

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS LESSON 44 PART 1: “THE STRUGGLE: *IT’S ME*”

ROMANS 7:14-25 For we know that **THE LAW** is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with **THE LAW**, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be **A Law** that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in **THE LAW** of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another **Law** waging war against the **Law** of my mind and making me captive to the **Law** of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve **THE LAW** of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve **the Law** of sin.

The **Struggle** that Paul (**we**) finds himself in is that even NOW that the **Old-Self** has “died” **its** presence continues to harass us with temptation. Although **it** has NO power to control us, **it** is still “sensitive” to the world around us and through the “**body and its members**” draw us into sin.

Listen to James on the same subject:

JAMES 1:13-20 Let no one [that’s You] say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. ¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person [You] be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man [You] does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore [You] put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

The battle Paul is describing here is a personal testimony to the inadequacy of **THE LAW** to help us Live in Righteousness (Sanctification).

We must remember the “Spiritual Transformation” that Paul experienced at his New Birth.

FROM: *An arrogant, self-righteousness, passionately murderous hater of anyone who would challenge Judaism, as he saw it...*

TO: *One who was willing to be humiliated, rejected, tortured for the love of non-Jewish believers.*

WHAT battles he must have fought within himself! It would not have been easy for any of the “Jewish Believers” to welcome the Gentiles openly and excitedly. **For Paul... it would have been unimaginable!**

We read Paul’s **LETTERS**... we read **LUKE’S** testimony of Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles in the **BOOK OF ACTS**, and we are led to think this was a quick transition from Rabbi to Apostle. **It was not...**

- In [ACTS 9](#), Paul is converted and born anew following his experience on the Damascus Road...
- In [ACTS 13](#), Paul is commissioned by the Holy Spirit and sent out from the Church in Antioch...
- But what was in between? How did he move from one position to the other?
 - In [GAL 1:15-22](#) Paul summarizes his conversion and early years... and his 1st meeting with the Leaders of the Church **3 Years** after his conversion...
 - In [ACTS 15](#), following Paul's 1st Missionary Journey, he went to the Council in Jerusalem to settle the issue of Gentiles being accepted into the Church...
 - In [GAL 2:1-9](#) Paul tells of this experience... revealing that it was **"14 years"** AFTER his 1st meeting with the Apostles in Jerusalem.
 - This tells us that there were **17 years** difference.
 - His "commissioning in Antioch" was **15-16 years** AFTER his conversion.
- That's an incredible amount of time for God to reveal Himself and "re-educate" Paul...

Throughout this **"15-16-year period"** Paul learned the amazing truth he is about to reveal in [ROMANS 8](#). During those years of growth, he faced **the Struggle** he reveals in [CHAPTER 7](#). Because of HIS dedication to THE LAW, he KNOWS by experience that there was NO victory gained by trying to apply to the New Life what had only "failed" him in the Old-Life: "That which promised life...only brings death."

Paul repeatedly returns to this subject in his Letters: [2 COR 3:1-18](#); [GAL 2-4](#); [EPH 4:17-5:21](#); [COL 3:1-17](#); and others. He KNOWS the failure. But he also knows the answer that brings hope and success.

ROMANS LESSON 44 PART 2: "THE STRUGGLE: IT'S ME"

I AM...

[ROM 7:14](#) *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.*

Paul said of himself (representative of all believers), *but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

- The Law is "Spiritual?" How? It was given to **"Promise LIFE..."**

[DEUT 10:12-13](#) *And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?*

[READ DEUT 10:14-22](#) **"He Loves You... therefore Circumcise Your Heart"**

Notice that **"Loving God"** comes before **"Serving Him"** and **"Keeping His Commandments"**
- Though THE LAW is spiritual, man is **"of the flesh"** (NIV - "fleshly") **"Sarkinos"** - Carnal - because of the fallen human nature inherited from Adam we have a tendency to "give-in" to the flesh...
- All unregenerate are **"sold under sin"** (cf. 3:9) but being regenerate does not mean sin loses its appeal for believers.
 - **Sold...** - **Piprasko** - *perfect tense*. Robertson says; *"sin has foreclosed the mortgage and owns its slave."*
 - **Under...** - *Delivered over to* - under the power of... **Sin** - As much as we "hate it" the flesh continues to make it's demands...
 - Who did this? - **ADAM...**

- Though Christians need not be enslaved to sin's dominion (6:1–23) Christians can still have a strong attraction to sin, and again *“become entangled in a yoke of bondage.”* (GAL 5:1)
- This is not what should happen to the Christian... but is what will happen to the struggling Christian who tries to control sin by inappropriately using THE LAW.

I Don't Understand...

7:15–17 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Knowing full well that at regeneration the believer acquires a new disposition to help him grow, Paul says: vs 15) *what I am doing, I do not understand.*

- Paul described a past event since he shares the component to overcoming this problem in CHAP. 8.
- However, Paul uses the present tense from 7:14–25 to vividly portray his, or by extension every Christian's struggle, in using THE LAW for sanctification.
- *For what I (new) want to do... that I (old) do not practice; but what I (new) hate, that I (old) do.*
- In response to using THE LAW for Sanctification the old capacity to sin revives.
 - Through the influence of the *new capacity*, he desires to do the right thing, but due to familiarity with the *old capacity*, he does what he hates – Looking at my *desires / actions* and finding in THE LAW nothing more than, “You're doing wrong... You're doing wrong...”
 - The personal pronoun “I” should be viewed as the whole person.
 - Yet... within the Believer there are two competing dispositions (*the flesh* against *the spirit* - GAL 5:16–17) warring to gain mastery over the Believer.
 - Therefore, if Paul does *what he does NOT want to do*, then he knows THE LAW must be good. There is within him the “knowledge” that what he is doing is “not good”

The tree of the Knowledge of good and evil... – even in “The Fall” God did not abandon mankind to absolute evil... there was also imparted a “knowledge of good...” That's Grace...
 - Paul does not conclude that THE LAW is not a good moral guide just because he cannot keep it. Rather, he knows that the problem is sin that dwells IN his fallen human nature...