

Romans 07 - The Believer's Relationship to the Law

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Romans 7

(2) The believer's relationship to the Law (Rom 7:1-25)

(A) The believer's freedom from the law (7:1-6)

(a) Legal illustration (7:1)

1 Or do you not know, brothers *and sisters* (for I am speaking to **those who know the Law**), that **the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?**

1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

1 Don't you realize, brothers—for I am speaking to people who know the Law—that the Law can press its claims over a person only as long as he is alive?

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know [the] law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

- "...those who know" - Paul's Roman readers; they lived in the capital of the empire where officials debated, enacted and enforced laws

— Verses 1-6 relate to Rom 6:14—the intervening verses (Rom 6:15-23) being a digression raised by the question in Rom 6:15

— The statement that a believer identified with Jesus Christ in His death is no longer "under Law" (Rom 6:14) should not have surprised Paul's readers because they were men who know the Law.

— This statement should not be restricted to Jewish believers in the church at Rome because Gentiles also knew the principle that the Law has authority (*kyrieuei*, "rules as lord"; Cf. Rom 6:9; 14) over a man only as long as he lives.

— It is a general principle of the law that death cancels engagements

— This is a self-evident truth, which Paul will now illustrate by marriage, an allegorical example

- "...the Law" - the 10 commandments, and the 603 other commandments of the Mosaic Law that revolve around further explain them

— These 613 laws are what Paul refers to when he says "the Law"; the Law is outlined in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy

— The most important thing that Paul will say about the Law is that it will not save (justify) a single person. You can try your entire life to keep the Law of God, but that won't gain you entrance to heaven.

— The next most important thing Paul will say about the Law is that once you become a Christian, the Law (without the Holy Spirit) cannot help a person live a godly life.

- In fact, Paul will explain that the Law without the cross and without the Holy Spirit, is lethal (dangerous). The Law sits in judgment on us.
- So if the Law cannot save us, and it cannot (without the Holy Spirit) help us live a life that is pleasing to God, then what good is the Law? It is good at condemning us (John 5:45).
- This describes a person's relationship to the Law before they come to Christ: the Law tells me to do something and I fail; the Law tells me not to do something and I do it anyway. So the Law is always condemning an unbeliever.
- Paul's point in v1-6 is that the believer has been set free from the condemnation of the Law
- "...the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives" - Paul's not specific about the Mosaic Law here, but any law (the laws of the USA, the State of Arizona, etc.).
- The law (in general) has jurisdiction over a person for their entire life, until death. Once a person dies, the law has no jurisdiction over them any longer. The law can no longer hold someone accountable for a crime once they are dead. Death emancipates us from the law.
- Paul will make the point that our death with Christ emancipates us from the condemnation of the Mosaic Law. Because a believer has been unified into Christ's death, they have been liberated from the condemnation of the Mosaic Law.
- The 10 Commandments, which stood in condemnation over me while I was an unbeliever, I have now been liberated from because of my unification with Christ in His death

(b) Marriage illustration (7:2-3)

- 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.
- 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.
- 2 For a married woman is bound by the Law to her husband while he is living, but if her husband dies, she is released from the Law concerning her husband.
- 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.
- In the laws of marriage, a woman is bound to her husband for his (or her) entire life
- If the husband dies, she has been released from that obligation, and is free to pursue another man
- Paul is not giving us instructions on divorce and remarriage here; he will do that elsewhere
- In the illustration, the wife represents the believer and the husband represents the Law
- A married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive. If her husband dies (third-class condition indicating a real possibility), she is released (perfect tense, "has

been and stands discharged") from the law of marriage.

— She is bound to him by marriage while he lives, and obviously his death frees her from being bound any longer

As a woman whose husband has died is free to marry another, so also are believers, since they have died to the Law, free to belong to Christ.

3 So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.

3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.

3 So while her husband is living, she will be called an adulterer if she lives with another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from this Law, so that she is not an adulterer if she marries another man.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

- However, if she pursues another man before his death, she has broken the law and become an adulteress

— If she marries someone else after her husband died, she is not considered an adulteress

— Paul's point is: death brings freedom from the Law

The Mosaic Law was an instrument of condemnation and death, a tool by which all of my deficiencies and shortcomings are pointed out. The Law stood in judgment of me. But after I trusted in Christ and was identified into His death, I am freed from the condemnation of the Law.

The Mosaic Law had no provision for a married woman to get a divorce. Thus, she is a type of the believer. Marriages were arranged; the woman had no choice...a loveless obligation. This leads to a most provocative metaphorical application:

(c) Application to our union with Christ (7:4a)

4 Therefore, my brothers *and sisters*, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to **another**, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might **bear fruit for God**.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in

order that we might bear fruit for God.

4 In the same way, my brothers, through the Messiah's body you also died as far as the Law is concerned, so that you may belong to another person, the one who was raised from the dead, and may bear fruit for God.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that [for the purpose that] ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

- "Therefore" - introduces the application of the illustration for the readers

- The believer was not "made to die to the Law" (freed from its binding authority) because the Law died, but because we died with Christ

- Believers have died to the Mosaic Law, not to the OT in general. The OT is still authoritative revelation for Christians. It's just that the relationship that once existed between the OT believer and the Mosaic Law no longer exists for the Christian.

- Since we died with Christ, we no longer have to live according to the commands of the Mosaic Law

- At the point of one's faith in Christ, their whole identity shifts...

- We may not feel like our identity is shifted, but theologically from God's perspective there was a dramatic shift in our relationship

- We are no longer under the condemnation of the first Adam, but we are now under the forgiveness and righteousness of the Last Adam

- Just as in the two illustrations above, our union into the death of Christ brings forth liberation from the Law and from its condemnation

- This liberation is from seeking to keep the Law and failing, seeking to keep it again and failing, and doing this over and over again throughout our lives while the Law stands in condemnation of us. As believers, we are freed from this scenario.

- "...another" - Christ; every believer not only died with Christ, but also arose with Him (6:14). Thus, God joined ("married") us to Christ, in both His death and resurrection. His death ended the old relationship with the Law.

- Only this new relationship can produce the fruit of righteousness; people married to the Law cannot produce good fruit

- "...bear fruit for God" - this is the purpose of God freeing us from the condemnation of the Law...so I can "bear fruit for God"

- Fruit bearing is the purpose of a believer's relationship to Jesus Christ

- God has something much better in store for our lives than perpetual failure and perpetual condemnation, which is what we had under the first Adam

- We can only do this with the righteousness that the Holy Spirit produces as we cooperate with Him through faithful obedience to God's Word. It is this pursuit, not the Law, that sanctifies us.

- The point of faith is really the point of death, when I was unified into Christ's death, and consequently this condemnation that the Law had over me was erased.
 - All of my infractions of the Law, past, present and future, have been unconditionally forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ
 - All of my failed attempts to keep the Law can now be remedied through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer
 - In Rom 8 Paul will talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification process.
- Before he gets there, Paul will discuss his own failures to keep the Law. As a believer, he tried to keep the Law, but failed. He was trying to seeking to live the Christian life without the power of the Spirit, and he failed miserably. Finally, he learned about the power of the Holy Spirit, and will describe it beginning on 8:1.

Something in human nature makes us want to go to extremes, a weakness from which Christians are not wholly free. Since we are saved by grace, some argue, we are free to live as we please, which is the extreme of license.

But we cannot ignore God's Law, others argue. We are saved by grace to be sure; but we must live under Law if we are to please God. This is the extreme of legalism.

Paul answered the first group in Rom 6; the second group he answered in Rom 7. The word law is used 23x in this chapter. In Rom 6, Paul told us how to stop doing bad things; in Rom 7 he told how not to do good things. [Wiersbe]

So believers are freed from the condemnation of the Law and now there is the prospect of actual fruit bearing for God, not from my own strength or power, but as I learn to tap into the divine resources God has given us.

The divine resources are:

- Our identification/unification into Jesus Christ and how that broke the power of the sin nature (Rom 6)
- The Holy Spirit and the role He plays in the believer's life (Rom 8)

(e) Past fruit bearing (7:5)

5 For while we were **in the flesh**, the sinful passions, which were *brought to light* by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to **bear fruit for death**.

5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

5 For while we were living according to our human nature, sinful passions were at work in our bodies by means of the Law, to bear fruit resulting in death.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

- "...in the flesh" - *sarx*, our sin nature; the sinful passions aroused by the Law at work in our bodies; the sensual element apart from control of the Spirit; imperfect, under the domination of self
- This describes a believer before he was saved (Cf. Rom 6:19)
- The Law by its prohibitions aroused sinful passions, as will be explained in v7-13
- "...bear fruit for death" - before Christ, when the Law of God told me to do something, I didn't do it; conversely, if it told me not to do something, I usually did it. Because of my sin nature inherited from Adam, I had a desire to do the very thing that the Law told me not to do.
- There was a discovery process...I learned that my default nature is to yearn for rebellion against God. This is the bad fruit.
- The works of the flesh eventually produce ("bear fruit") for death
- "death" - temporal death; the believer is exempted from the penalty of sin: spiritual death and eternal death, but not from physical death or temporal death
- There are all kinds of things that "die" when we walk in sin. For example, when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, look at the things that died: his son, Uriah, his family unity and love
- Death follows sin like night follows day
- But as a believer walks more and more with the Lord, we become more and more exempt from temporal death, more and more things that otherwise would be dead if I continued in sin, will live and in fact flourish when I walk with the Lord.
- Paul understood his spiritual deadness from his pre-Christ experience. Before he met Christ, Paul's righteousness based on the Law was perfect...or so he thought. He served faultlessly in the "way of the written code." Yet Paul's actions were evil, and exercise in self-righteousness that led him to persecute Christians (Acts 9:1-6; Phil 3:6). He produced fruit, but it was quite literally "fruit for death."
- Sin, Paul repeatedly affirmed, leads to death (Cf. 5:15,17,21; 6:16,21,23; 7:10-11,13; 8:2,6,10,13)
- The law energized our rebellion... The law cannot bring us into a righteous life. It can only *demonstrate* our sinful nature.
- If you understand this passage you will understand what most of the people that have ever lived have not been able to grasp: What is the purpose of the law of God?

(f) Present fruit bearing (7:6)

6 **But now** we have been **released** from the Law, **having died to that by which we were bound**, so **that we serve** in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

6 But now we have been released from the Law by dying to what enslaved us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit, not under the old writings.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

- This verse is a summary of v1-5...

- "But now" - these words (also used in 6:22) point to what happens when we receive Christ as Savior. Paul goes on to describe this great change through a series of contrasts:

- Our condition before Adam, before God saved us—but now—our new life in Christ
- Our former slavery to sin—but now—our new and willing slavery to God
- Our bondage to the "old husband"—but now—we died to the old and belong to the new

- "...released" - *katargeo*, delivered from, unshackled; to render inoperative

— We died to the law, just as we died to sin (Cf. 6:5); the same Greek word (*katargeo*) occurs in both verses

— Christ's death as our Substitute changed our relationship with both entities (sin and the Law)

— This is one of several passages that reveal that, as Christians, we have no obligation to keep the Law of Moses: Cf. 10:4; 14:17; Mark 7:18-19; John 1:17; Acts 10: 10-15; 1 Cor 8:8; 2 Cor 3:7-11; Gal 3:19,24; 4:9-11; 5:1; Heb 7:11-12; 9:10

- "...having died to that by which we were bound" - I was released/liberated from the condemnation of the Law at the point of death (our union into death at the point of faith). My union in that death frees me from the power of the sin nature.

- Consequently, I have a new life now...I can say Yes to God in the newness of the Holy Spirit that indwells me, and I can say no to my past life of sin (2 Cor 3:6).

— Before I came to Christ, the Law was killing me. The Law pointed out my failure, then it pointed out the consequence that I deserved (death).

- "...that we serve" - present tense, constantly serve

— The purpose of this release from the Law is so that we may serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code

The Law of Christ

Paul did not say we have been released from the ceremonial part of the Law, as opposed to the whole. The Mosaic Law was a unified code that contained moral, religious and civil regulations. God has terminated the whole code as a regulator of Christians' lives (Cf. 10:4). Christians have received new code that Paul called the "Law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). The "Law of Christ" contains some of the same commandments as the old Mosaic Code, including 9 of the 10 Commandments. The one that Jesus did not carry over was the fourth commandment about Sabbath observance. Nevertheless, the Law of Christ is a new code. Thus, Paul could say that God has released us from "the Law" of Moses. The Law of Christ

consists of the teachings of Jesus that He communicated during His earthly ministry. It also consists of teachings that He gave through His apostles and prophets following His ascension to heaven.

Letter vs. Spirit

Letter

Depends on the flesh (Rom 8:3)
1:8)

Produces rebellion (Rom 7:8)

Results in more sin (Rom 5:20)

Brings wrath (Rom 4:15)

Not of faith (Gal 3:12)

Kills (2 Cor 3:4-6; Gal 3:21)

Spirit

Depends upon God's power (Luke 23:49; Acts

Produces God's desires (Phil 2:13)

Righteousness (Rom 8:4)

Brings joy, peace, production (Gal 5:22-23)

By faith (Gal 5:5; 2 Cor 5:7)

Gives life (Phil 2:12-13)

Why the Law was Given (Cf. Rom 5:20)

1. The Law was given to expose our sin nature (7:7)
2. To incite the sin nature to sin more (7:8-23); sin nature cannot be reformed
3. To drive us to despair of self-effort (7:24-25)
4. To drive us to dependence upon the Holy Spirit alone (8:1-4)

These four points must be experienced before you can continue in the Spirit. The involvement of the Mosaic Law in the discussion of a believer's identification with Christ and death to sin raises a question about the Law's relationship to sin:

(B) Although the Law is holy, sin used it to usher in death (7:7-12)

(a) Is the Law sin? (7:7a)

(b) Emphatic denial (7:7b)

(c) Purposes of the Law (7:7c-11)

(i) The Law defines sin (7:7c)

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? **Far from it!** On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "**YOU SHALL NOT COVET.**"

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

7 What should we say, then? Is the Law sinful? Of course not! In fact, I wouldn't have become aware of sin if it had not been for the Law. I wouldn't have known what it means to covet if the Law had not said, "You must not covet."

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.

- Based on what Paul has said so far (v1-6), a logical question is: What is wrong with the Law?

— If the Law points out my failures, if it's a ministry of condemnation over me, is there something wrong with the Law?

— The moment we understand that the Law is perfect and holy and we're not, we're the problem, is the moment we understand the purpose of the Law

- "...Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, the strongest negation in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. 6:1,15)

— Paul emphatically says No, there's nothing wrong with the Law, but there is something wrong with us

— There is a divine purpose in the Law, which Paul will describe in v7-12: the Law's purpose is to tell us that there is something wrong with us

— The problem is not the Law because the Law came from God; the problem is us, and the Law is very good at pointing this out

— The point is that the Law is not sinful simply because it makes us aware of what is sinful. It is similar to an MRI machine that reveals a tumor...the machine itself is not bad because it reveals something bad.

— The Law arouses sin (7:5) but that does not mean the Law itself is sin. In fact, Paul said later, the Law is holy (v12) and spiritual (v14). Paul went on to explain that the Law made sin *known* (Cf. 3:19-20).

- We have to understand that the Law of God is the perfect revelation of God's moral character

— As you study the Law, we learn what pleases God and what displeases God

— If God had not revealed His character through the Law, we would have no idea what things are pleasing to Him and what things are displeasing to Him

— The Law is a very good reminder of when we do something externally (behavior, actions) outside the will of God. But the Law is also much deeper than pointing out just our external sins.

- "...YOU SHALL NOT COVET" - a quote from Ex 20:17, the 10th commandment

— Paul chose the 10th commandment because it is different than the other nine commandments in that if you violate one of the other nine, it's obvious to outside observers. People can observe when you break one of those commandments.

— But the 10th commandment, a prohibition on coveting, is not something that is observable because it's committed in the heart and mind

— This shows that the Law of God does not only stand in judgment of what I physically do wrong, but also stands in judgment on what I think. The Law also stands in judgment of my

inward motives and desires of the heart.

