



Romans 7:13-25

# OUR ONGOING BATTLE WITH SIN

*The battle of the sinful nature against the Spirit is something all God's children have felt. If we search our own conscience and are not hypocritical, we will see that what Paul says here is true in ourselves; our sinful nature battles against the Spirit. All believers, therefore, confess that their sinful nature resists the Spirit and that these two are so contrary to one another that whatever they do, they cannot perform what they want to do. Therefore, the sinful nature stops us from keeping God's commandments, so that we cannot love our neighbors as ourselves, much less love God with all our heart; therefore, it is impossible for us to become righteous by obeying the law. Indeed, there is a good will in us (and so there must be for it is the Spirit himself who resists the sinful nature). This good will would gladly do good, fulfill the law, love God and neighbor, and so on; however, the sinful nature does not obey this good will but resists it. ...The more godly you are, the more you feel that battle.*

—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

In Romans 6-8, Paul focuses on our sanctification in Christ—how do we live this Christian life? What is the power that enables us to grow more and more into the image of Christ?

*For sin shall not have dominion over you,  
for you are not under law but under grace.*

Romans 6:14

Paul makes it clear that our conformity to the image of Christ must be motivated and empowered by grace not by law. Law simply cannot overcome the power and principle of sin in us. In fact, sin actually uses the law to produce further death in us.

## SEVEN BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT THE LAW

1. The law refers primarily to the Mosaic Covenant (5:14; Jn. 1:17).
2. The law reveals God's pure righteousness and holiness (7:12).
3. The law requires perfect obedience to \_\_\_\_\_ of its commands (2:13; Ex. 24:7-8; Deut. 27:26; Matt. 5:48; Gal. 3:10; James 2:10).
4. The law condemns \_\_\_\_\_ of us as sinners (3:19-20; Gal. 2:16).
5. The law is absolutely powerless to save us from sin. Instead, it \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the depth of sin in us (7:5-13).
6. The law is \_\_\_\_\_. Thus, it can only be fulfilled in the power of the Spirit not by our own self-effort (7:14).
7. Christ has perfectly fulfilled the whole law (10:4; Matt. 5:17-18).

*Sanctification is the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.*

—Westminster Shorter Catechism

"Law" and "commandment" are used 29x in Romans 7. "Spirit" or "spirit" are used 24x in Romans 8.

*We were carried down the stream of sin, and the law was but as an imperfect dam, which made the stream to swell the higher and rage the more...*

*The law may discover sin and convince of sin, but it cannot conquer and subdue sin. It discovers the defilement, but will not wash it off. It makes a man weary and heavy laden, burdens him with his sin; yet, if rested in, it yields no help towards the shaking off of that burden. This is to be had only in Christ.*

—Matthew Henry

*The Mosaic Law was done away in its entirety as a code. It has been replaced by the law of Christ.*

—Charles C. Ryrie

## OUR ONGOING BATTLE WITH SIN REVEALS THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE LAW TO SAVE US OR TO SANCTIFY US (7:15-23)

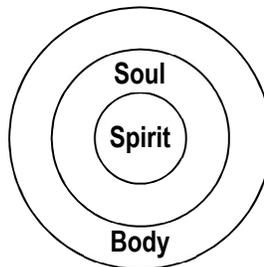
Romans 7:15-25 has been a debated passage throughout church history. The big question: *Is Paul speaking as an unbeliever or as a believer?* I believe that Paul is speaking as a believer for the following reasons:

- The context of the passage is focused on sanctification (ch. 6-8).
- He uses the first person present tense over and over.
- He describes himself as one who wills to do good and joyfully delights in God's law in his inner man (7:18-22; cf. Eph. 3:16).
- He sees his problem rooted in his "body of death" and he looks forward to his future deliverance from it (7:24; cf. 8:10-11, 23).
- He ends the passage with a summary of his present battle (7:25).
- His experience matches our present experience (Gal. 5:16-23).

Paul's main point is that the sin principle that remains in us, even after conversion, cannot be conquered by our own self-effort to keep the law.

### 1. **We are saved but we are not yet fully \_\_\_\_\_.**

Our spirit has been regenerated but our body and soul still battle with idols of the heart, sinful thought patterns, self-mindedness, fleshly desires, and bodily weakness.



### 2. **We are set free from the realm of sin and death but we can still follow their dictates and live like \_\_\_\_\_.**

Sin still seeks to deceive, confuse, distract, weaken, entice, frighten, divide, depress, and enslave us (6:12; cf. Gal. 5:1).

### 3. **The sin and selfishness that remain in us run \_\_\_\_\_.**

As we grow closer and closer to Christ, we realize more and more the depth of our sin (7:24; cf. 1 Tim. 1:15).

## OUR ONGOING BATTLE WITH SIN REVEALS OUR DESPERATE NEED FOR CHRIST FOR SALVATION & SANCTIFICATION (7:24-25).

*O wretched man that I am!  
Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

*I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

*The wretched man of Romans 7 tried to meet the claims of God's law **himself**, and that was the cause of his trouble. The repeated use of the little word "I" in this chapter gives the clue to the failure.* —Watchman Nee

*God's purpose is not that we should be OT Christians, regenerate indeed, but living in slavery to the law and in bondage to indwelling sin. It is rather that we should be NT Christians who, having died and risen with Christ, are living in the freedom of the indwelling Spirit.* —John Stott

*His problem isn't desire—he wants to do what is right. His problem isn't knowledge—he knows what the right thing is. His problem is lack of power—how to perform what is good. He lacks power because the law gives no power.* —Ken Wuest

*There is something in humanity, even in regenerate humanity, which objects to God and seeks to be independent of him. This 'something' is what Paul here calls 'his flesh.'* —F. F. Bruce

*No believer will come to know the Lord Jesus as his Life until he knows by experience the deadly self-life deep within for what it is.* —Miles J. Stanford

*You can still be a slave experientially, even when you are no longer a slave legally. Whatever you may feel, whatever your experience may be, God tells us here, through His Word, that if we are in Christ we are no longer in Adam, we are no longer under the reign and rule of sin. And if I fall into sin, as I do, it is simply because I do not realize who I am.* —D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones