

Romans 7: **The person lacking victory** (The futility of living under law; *i.e. striving to live holy by human efforts to keep God's laws*)

I. **Rom 7:1-6 we are no longer under the law.** Rom 7:6 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.

A. (Vs 6) **Let's break this verse down:**

1. **Now** = now that we are saved.
2. **Delivered from the law** = set free from being under law; free from trying to please God, or attain to holiness by human efforts to keep rules including the laws of God
3. **Serve in oldness of letter** = serving under the law (i.e. by human efforts at keeping the law, which simply leads to frustration and failure).
4. **Serve in newness of spirit** = serving under grace (i.e. by the power of the Spirit through faith in and dependence upon Christ).

B. **Some people misinterpret this concept** as telling us how to interpret the commands of God.

1. Any command of God they don't like: "That's just the Old Testament" or "that's the Law"
2. This verse is not addressing the matter of interpretation but application (*how we serve & obey God*)
 - a. We serve through this new way, through the power of the Spirit; not through outward, religious activity, nor human effort.
3. Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

II. **Rom 7:7-14 defines the proper place of the law** of Moses (and the commands of God in general) in the believer's life:

A. **The law is not bad** Rom 7:7a What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid.

1. **The law is spiritual.** Rom 7:14 For (*because*) we know that the law is spiritual
2. **It is holy, just & good.** 7:13 Wherefore the law is holy, & the commandment holy, just, & good
3. **It brings the awareness of sin;** (it does not bring righteousness, only grace can do that).
 - a. I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.
 - b. 1 Tim 1:8-11 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully (*correctly; [ie in accordance with the new covenant]*); 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, (*one living righteously by the grace of God*) but for the lawless & disobedient (*one committing sin*), for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.
 - 1). So Paul teaches that the law is bad only in this sense: if we attempt to serve God under law,
 - 2). but it is good if it points out our sin & directs us to our need for grace
 - c. Rom 7:8 But sin, taking occasion (*a starting point*) by the commandment, wrought (*worked*) in me all manner of concupiscence (*lust*). For without (*apart from*) the law sin was dead (*lit inactive; i.e. unrecognizable to me*).

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- 1). (*In-other-words*) Sin, being revealed by the law, works in us all types of lust; apart from the law sin is unknown.
 - (a) If there is no posted speed limit sign, it doesn't necessarily mean you aren't driving too fast; the proper speed is unknown.
- 2). The law of God therefore serves an important purpose of illuminating sin for us, so we can see our need for grace to bring us into holiness.
- d. Rom 7:9 For I was alive w/out the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived (*came to life*), and I died. **“The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable”**

4. But: **The law, by itself only brings death (vs10)**

a. **What the law does not do:**

- 1). bring life (make you alive spiritually)
- 2). create victory
- 3). produce righteousness
- 4). change the heart

b. Living under law (*Striving to keep God's commands thru human effort*), leads to defeat (death)

B. **A note on preaching:**

1. **If one only preaches the “do’s & don’ts”...**

- a. They miss the heart and mind of God and the message of grace.
- b. They bring only condemnation and spiritual death to God's people.

2. If one rarely preaches the “do’s and don’ts”...

- a. They miss the heart and mind of God; and the message of grace.
- b. They do not convict people nor challenge them to enter into grace for holiness.

3. A preacher must clearly teach...

- a. The commands of God
- b. The need to choose obedience to those commands
- c. The means to carry out those choices (by the power of the HS, through faith in Christ).

1). Paul, in His epistles, always taught **grace first**, he taught **practical holiness second**.

C. **Paul has spoken all of this from his own experience** as a believer; he said ...

1. **Sin worked in him all manner of lust** (evil cravings & desires) (vs 8)
2. **Sin was only known to him by the law of God** (vs 7, 9).
3. **Sin deceived him and slew him.** (vs 11).
4. **Sin worked death in him** (vs 13).
5. **Sin enslaved him** (vs 14) (sold under sin = *a slave under the master of sin*)
 - o This is a sorry state of affairs!

D. Vs 15-25 show the best that we can produce; this is the believer under law.

III. **Romans 7:15-25:** Paul now pictures the strife of the two natures, in the life of the believer, from his own personal experience.