— Often, our hearts and minds commit sin before our hands get around to it. When we take into account the 10th commandment, it shows that the Law of God does not only rule over our actions and behaviors, but it also has jurisdiction over our hearts and minds. Jesus made this point clear with numerous examples in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Law functions a lot like pain does for us...we put our hand on a hot stove, feel pain, and immediately remove our hand. The pain we feel, which causes us to remove our hand, prevents further, maybe permanent, damage. The Law functions like that...we go through our lives virtually clueless to our fallen condition. One of the greatest deceptions of Satan is that we are mostly good. We're made in God's image, but we have all inherited this nature from Adam that hates God, that wants to do its own thing. I have a nature that wants to do what I want to do. And I don't realize I have this nature until I become exposed to the Law of God. The Law then functions like pain, that alerts me to an action that is necessary to prevent further, maybe permanent, damage. If I don't follow what the pain tells me to do, which is remove my hand, I will do permanent damage to my body. In the same way, if I do not recognize the spiritual reality (pain) brought to me through the Law, I have no understanding of my fallen nature, and if I don't understand my fallen nature, the whole gospel presentation seems irrelevant. This is why many people hear the Gospel, but say No thanks, because they don't feel like they need the Gospel. The Gospel is for the bad people, not the good people. They feel like they have everything they need, they are content, so they don't view the Gospel as something relevant to them...because they have not encountered the Law of God. We can't understand that we even need Christ without the Law (Gal 3:24). The purpose of the Law is to alert man to the presence of his sin nature. Once a person understands their sin nature, the Gospel all of a sudden becomes more appealing because he sees his need for it. Spiritually speaking what is happening is that pain is introduced, alerting the person for the need for corrective action.

The Law is a mirror that helps us see our dirty faces (James 1:22-25), but you do not wash your face with a mirror! It is grace that provides the cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ. [Wiersbe]

The Law can lay down what people ought to do, but it cannot give them the power to overcome the temptations to do evil.

(ii) The Law provokes sin (7:8)

8 But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, **produced in me** coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead.

8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead.

8 But sin seized the opportunity provided by this commandment and produced in me all kinds of sinful desires, since apart from the Law, sin is dead.

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

- Paul says that everything was perfectly fine in his life until the Law of God showed up and wrecked everything...I learned that things I was doing in my life, externally, were displeasing to God

- Then the Law of God took another surgical step and started looking into the deep dark crevices of my heart...and Paul essentially says that sin came to life

- "...produced in me" - it wasn't sin that came to life in Paul, it was his awareness of his sin...the sin was always there, but it was not called sin because there was no law against it. Once the Law came, it pointed out that what he was doing was sin.

- If the Law produced sin, it would be bad. But Paul said that the Law isn't bad, it's good (v7). The Law didn't produce sin out of thin air, the sin was already there, it just wasn't called sin since we weren't aware that it was displeasing to God (Cf. 3:20).

- The problem is not the Law, the problem is not God, the problem is us because we inherited a sin nature from Adam. If we didn't have the Law, we wouldn't know what sin was, and we wouldn't be aware of our natural appetite for sin (Cf. 4:15).

- In v7, the Law defines sin; in v8, the Law provokes sin

- "in me" - it is significant that, beginning with v7 and continuing through this chapter, the Apostle Paul turned to the first person singular, presenting his personal experience

- Up to this point he had used the third person, the second person, and even the first person plural. But now he described his own experience, allowing the Holy Spirit to apply the truth to his readers.

Whenever someone establishes a law prohibiting something, the natural tendency of people is to resist it. Suppose you want to drive your car as fast as it can go. If there was no speed limit on a road, you would go as fast as you wanted to. But if you came upon a long stretch where the speed limit was 30mph, your will would rebel. Then you come upon a sign that says, "Speed Limit Strictly Enforced." You would drive on frustrated, conscious of both your desire to speed and your rebellion against the imposed speed limit. The speed limit signs did not create the desire to go fast: you already had that desire. But the 30mph speed limit and strict enforcement signs brought you into conscious conflict with authority.

(iii) The Law is an instrument of sin/death, not life (7:9-11)

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and **I died**;

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

9 At one time I was alive without any connection to the Law. But when the rule was revealed, sin sprang to life,

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

- Paul says, I was having a great day until the Law arrived...then I became aware of my sin and I died

- "...I died" - because death follows sin like night follows day, death in all its various forms become a reality

— This verse is also viewed as a basis for children being saved prior to the age of accountability (Cf. 2 Sam 12:15-23)

Since Paul was obviously still physically alive when he wrote this verse, he had to have been talking about his spiritual life and death. Before Paul was old enough to be accountable for his sins, he had eternal life. The phrase "the commandment came" means he had reached the age where he became accountable under the Law. As soon as that happened his sins became a death warrant. In order to escape death he had to become born again.

God doesn't hold children accountable for their sins until they become old enough to understand the sin/salvation issue. Before that time it's as if they haven't sinned. This is part of what Jesus meant when He said we have to become like little children to enter God's Kingdom (Matt 18:3), in other words not accountable for our sins. In Rom 7:15-20 Paul says that's the case for all born again believers.

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

10 and I died. I found that the very rule that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

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

- The original intent of the Law (for OT believers) was to bring people blessing ("life") as they obeyed (Lev 18:5)

— Because Paul did not obey it, he found that it condemned him

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed *me*.

11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

11 For sin, seizing the opportunity provided by the rule, deceived me and used it to kill me.

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

- The Law aroused Paul's sin nature, because he now had the requirements of God in his life; his sin nature was always aroused, he was just unaware of it

— Consequently, Paul was condemned to a perpetual life of sin

— So this sin “deceived” him [“led him astray”; Cf. 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14)] and put him to death (lit., “killed” him), not physically but spiritually

— How did it deceive him? By luring him to attempt to live for God *by his own effort...*

— Without the cross to forgive me and the Holy Spirit to empower me, the Law is the most lethal truth a person can ever be exposed to

Throughout the ages, sin makes a double promise to its victims: first, that no evil consequences will ensue, and second, that their view of life will be enlarged and that on this increased knowledge will follow increased happiness.

