

Conquering the Spiritual Tug of War

Part 4

Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Transition

- In order to collect leaves, you use a rake.
- But diamonds are found using a shovel
- Romans 7 has diamonds in it.
- If you use a rake on Romans 7 you will miss the diamonds.

The last 3 weeks we have done a deep dive into this passage.

We will continue that today.

What is Paul arguing for?

What is the point of this passage?

How can this passage help me?

How can I apply this passage to my life?

Why do I need this passage?

Romans Main Point

- All sinful human beings have fallen short of the glory of God and bring daily dishonor to God and are under the wrath of God righteously.
- **We are all deserving of the wrath of God.**
- **It is just of God to pour out his wrath on sinners who bring daily dishonor to him.**
- Yet he is **wildly merciful** and it is **therefore possible** for **us sinners** to be **set right** by God.
- Because of Jesus' work on the cross - our faith in him and him alone for our salvation brings undeserved **FAVOR!!!**

- Trust Christ and you get **FAVOR!**

Illustration

- Instead of wrath you get **FAVOR**
- Instead of punishment you get **BLESSING**
- Instead of damnation you get an **INHERITANCE**
- Instead of separation you get **UNION**
- Instead of being on the outside you are **brought inside**
- Inside to the **Banquet table of the King**

I. Be amazed that you are saved.

- Join heaven and rejoice in your salvation.

Luke 15:7

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

A. Romans 7 holds 2 realities in contrast.

1. The law is good and helpful but the law cannot save me.
2. The only way I can be saved is because of grace.

The law is good BUT I need grace.

Romans 7:14 - We know that the law is spiritual

Romans 7:16b - I agree that the law is good.

Romans 7:22 - For in my inner being I delight in God's law

Romans 7:25b - I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law

Illustration

- Mirror
- The law is like a mirror
- It shows me what I really look like.
- It shows me what is apparent to God.
- It shows me what my true condition is

Romans 7:7

Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

How do you know you are a sinner unless you know what you are doing is sin?

The law is good BUT I need grace.

Question

- Why do I need grace?

Romans 7:17 - As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

Romans 7:20 - Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Answer

- I need grace because of “indwelling sin”
- Explain why Christians are not perfect and don't measure up to their own highest standards.

Romans 7:22-23

²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

Vs. 22 – Evidence that I am a genuine Christian

Vs. 23 – Even though I am not perfect but I do sin.

- I violate God's law
- I don't always – every day – every minute Love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.

I want to but I don't always do that.

It is not true that I always do that

B. Thank God for his GRACE!!!!

Straw Man

- Are you saying that there is only one way to God?
- Are you saying that it is because of Jesus and Jesus alone that you can be saved?
- That is pretty narrow minded to think that there is only one right way.

My response is that it is a miracle that there even is a way.

Be amazed that there is a way.

Be amazed that there is a way to be set right with God.

Be amazed that there is an offer of salvation.

If you are saved you should be AMAZED you are saved.

II. Don't be tied to a list of rules - be united to a person.

Romans 7:4-5

⁴ So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

A. Unpack

1. So sin took God's "holy, just and good" law Romans 7:12 and made it an instrument of fruit unto death.
2. I would argue that the reason this happens is that the essence of sin – or the essence of the flesh – is **self-deification**.
 - a. We prefer being our own god.
 - b. We **do not** like to be told what to do.
 - c. We are not just **law-breakers**; we are **law-haters**.
 - d. We love **autonomy** and **hate submission**.
 - e. This is what we are by nature ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, who preferred their own wisdom to God's.
3. So when the "law of commandments" comes to us in our flesh...
 - a. Without the **Holy Spirit** and without **faith**
 - b. It produces not the fruit of love – which Paul teaches is the fulfilling of the whole law
 - c. But fruit for death.

B. If we are going to bear fruit for God (verse 4)

1. If we are going to be transformed...
2. Christ-like persons.
3. We must die to the law.
4. Not just have stronger willpower to obey it better, but die to it.

Romans 7:4

⁴ So, my brothers and sisters,

you also died to the law through the body of Christ,
that you might belong to another,
to him who was raised from the dead,
in order that we might bear fruit for God.

C. Unpack

Straw Man

- The key is not to resolve to keep the commandments.
- Try harder and harder and harder and harder.

D. So the key to living the Christian life.

1. The key to bearing fruit for God.
2. The key to a Christ-exalting life of love and sacrifice.
3. The key is to die to the law and be joined.
4. Joined to what - *not* to a list of rules.
5. Joined to a Person, to the risen Christ.

E. The pathway to love

1. Is the path of a personal...
2. Spirit-dependent...
3. All-satisfying...
4. Relationship with the risen Christ

Not the resolve to keep the commandments.

1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

John 15:4–5

⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Don't be tied to a list of rules - be united to a person.

**If you are saved you should be AMAZED you are saved.
Don't be tied to a list of rules - be united to a person.**

III. Drive a stake into the hopeless of Perfectionism.

- A. One of the reasons a solid understanding of Romans 7 matters is that it exposes a lie and kills it.
 1. The lie is that once I am a Christian I will be perfect.
 2. Therefore if I am not perfect then I certainly cannot be a Christian.
- B. Love the Law - Hate your sin.
 1. Be amazed you are saved.
 2. Don't tie yourself to a list of rules – Unite to Jesus Christ.
- C. One of the reasons this matters is because it rescues people from the devastating hopelessness of perfectionism.

Illustration

- My company commander told me a story.
- He was out with his friend on a boat and they were coming back in from the Atlantic through the intercostal waterway.
- The men were attending to things on the boat and the boat owner ask his son for help.
- His son had some mental and emotional challenges.
- The instructions were. Son see that buoy. Yes.
- Stay to the right of the buoy
- Whatever you do don't hit that buoy.
- Got it!
- The son became so hyper fixed on not hitting the buoy and he drove the boat right into it.

Application

- Don't do that .
- Don't do that.
- Don't do that.
- Don't do that.

Should we hit the buoy?
 NO – Don't hit the buoy.

But what we should do as a Christian is instead of saying don't do that.
 We should say – Jesus I love you. Jesus you are mine and I am yours.
 Jesus you are my everything.
 Jesus where would I be without you.
 Jesus you are so beautiful
 Jesus I love you so much

This is our motivation.
 This is our war cry.
 This is the beat we march to.

Love ALWAYS accomplishes more.
 Always

We should say... How do you want me to handle this? How do you want me to handle that?
 How do you want me to feel about this? How do you feel about this? What are your thoughts
 on this? I want those thoughts.
 I want those feelings.

Illustration

J.I. Packer was a theologian who taught at Regent College 40 years.

Most famous for his book titled Knowing God - over 1.5 million copies