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- A. It was no doubt this experience & the subsequent crying out to God (vs 24) that led to the revelation of how to walk with God in victory.
- B. Rom 7:15 For that which I do I allow (*understand*) not: for what I would (*want to do*), that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.
1. **I understand not:** The strife between the two natures is often very confusing to the believer.
 2. **Would** = to intend, to purpose, to determine, to desire, to wish.
 - a. Paul states: I do not understand why I don't do what intend to do; and I do what I hate to do.
 - 1). He will **explain the reason for this dilemma**, in the next few verses
 - 2). **And give the remedy** in the next chapter.
 - o *Rom 7:16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*
 - b. The very fact that Paul is attempting to keep the commands of God attest to the fact that the law of God is good.
 - o *Rom 7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*
 - c. Sin that dwelleth in me = **the sin nature**.
 - d. Because Paul is not choosing sin, it is the carnal nature in him that is dominating and controlling him.
 - o *Rom 7:18 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.*
 - e. Note that “the flesh” is “you”; (i.e. the carnal nature that you were born with and still possess even as a Christian).
 - f. For to will is present with me= **I am able to make the choice; I want to do what is right.**
 - g. But how to perform (*accomplish*) that which is good I find not (*i.e. I come not upon after searching*).
 - 1). **But the ability to carry out what I want to do, escapes me.**
 - o *Rom 7:19 For the good that I would (want to do) I do not: but the evil which I would not (do not want to do), that I do.*
 - o *Rom 7:20 Now if I do that I would not (do not want to do), it is no more (no longer) I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Sin that dwelleth in me = indwelling sin; i.e. the sin nature)*
 - h. Paul again states that it is his sin nature controlling him and it is not the choice of his will to sin.
 - 1). It should be abundantly clear then, that it is possible for sin to control a sincere Christian, and *it will* in fact control him apart from dependence upon Christ for the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, which alone can enable the believer to walk in victory.
 - 2). This does not mean that we are not responsible for our actions, but explains why our actions are not always in accord with our intent.
 - o *Rom 7:21 I find (lit. I have found) then a law (a principle), that, when I would (want to) do good, evil is present (available; figuratively, easy) with me (lit unto me).*

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- i. Paul states that “I have come upon this principle: that though I choose to do what is right, evil is still easy to fall into”.
 - 1). If we are to walk in victory, we must first understand this principle and therefore that choosing obedience is only part of the answer.
 - 2). Paul explains the reason for this principle in the next 2 verses.
 - *22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law (a principle) in my members (parts of my body), warring against the law (the principle) of my mind (the will), and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (The principle of the indwelling of sin wars against the law of the mind [the mind is the seat of the will, where we make the choice to obey the law of God]. This principle of the indwelling of sin is stronger than the human will and eventually wins out. We must have something greater than human will [as important as that is] and certainly greater than human strength in order to walk in victory over the sin nature [Note: the principle of indwelling sin, i.e. the sin nature, is here called “the law of sin which is in my members”]).*
 - *24 O wretched man that I am! (Declares the wretchedness of the human nature and the quandary that we are in if we desire to please God,). Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Makes plain the fact that even regenerated man needs the power of someone outside of himself in order to be delivered from the power of sin which dwells in our human body. The answer to the question Paul asks is, of course, the Holy Spirit, who empowers us through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul will answer this question soon in Rom 8).*
 - *25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind (choice of the will) I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh (the body) the law of sin. (This makes it clear that it is possible for a saved person, who loves God and wants to do His will, to struggle with sin though he does not want to commit sin, since Paul found himself there at one time. It is possible; however it is not God’s perfect will, nor is it the victory Christ purchased for us on the cross. The way to victory through the power of the Holy Spirit will be described in Rom 8).*
3. In summary: Paul has shown us that...
 - a. It requires more than sincerity, to walk in victory.
 - b. It requires more than a decision, desire or determination to dominate the power of indwelling sin.
 - c. It requires more than strength, effort, or human ability to serve God in victory.
4. Paul has also shown us that ...
 - a. If you try to please God by law, you negate the power of God and are therefore striving in your own effort (*the flesh*); one can not help but fail in this capacity, since you are attempting to keep God’s laws by the very thing that you must conquer; your flesh (*self*). It is not possible to please God in the flesh, (*Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*). Pleasing God is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Some people mis-interpret this phrase (delivered from law) as telling us how to interpret the commands of God. (*Explain*).
- D. He also works to convince us that we do not possess the power or ability to overcome sin within ourselves.