(d) Conclusion: the Law is good (7:12)

12 So then, the Law is **holy**, and the commandment is holy and **righteous** and **good**.

12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

12 So then, the Law itself is holy, and the rule is holy, just, and good.

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

- Paul began this passage (v7) with a question of whether or not the Law was bad...

— He answered with the strongest negation possible that the Law is not bad, it is not sin, but rather the Law is holy

- “...holy” - far from being sinful, the Law comes from a holy God and searches out sin

- “...righteous” - because it lays just requirements on people, and because it forbids and condemns sin

- “...good” - because its purpose is to produce blessing and life

— The Law is not the problem, I'm the problem; the Law is just very good at pointing out that I'm the problem

- Paul was a man who at one point in his life, before Christ, thought he kept the Law perfectly (Phil 3:5-6). Now this same man, in Christ, as his mind is being illuminated by the Holy Spirit, compares his life to the Law in Rom 7 and sees himself as an abject failure.

— There was a revolution in Paul's thinking about the Law of God and his own righteousness. We need that same revolution to go on in the world today, including in the church. We need to get away from this futile and foolish mindset that everyone is inherently good because if you believe you are inherently good, you haven't studied the Law of God.

(C) Although the Law is holy, it is powerless to deliver someone from sin (7:13-25)

(a) Interpretive challenges

Verses 13-25 provide a description of a man (Paul) who is extremely frustrated in the Christian life. Paul reveals in this passage that not only can the Law not save us, it doesn't have the power to sanctify us.

This passage is one of the most debated in all of the Bible. In it, Paul details his personal struggle with sin. ***The question is whether Paul is a believer or an unbeliever when Paul describes this struggle with sin?***

Many commentators will say that because Paul describes his deep struggle with sin in this chapter, he is somehow dialing back to his "pre-Christ" days when he was an unbeliever. Many people believe that a Christian cannot struggle with sin at this level, thus conclude that he is describing something that happened to him while he was an unbeliever.

Three Questions to Properly Interpret this Passage

1. Is Paul a Christian when he wrote this?
2. If Paul is a Christian, how does it shape our view of who we are in Christ?
3. So what?

There are two views on this passage, by those who equally love Jesus Christ and His Word: the "pre-conversion view" and the "post-conversion view." Did Paul have the struggle with sin described in this passage before he was saved (pre-conversion view) or after he was saved (post-conversion view). For the detailed arguments of both the pre-conversion view and the post-conversion view, see [Romans 17 The Believer's Relationship to the Law - Part 2 \(Rom 7:13-25\).](#)

Post-Conversion View Arguments

1. Change of tenses

Argument: The dramatic change of verb tenses from the past tense (7:7-13) to the present tense (7:14-25) indicates that Paul is speaking of a present experience in 7:14-25, possibly even an experience he was having when he wrote Romans

2. Desire of the Paul to keep God's Law

Argument: The desire of the "I" (Paul) to keep God's Law (7:22) cannot be describing an unbeliever (Cf. 3:11)

Response #1: It is possible for unregenerate Jews to delight in God's Law (Rom 9:31-32; 10:1-2)

- The Pharisees delighted in tradition rather than the Law (Mark 7:13); 1st century Pharisees did not delight in God's Law...they were interested in their own man-made traditions (outlined in the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*) that revolved around the Law.
- Paul was steeped in these Pharisaical traditions (Gal 1:14)
- Paul's heart in Romans is not for tradition, but for God's heart

3. Desire of the "I" (Paul) to keep/delight in God's Law

Argument: The desire of the Paul for God's Law cannot be describing an unbeliever (Cf. 3:11); Paul is struggling and failing to keep the Law, but the desire to keep the Law is there

Response #2: God has placed His Law in the hearts of all men, including unbelievers (Rom 2:14-15)

- Rom 2:14-15 only says God's Law in the hearts of unbelievers convicts them...it doesn't give them a desire to keep it
- The Law in the heart of unbelievers isn't a joy...it annoys them, convicts them, harasses them. It is not something delighting to them, yet Paul here is delighting in God's Law.

4. Desire of the "I" (Paul) to be rescued

Argument: The desire of Paul for deliverance from the present body (7:24) is consistent with the believer's call for the redemption of the body (8:23)

- Paul says that he is such a failure as a Christian that he wants out of his body (7:24)
- Paul has the same cry in 8:23 for deliverance

Response: Future tense of *ruomai* indicates a call for salvation (justification)

- *ruomai* is a call for glorification rather than justification

5. Similarities between Rom 7 and Gal 5

Argument: Because of the similarities between Rom 7:14-25 and Gal 5:16-18, and because believers are in view in Gal 5, a believer must also be in view in Rom 7:14-25

- Both passages speak of a struggle between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit, between the mind that wants to please God and the mind that does not want to please God
- There is no debate that Paul is talking to believers in the Gal 5 passage, so if the topics are identical, how in the world can Paul be describing himself as a non-believer in Rom 7?
- Another consideration is how in the world would an unbeliever have access to the Spirit?

6. Duality of the two "I's" - I want to do the right thing, but I don't

Argument: Because Rom 7 is a description of a divided man (7:18,22,25) and because unbelievers are unilaterally under sin's control (Eph 4:17), a believer must be in view in Rom 7

- There is a capacity in Paul to go in either direction (he is divided)...this cannot describe an unbeliever because they only have once choice: sin. They are unilaterally under the control of sin, which is a concept Paul develops throughout Rom 1-3.

