

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS LESSON 45 PART 1: “THE STRUGGLE: ME2”

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 (ME2) finds himself in is that even NOW that the Old-Self has “died” its presence continues to harass with temptation. Although it has NO power to control, it is still “sensitive TO & influenced BY” the world around... and through the “body and its members” draw the Believer into sin.

The most common thing that Believers turn to for HELP is “THE LAW.” But as Paul explains, THE LAW was NOT able to help me obtain JUSTIFICATION... and THE LAW is NOT able to help me live in SANCTIFICATION. It can ONLY show me “my failures.”

I Do NOT Have the Ability...

7:18–20 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.

➤ Paul probably struggled for years to live this NEW LIFE through fulfilling THE LAW by his own power...

- After all ... THAT IS HOW he had been trained... (PHIL 3: 4-6)

****PHIL 3:4b** “If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I MORE SO... concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.”

BEFORE salvation he felt fully competent and confident in HIS ability to live a righteous life by adhering to The Law...

WHY should it be any different AFTER salvation?

- **But at some point**, he became aware of the real problem... *and the solution* (PHIL 3:7-14)
****PHIL 3:7** *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for CHRIST.*
 The “revelation” of ROM 7:24-25 brought the desired **freedom** and **victory** he longed for...

- He states, *I know that **IN ME**, that is, in my flesh, [sarx], nothing good dwells.*
 - **** THIS** was not immediately known... or experienced... BUT it IS a reality (for Paul) now!
 - The expression *in me ... (clarified as “in my flesh...”)* refers to the fallen Adamic nature (cf. vv 14–16) within Paul ... that **all Believers continue to possess.**
 - **Flesh [sarx]** does **not** refer to **man’s body** as opposed to his **NEW SPIRIT**, but to **the whole being** functioning under the aspect of *the flesh* as seen elsewhere in Scripture:
1 Cor 9:27 “...But **I discipline** [“beat black and blue” – Wuest] *my body and bring it into subjection...*”
Gal 5:17 *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

ROMANS LESSON 45 PART 2: “THE STRUGGLE: **ME2**”

Eph 4: 22-24 “... that you **put off**, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,²³ and **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and that you **put on** the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
Col 3:5 “Therefore, **put to death** your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry...
vs8 *But now you yourselves are to **put off all these...**”*

- Paul explains that even a desire to do *what is good* (i.e., obey **THE LAW**) is **not enough to carry it out.**
 - Rather, when one sets out to do *the good* he desires (by **THE LAW**)...
it results in *the evil* he had no intention to *practice*.
 - The Believer’s experience of trying to live by **THE LAW**
results in a **constant battle** (vv 16–17)
- Paul summarizes these paradoxical attributes waging war within by writing:
 - *Now if I... (the **Fallen Nature**)*
 - *do what I... (The **Resurrection Nature**) do not desire to do...*
 - *it is no longer I... (The **Person’s Desire**) who do it,*
 - *but sin (the **Sin Principle** that is dominant in the **Fallen Nature**) that dwells within **me...***
*(the “in me...” refers to the **Whole Person**; cf. vs18; 6:6).*

WHO Is In Control Here?

7:21–23 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.

- Paul discovered (*I find*) that a specific **law (Principle / Rule)** was enforced upon him (*upon us ALL*).
 - This **“Law”** was that **“evil desires”** were ALWAYS **present with** him... *exposing his corrupt nature*
 - The mandates of **THE LAW** could not be carried out – because **IT** was powerless to **CHANGE** him...
- **v 21** Paul now explains his inner desire for God’s Law.
 - Even if he cannot carry it out, there is **delight in THE LAW of God according to the inward man**.
 - **THE Law of God** refers to God’s Law as opposed to the **law (Principle / Rule) of sin** within Paul...
 - The phrase **inward man** also appears in two other places (**2 COR 4:16** and **EPH 3:16**).
1 COR 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*
EPH 3:16 *... [I pray] SO THAT He would grant you [to give without restraint], according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened [to be dominated by HIS] might [dunamis – supernatural ability] through His Spirit in the inner man...” –*

To know that: **“I have His ability within, and I can rule over this temptation...”**

- In both places the **inward man** is something within believers that can be **“renewed”** daily and **“strengthened”** by the Holy Spirit.
- In **v 23**, Paul clarifies this phrase as being synonymous with **the law of the mind (in my inner being)** which in **ROM 12:2** he commands Believers to be **“transformed... through the Word...”**
The **“law of my mind”** is **what I KNOW** about the **“Law of God”** in **my inner man**...
IF I don’t know... I cannot successfully overcome...

Consider: **HEB 8:8-12 (vs 10)** *“I will put MY LAWS into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

- The phrase **another law in MY [Paul’s] members** is also a virtual synonym of the phrase **law of sin which is in my members (THE FALLEN NATURE - v 5)**.
- This **law of sin** waged war against the **law of his mind** (the inward man) and won... **IT** was stronger
- **Making me captive...** – Using **THE LAW** to try to gain victory only brought more and more condemnation... It didn’t help... It **COULDN’T** help... **it ONLY intensified the struggle...**
ROM 8:3 *“For God has done what THE LAW, weakened by the flesh, could not do.”*

Help ME!

7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this **body of death?**

- Experiencing this hopeless and futile battle, Paul cried out in frustration, **“Who will deliver me from this body of death? [I AM a “Death-doomed man” ... WHO will deliver me?]**
- Paul recognized that an **inner desire** could not overcome his **natural inclination** to do evil –
AS LONG AS THE LAW was his only weapon...

Through Jesus Christ...

7:25 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.

- Paul concludes by introducing **the discovery** he made about **"how to experience victory over sin."**
 - He thanks **God** for **supplying** **through JESUS CHRIST our LORD** **the means** to **"deliver"** him (*and all believers*) from this struggle (**5:9-10; 6:1-10**).
 - **IN SUMMARY...** *with the mind* **(the new desire inspired by the Inner man)** Paul *served* God's LAW...
 - **"...but with the flesh"** (old desires and passions) **"the law of sin"** (**v 22-23**) ... **THIS is NOT a solution!**
- BUT...** He is STILL NOT VICTORIOUS! **He has only surrendered to the inability to escape ... UNTIL...**