous report dealt with the first few verses from this chapter, and it revealed to us the shackles of a saved soul. Christ died to remove our guilt of sin, and He rose again that we might be joined to a living Savior! The so-called Christian Life is a life whereby Christ lives His life through us. There is *no possible way* we can do it ourselves or make it on our own volition in this life. Do you feel like you have done a pretty good job in your life? Guess what; God gave you everything you have! The Lord Jesus Christ said,

*“without Me ye can do NOTHING.”* This also means you cannot live by the law, either. The law is a ministry unto condemnation. If you have not read our previous report, I suggest you go back and do so now....

***7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.***

***8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.***

~ Let's keep this in perspective, friends: there is nothing wrong with the Mosaic System of Levitical Law. The problem is us; because we can't keep it. Here, Paul asks again, *“... what shall we say then?”* Well, what CAN we say is always my question? In the first part of this chapter, Paul seems to say sin and the law are on par! If release from sin means release from the law, then are they not the same? No, the law is good, and it is part of God's plan, purpose and will. The law reveals His will. Again, there is nothing wrong with the law; the difficulty is in our disobedient hearts! The flesh is at fault for the problems in our lives. Every time.

This is where Paul becomes extremely personal and begins use of the personal pronouns *“I,” “me”* and *“my”* for the first time. Here, Paul makes reference to himself forty-seven times in a very little space. *“I”* appears twenty-eight times – this is the struggle Paul had within himself. Paul tried to live for God in the power of his new nature, and he found it a disastrous experiment of total failure. The law was an x-ray of his heart; which showed Paul the exceeding sinfulness of sin, my beloved! We had better make very sure we are using the Word of God as a *mirror* to examine the problem of sin in *OUR OWN* lives – *NOT* in the life of another person. That is where *“religion”* goes so horribly wrong. This is why the church is failing a lost and dying world.

It is amazing how strongly people desire admiring themselves. Pictures, video's, staring in the mirror – but *NOT* the mirror of the Word of God! They'll have no part of that. It's amazing how many physical mirrors there really are in society. I think men look in the mirror more often than women

do, too, by the way. A mirror will reveal the spot on our face, but we don't use the mirror to clean the spot off. The law of God cannot clean us up, but it can show us our dirty spots. The place where we are cleansed of our sins is at the Fountain filled with Blood drawn from Immanuel's veins.

The law revealed the exceeding sinfulness of sin; which is its primary function. The admonition of prohibition in the Mosaic Law makes clear the weakness of the flesh. It shows we are abject sinners. The Word of God reveals us as lost, awful sinners, friends. You will find nothing in the Mosaic Law except condemnation and judgment against sin....

***9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.***

***10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.***

~ This is the tragedy of any person who seeks to live by the law today! God did say *"this do and live"* in Leviticus chapter eighteen verse five; but the *"doing"* was where they failed! So, we're right back to square one. The problem is not in the law; the problem is the heart of the one who thinks the law will bring life and power! It did neither — but, rather, revealed the weakness and total inability in man due to his sin. Condemnation and death are the end result of the law. Paul will later say, *"... if there were a law of life that God could have given then He would have done so."*

Well, neither our life nor our Christian life comes by the law. See, a new car in the hands of an experienced driver can be a wonderful thing. However, in the wrong hands — that of an inexperienced and incapable driver — a new car is dangerous. Of course, it can easily become a death dealing instrument. The problem is not with the car — the problem is with the driver. That is the same problem man has — he is at fault and is to blame for the conditions of his life on this earth today — which isn't good. Many people still talk about gun control, for example; but what we need is *man* control. Everyone knows guns don't kill — people do — man does — because man is a sinner. Alarmingly, there is no plan even being discussed in sociology, politics, the ministry nor in *ANY* field today about controlling

man. We want to control the drug – gun – food – information – misinformation – [insert other worldly problem here]....

***11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.***

~ Sin tempts every man outside the Garden of Eden relative to his walk with God. In the Garden of Eden, Satan caused Eve to believe that God couldn't be trusted. Satan tricked man into thinking man could be his own god apart from the True and Living God. Sin is like a pied piper, playing a piece that says if we follow the law, God is not needed. This is the false trail the Bible speaks of many times; the way which leads to death. Paul said he was ordained to life, and he found out he was being led to death – after suffering what great things he did for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ! In the end, sin will kill – every time. Now, the law brought us knowledge of sin, so the law is without excuse. Again, the difficulty is not with the law the difficulty is with *YOU* – and me....

***12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.***

***13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.***

~ The problem is a humanity problem, friends. Man is the “x” in the equation of life. Man is the uncertain one; the one who is inconsistent and cannot be trusted or depended on — and this brings us to a very strange paradox. Do we have a perversion of a good thing here? The commandment was totally incapable of communicating life. Man must have recourse help from the outside because the commandment intensified the awfulness of sins....

***14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.***

~ Notice verse fourteen says “we know....I am carnal....under sin.” That was the general agreement amongst believers regarding the apostle Paul. The

law amongst believers is spiritual in the sense that it was given by the Holy Spirit. It certainly is part of the Word of God! When Paul writes to the Corinthians he says, “... and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” See, the “Rock” is called “spiritual!” The obvious inference is that it was produced by the Holy Spirit. In the wilderness, the children of Israel had spiritual meat and spiritual drink, and the Spirit of God provided it! Paul says he is “carnal” and of the flesh. We have already considered how man is hopelessly contaminated with sin! That is a premise now. Some people make horrible choices marking their bodies and twisting or cutting them and everything else; well, it’s all fun and games as a child, but look at them fifty years later. It’s not pretty! The flesh has no good capabilities or possibilities on its own towards God.