7. Overall flow of Romans

Argument: Because Paul has left behind his discussion of sin and unbelievers (1:18—3:20) and moved onto salvation (3:21—5:21) and the sanctification section of the book (Rom 6-8), a believer must be in view in Rom 7

- It would be strange for Paul to disrupt the argument flow of the book by spending a whole chapter going back to the topic of sin and the unbeliever, because he covered that in 1:18—3:20

Response: Occasional Pauline flashbacks to his unsaved life (Rom 8:7-8)

- Whole chapter? That would drastically disrupt the flow of Paul's argument.

8. Personal experience of the believer

Argument: Because believers identify with Paul's struggle in Rom 7:14-25, a believer must be in view in these verses

- The believer strives to attain the holiness of God, because God put that desire in our hearts, but we are frustrated and fall short

Conclusion

- Paul is describing his personal experiences
- Paul had these struggles during his Christian life
- Christians are dual-natured

Dual Nature View of the Believer

1. Paul's use of *sarx* in Rom 7:14-25

- *Sarx* is used in Rom 7:5,18,25
- *Sarx* is not always a negative term
- Paul's use of *sarx* is typically negative
- Residue of the old self remains even after conversion
 - Rom 13:14; Gal 5:13 both tell believers to make no provision for the flesh/sin nature

2. Numerous theologians have advocated the dual nature view

- Augustine
- Reformers - Calvin, Luther, Melancthon
- 19-20th century Calvinists - Hodge, Hokea

- Dispensationalists: Scofield, Chafer, Ryrie
3. The dual nature view does not advocate spiritual schizophrenia
 - Jesus had two natures (human and divine)
 - Jesus was not schizophrenic
 - Christ was one Person with two natures
 - Believers are one person with two natures

Implications & Conclusion

- A saved person has both an old and new nature
- Old nature - a complex set of attributes with a disposition toward sin
- New nature - a complex set of attributes that incline and dispose the believer toward holiness

Application

1. Believers with two natures can only achieve sanctification by availing themselves of the divine resources
 - Paul's struggle shows that the new nature cannot in and of itself produce a righteous life that God desires
 - If the new nature was enough (2 Cor 5:17), there would be no struggle in Rom 7; if the new nature was enough, God would not need to provide us with divine resources
 - Divine resources
 - Believer's baptism/identification with Christ (Rom 6); position informs condition
 - Provision of the Holy Spirit; the believer's walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16; Rom 8)
2. Human responsibility plays a role in the sanctification process
 - ***Christians do not automatically experience practical sanctification because they are new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)***
 - A volitional response must be made toward the appropriation of the divine resources
 - The resources are there and available, and powerful, but whether I avail myself to them is my decision
 - Otherwise the biblical exhortations are meaningless
 - If the new nature was automatic, the commands throughout the NT to walk in the Spirit, do not make provision for the flesh, reckon the old man dead, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, put on the full armor of God, etc. are non-sensical

- Why would God give us so many commands if the sanctification process was automatic?
 - We permit God to work out His plan of sanctification in our lives when we avail ourselves to the resources He has given us
 - ***Any view of practical sanctification based solely on the sovereignty of God, independent of human participation, is not biblical***
3. Ultimate perfection will occur in heaven rather than in the present
- Perpetual conflict between the old and new nature as long as the believer remains in the body
 - Some degree of sin will always be present (Rom 7:24; Phil 3:12; 1 John 1:9)
 - Ultimate perfection will only occur at death or the Rapture (Eph 5:27; 1 John 3:2; Rev 21:8)

Review

- Paul is speaking of his personal experience in Rom 7:14-25
- Paul's struggle here represents a post-conversion experience
- The believer is dual natured
- This dual nature view of the believer shapes our understanding of sanctification

The Law was not designed, nor is it capable of helping the believer live the righteous life that God wants for us. The Law gives us standards for right and wrong, but as far as empowerment to live the Christian life, it provides nothing.

Some reading this may say Why do we need to study Rom 7...I'm not under the Law and I don't struggle with the Law. But what Paul addresses here is not Christians struggling with the Law, but Christians struggling with legalism. Legalism can be defined simply as "rules without resources."

Many Christians today struggle with the set of rules/commands given in Scripture. They attempt to "white knuckle" the Christian life, all out of their desire and volition, without tapping into the resources that God has provided. They hear sermons on the need for holiness, but have no idea how to attain it? How do I get that holiness in my daily life, because I'm constantly trying and failing? That's what Rom 6-8 is all about.

(b) Contrast between the Law and man's nature (7:13-14)

(i) The Law is not the cause of our sinful tendencies (7:13)

13 Therefore *did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it!*

Rather *it was* sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

13 Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

13 Now, did something good bring me death? Of course not! But in order that sin might be recognized as being sin, it used something good to cause my death, so that through the rule, sin might become more exposed as being sinful than ever before.

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.

- "...did that which is good become *a cause of* death for me?" - Paul's question is: Is the Law the reason for my sinful tendencies?

- "...Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, the strongest negation in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. v2; 7:7)

— The sin nature that I inherited from Adam, at the point of conception, is the problem...not the Law

— The only thing the Law did was make me aware of my sin nature

(ii) Our nature and the Law are going in opposite directions (7:14)

14 For we know that the Law is **spiritual**, but **I am fleshly**, sold into bondage to sin.

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am merely human, sold as a slave to sin.

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

- My nature wants to go the opposite direction from the Law...if the Law is going right, my sin nature wants to go left; if the Law goes up, my sin nature wants to go down

- "...spiritual" - *pneumatikos*, Spirit-given; the Law came from God (Cf. 1 Cor 3:1)

— The Law comes from God who is Spirit (John 4:24) and expresses God's will for human living

— Paul didn't want his readers to think that what he was about to say about the Law was a criticism of the God who gave it

- "...I am" - present tense, 1st person; autobiographical. Paul uses himself as an example.

- "...fleshly" - *sarkinos*, carnal

— Understanding the conflict in personal sanctification involves seeing the relationship between a believer and his indwelling sin

— Paul is describing himself, a redeemed believer in Christ, as "carnal." However, he makes it abundantly clear in Rom 8 that he does not regard the Christian as being carnal in the same way that an unredeemed non-believer is carnal.

(c) Man's inability to gain victory through the Law (7:15-20)

(i) The Law cannot prevent me from doing wrong (7:15-16)

15 For I do not understand what I am **doing**; for I am not practicing what I want *to do*, but I do the very thing I hate.

15 For 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.

15 I don't understand what I am doing. For I don't practice what I want to do, but instead do what I hate.

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

- It's not the Law that is the problem...it's our sin nature

— But the Law cannot prevent me from sinning...it just points out my sin, but doesn't keep me from committing sin

- "...doing" - *katergazomai*, to work to the outside from the result that is already on the inside

— Paul's sinful nature influenced him to such an extent that he found himself doing (approving) the very things that he despised intellectually. This fact caused Paul to marvel at himself.

16 However, if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, that *the Law is* good.

16 But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

16 Now if I practice what I don't want to do, I am admitting that the Law is good.

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

- If I do the thing I do not want to do, I'm following my sin nature. In that case, the Law is good in that it points out to me that I'm doing wrong.

(ii) Problem of the sin nature (7:17)

17 But now, no longer am I *the one* doing it, but sin that dwells in me.

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

17 As it is, I am no longer the one who is doing it, but it is the sin that is living in me.

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

- Our problem is not that we commit acts of sin, but that we have a disposition toward sin in our nature that produces acts of sin

— This means that I'm not a sinner because I sin, but rather I sin because I am a sinner. The fact that we commit sin is just a logical outworking of who we are in the First Adam.

— This does not mean Paul was avoiding personal responsibility for his actions; he was speaking of the conflict between his desires and the sin within him. He was identifying the source of his sin.

- Viewed as a whole person, he was dead to sin. Nevertheless, the source of sin (his sin nature) was very much alive.
- We have to understand that our sin nature/flesh is so corrupted that God does not even attempt to rehabilitate it
- God deems our old nature unfixable, and thus gives us a new nature

(iii) The Law cannot cause me to do right (7:18-20)

18 For I know that **good does not dwell in me**, that is, in my flesh; for **the willing is present in me**, but the doing of the good *is* not.

18 For 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.

18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but I cannot carry it out.

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.

- "...good does not dwell in me" - sin thoroughly corrupted Paul's nature

— Even though he was a Christian, he was still a totally depraved sinner

— He knew what he should do, but he did not always do it

— "Total depravity" to a non-Calvinist refers to the fact that sin has affected every aspect of a person, but it does not necessarily mean that people are as bad as they could be, or that they are so bad that there can be nothing good in them.

- "...the willing is present in me" - the desire to do good is present in Paul, which proves that he is speaking of himself after becoming a believer, but before he understood how to allocate divine resources toward the problem of his sin nature

19 For **the good that I want**, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

19 For I don't do the good I want to do, but instead do the evil that I don't want to do.

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

- "...the good that I want" - the desire to do good is present (Cf. v18) in Paul, but the *power* to do good is not

— We have to understand the dual nature of the Christian...we have the old sin nature, and we have the new nature (2 Cor 5:17), and both are in competition with each other

— Paul has not yet learned how to allocate the divine resources to say No to his old nature and yes to his new nature

- One example of our dual nature is Peter in Matt 16...one minute he confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus then gives marvelous promises to Peter...that Christ will use him to build His church, and He gives Peter the keys of the kingdom.

- Just a couple verses later, Jesus begins to tell the disciples that He will go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, and eventually be killed. Peter took Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, aside and rebuked Him. Jesus tells Peter Get behind me Satan.
- In the span of a single conversation, Peter goes from proclaiming one of the greatest truths in Scripture, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, to being used as a tool of Satan, trying to prevent Jesus from going to the cross to provide atonement for the sins of all mankind and fulfill His mission in coming to earth.
- One minute Peter is in the Spirit, the next minute he is in the flesh
- This is exactly what Paul is describing...the desire to please God is there because of the new nature, yet we keep falling backwards
- Next time you're bothered by your sin, be thankful because that proves the new nature is there, the Holy Spirit is working. If the new nature wasn't present in you, if the Holy Spirit wasn't indwelling you, you would sin and it wouldn't bother you at all.
- The fact that a struggle is happening is cause to praise God because it shows us that there is a higher source of power within us called the new nature. If the new nature wasn't there, I would not be bothered by my sin.
- The new nature is good, but it's not enough. It will give you the desire, the sincerity, but it's not designed to add the power and the fortitude by which we can live for God in this fallen world.

20 But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer *the one* doing it, but sin that dwells in me.

20 But 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.

20 But if I do what I don't want to do, I am no longer the one who is doing it, but it is the sin that is living in me.

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

- A restatement of v17, but with a further insight. The source of sin is the old nature. Paul now, as we often have as a small child, in candor and honesty, admits he doesn't understand his own behavior.

— Paul recognized that even as a believer he had an indwelling principle of sin that once owned him as a slave and that still expressed itself through him to do things he did not want to do and not to do things he desired to do. This is a problem common to all believers.