We have seen ad infinitude on safari how the flesh is overwhelmingly dominated by a sinful nature in so many ways; the ramifications of which reach into the innermost recesses of the non-understanding awareness of our mind, body and points of reason. The frontal lobe of the human brain can be a mere instrument to devise evil. Our motor neurons are ever-ready to spring into evil action in terrifying excesses. Friends, the heart of man is desperately wicked, deceitful above all things; who can know it? Well, God knows it. Man wants to do the things that are evil today, friends; let’s be absolutely clear. Frightfully, the body responds to that in a self-pleasing way....

***15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.***

~ So, about that struggle of a saved soul we were talking about: you may want to read very carefully now. This is basic math. Our new nature doesn’t want to do what the old nature wants to do. The old nature will not give power to the new nature. Have you ever done something and then hated yourself because you did it? Do you cry out to God for mercy in your failures? Do you thank Him in those times for being faithful to you even when you were unfaithful to Him? This is what’s real, friends. Simon Peter had this experience. Paul had this experience. If it is not your experience,

then something is radically wrong in your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ; and that something is: you don't have one.

It would seem there were three very distinct periods in the life of the apostle Paul. First, he was a proud Pharisee and religious ruler over the Mosaic System. I think one of the main things that disturbed him before his conversion was the continual bringing of sacrifices to the temple. Those little things that Paul thought should make him right with God were only condemning him more and more each time he did them; but he was a good and proud Pharisee, so he just ignored all that.

Then came that day Paul met Christ on that Damascus road and turned to Him as his Savior! Paul still had that feeling that he could live the Christian life, though. Well, do you know anything about this struggle? I don't know how long it lasted in Paul's life, but he went through a very definite period of testing. When Paul does get the victory, he will quickly discover he didn't win anything – God did. It all comes back to our yielding to Christ, as we have seen. We must present ourselves to God and allow the Holy Spirit to live out righteousness through us. Make a note: Final Conclusion – we can't even do *that* alone....

***16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.***

***17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

~ Make succinct mental notes regarding two things most believers desperately need to learn: (1) there is no good thing in you – or me – without Christ. It is alarming the number of so-called Christians who think something they do good in the flesh somehow pleases God. Many Christians become as busy as termites, and they have about the same effect on the church. They situate themselves on every board and committee there is and espouse proudly they are pleasing God. Unfortunately, they have no vital connection with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His life, death, burial or resurrection. Christ just isn't being permitted to live through most people who say He is today, friends, let's keep this real (2) Mistakenly assuming we can do something about our

problems in and of ourselves. So many Christians recklessly and blindly do what they want to do and quickly ask God to bless it in some hurried prayer; no, my friends, you can forget that – it doesn't work that way! Attempting to do things in your own strength by the flesh is futile....

***18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.***

~ Anything we do in the flesh: God hates it! God won't have it, and He won't use it. If it is in any way related to the flesh, then it is no good. If you haven't learned that lesson in life – you will. Jesus said, *"that which is born of the flesh is flesh!"* The flesh will never be anything but flesh, either, by the way; but either way, whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin! How wonderful and refreshing that is! Our new nature will definitely not sin; it is impossible. Sin is always hatched by the old nature. The new nature hates the old nature; and they have both kept me from sleeping many nights trying to convince me the other is wrong. How about you? Do you have a sense of urgency about those matters in your heart?

Paul discovered there was no good in the old nature and there was no power in the new nature! The new nature wants to serve God, but the carnal man is enmity against God. The natural man is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can he be. Most Christians go horribly wrong and make a huge mistake assuming they have some type of power in their new nature. This leads to major Christian Tragedy. When I first began to walk with God, I fell on my face many times – very hard.

This is one reason an evangelist can always get an emotional response in a meeting! The evangelist says to a congregation to hold up their hands if they want to live for God, come closer to God and recommit their life to God – and every hand in the place is in the air. Of course those are the things I want to do, too. My new nature says *"... I sure would like to live for God."* But there is no dynamic furnished for the ethic. There are some people who have been coming forward to the altar call for decades! That's all they ever do is come forward. Their lives never change. They never grow

in the Lord or go anywhere for Him; although they may be exhaustively spanning the globe as busily as a bee can be....

***19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.***

***20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.***

***21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.***

***22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:***

***23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.***

~ Do any of you know anything about that passage, friends? Have you discovered that any time you desire to do good in the power of the Holy Spirit, the old nature is right there dogging the scene with evil? We don't get rid of the old nature when we are saved, and there is no power in the new nature – stop kidding yourself. Trying to follow the law will only lead to sin and death. I promise you there will be no fruit in your life trying to keep the law. This understanding causes the honest child of God to cry out to Him as Paul does here. This isn't a lost man crying out, either; this is the saved apostle Paul, my beloved! We're all just helpless with our shoulders pinned to the floor as we end this leg of our safari....

***24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?***

***25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin ~***