— If Freud could only have known this, we could empty the psychiatric clinics... Psychology can only deal with symptoms (guilt) rather than its cause (sin)

(d) Description of the conflict within the believer (7:21-23)

(i) Principle of evil yet the desire to do good (7:21)

21 I find then the principle that **evil is present in me**, the one **who wants to do good**.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

21 So I find this to be a principle: when I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me.

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

- "...evil is present in me...who wants to do good" - a picture of the dual nature of the believer

— It perfectly describes the believer who is trapped between justification and glorification...I've been justified but not yet glorified

— The new nature, which will dominate at glorification is in me, but that sin nature that dominated before my justification is still there

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE-FOLD ENEMY	
<i>Problem</i>	<i>Solution</i>
The World	Flee
1 John 2:15-17	1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22
Lust of the Flesh	
Lust of the Eyes	
Pride of Life	
The Flesh	Deny
Romans 7:18-24	Romans 6:12-13; 8:13
The Devil	Resist
1 Peter 5:8	1 Peter 5:9

(ii) Good explained (7:22)

22 For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person,

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

22 For I delight in the Law of God in my inner being,

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

- Paul says that inwardly, he loves God and His Law; inwardly he desires for prayer, he hungers for the Word, he wants to have intimacy with God

— This statement *clearly* could not come out of the mouth of an unbeliever (3:11)

(iii) Evil explained (7:23)

23 but I see a **different law** in the parts of my **body** waging **war** against the **law** of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the **law** of sin, *the law* which is in my body's parts.

23 but 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.

23 but I see in my body a different principle waging war with the Law in my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin that exists in my body.

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.

- "...different" - *heteros*, also translated as "another", here meaning "another of a different kind"; there is a different/another principle in Paul than just the "law of God" described in v22

— Two words for "another" in Greek: *allos*, another of the same kind, and *heteros*, another of a different kind

— There is the yearning for the law of God (v22), but there is also something "different" in Paul, pulling him in a different direction

- "...law" [3x] - *nomos*, can be used as a principle of life, which is how it's used here

— Paul says that there is within me, even in my saved state, a principle of sin that has not been eliminated

— Recognizing the facts of experience, Paul said he saw another law or principle at work within him. This is the principle of sin. Paul called it "sin living in me" (v17,20), "evil is present with me" (v21), and "the sinful nature" (v5,18,25).

— The indwelling principle of sin is constantly mounting a military campaign against the new nature, trying to gain victory and control of a believer and his actions (Cf. "slave" in v14,25 and "slaves" in 6:17,19-20)

- "...body" - our body, when used for sin, is called the "body of sin" (6:6); conversely, as we grow in Christ, we are to present our body as a living sacrifice (12:1)

— Our body is not evil, it is neutral; it can be used for both good and evil

- "...war" - Paul describes this war in Gal 5:17; this war inside the believer is a present reality for everyone trapped between justification and glorification

— Despite a believer's identification with Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and his efforts to have Christ-honoring attitudes and actions, he cannot *in his own power* resist his indwelling sin nature. In and of himself he repeatedly experiences defeat and frustration.

— This natural rebelliousness was something that Paul could not rid himself of. Thankfully, Paul explained in Rom 8 that Someone with infinite power can enable us to control and overcome our rebelliousness.

(e) Solution to the problem (7:24-25)

(i) Problem stated (7:24a)

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

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

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is infected by death?

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

- Paul was frustrated with himself because he felt like he was losing this "war" between his old nature and his new nature

— Paul feels this way because he was not yet aware, and thus did not access the divine resources provided to him by God to overcome the struggle

— The word *wretched* carries with it the note of exhaustion because of the struggle. "Who is going to deliver me?" He is helpless.

- "...Who will set me free from the body of this death?" - Paul cries out to God for an answer...

— The agony of Paul's tension, and our inability to rid ourselves of our sinful nature, which urges us to do things that lead to death, come out strongly in this verse

— What Christian has not felt the guilt and pain of doing things that they know are wrong

— This is not a cry for salvation (justification) because Paul was already saved; this is a cry for glorification

— It's also, I believe, a cry and a plea for additional divine resources beyond the new nature. Paul didn't want the desire to do right without the empowerment to do right.

- The Message translation: "I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me?"

(iii) Answer to the problem (7:25a)

25 Thanks 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.

25 Thanks 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.

25 Thank God through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, because with my mind I myself can serve the Law of God, even while with my human nature I serve the law of sin.

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.

- The answer: Jesus Christ

— The answer is not more rules and regulations, it's not trying harder to live the Christian life, it's not white-knuckling it...it's tapping into the additional resources that Christ has graciously given us while we're trapped between our justification and our glorification

— What are those additional resources:

1. Our baptism into Christ (Rom 6)

2. Our walk with the Holy Spirit (Rom 8)

- Until that answer is realized (it's there, it just has to be discovered), the struggle will continue...

— The struggle between the old nature and the new nature, the law of sin and the law of God, will continue until these new resource beyond the new nature are accessed

— Until the time comes in my growth, my maturity, my sanctification and my discipleship whereby I have taken the time to realize what Christ has done for me, realize the new resources that I have, and begin to walk in those resources in a moment-by-moment fashion, the struggle will not end.

The question...[is] in the future tense. Paul here proclaims his present involuntary imperfection, summed up in the latter part of verse 25, will one day be made a thing of the past through the redemption of the body. For that future redemption we must long and wait, maintaining always the two-world, homeward-traveling, hoping-for-glory perspective that pervades the whole New Testament. [J.I. Packer]

Run, run and do, the Law commands

But gives me neither feet nor hands.

Better news the Gospel brings,

It bids me fly and gives me wings.

— J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*