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Rom 7:18 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.

1. Read Romans 7:1-6. The point: We are no longer under law.

a. (Vs 1) The law rules a man only while he is alive.

1). (Vs 2-3) We can see this illustrated in marriage.

b. (Vs 4) We are also dead to the law by the death of Christ (*this is our position*), and we are married to another (Christ), so that we can (now) bring forth fruit to God.

1). To be dead to the law means we no longer must strive through human effort to please God.

(a) We are no longer under law.

2). If something is our position, it is an indisputable fact.

(a) We do nothing to have it, though we must manifest faith to walk in it.

o Rom 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions (*passions*) of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

c. (Vs 5) When we were controlled by the flesh, sin worked in our bodies & brought forth fruit (sins) unto death

1). That was our condition under law. (He is telling us that this is no longer the case, because we are dead to the law and are one with Christ).

o Rom 7:6 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.

d. (Vs 6) Let's break this verse down:

1). Now = now that we are saved.

2). Delivered from the law = set free from being under law; free from trying to please God, or attain to holiness by human effort. (*See the definition for being under law Page 208 # 12a*)

3). Serve in oldness of letter = serving under law (i.e. by human efforts at keeping rules, which simply leads to frustration and failure).

- 4). Serve in newness of spirit = serving under grace (i.e. by the power of the Spirit through faith in and dependence upon Christ).
- e. Some people mis-interpret this phrase as telling us how to interpret the commands of God. (Explain).

1). This is not addressing the matter of interpretation but of application (*how we serve & obey God*).

(a) We serve through this new way through the power of the Spirit, not through outward, religious activity, nor human effort.

2. Rom 7:7-14 defines the proper place of the law and commandments in the believer's life:

a. THE law brings the awareness of sin; it does not bring righteousness, only grace can do that.

o Rom 7:7 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.

b. (Vs 7) The law is not bad; (it brings the awareness of sin).

1). 1 Tim 1:8-11 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully (*correctly; [ie in accordance with the new covenant]*); 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, (*one living righteously by the grace of God*) but for the lawless & disobedient (*one committing sin*), for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

o Rom 7:8 But sin, taking occasion (*seizing the opportunity*) by the commandment, wrought (*worked*) in me all manner of concupiscence (*lust*). For without (*apart from*) the law sin was dead (*unrecognizable to me*).

c. (Vs 8) Sin, being revealed by the law, works in us all types of lust; apart from the law sin is unknown.

1). The law of God therefore serves an important purpose of illuminating sin for us, so we can see our need for grace to bring us into holiness.

o Rom 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, & I died

d. (Vs 9) This reminds us of the saying, "The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable"!

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- Rom 7:10-11 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.
- e. (Vs 10) Paul found that the commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death to him.
 - 1). This is what you will find if you try to keep the commandment (live under law).
- f. (Vs 11) *For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.*
 - 1). Paul teaches this as a bad thing only if we attempt to serve God under law, but as a good thing if law directs us to our need for grace and for the righteousness that we walk in by faith. (*See the next verses where Paul tells us again that the law is good.*)
 - 2). However he has yet to teach us how to walk in victory, so he is showing the futility of living under law, (i.e. striving for sanctification by our works or human effort).
 - Rom 7:12-13 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear (*lit to shed light [i.e. become evident as]*) sin, working death in me by that which is good (*the law*); that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. (*the law makes sin to be seen as it really is, exceedingly sinful*)
 - Rom 7:14 For (*because*) we know that the law is spiritual (*of the Spirit; heavenly*): but I am carnal (*fleshly*), sold under sin (*a slave under the master of sin*).
- g. Paul has spoken all of this very personally, from his own experience as a believer; he said ...
 - 1). Sin worked in him all manner of lust (8)
 - 2). The law of God revealed his sin to him (7, 9).
 - 3). Sin deceived him and slew him. (11).
 - 4). Sin worked death in him (13).
 - 5). He was of the flesh and a slave to sin (14).
 - This is a sorry state of affairs!

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➤ These things are the best that we can produce; this is the believer under law.

h. Please note:

- 1). If one only preaches the “do’s and don’ts”, they horribly miss the heart and mind of God and the message of grace, bringing only condemnation and spiritual death to God’s people. They do not bring victory to God’s people
- 2). If one never preaches the “do’s and don’ts”, they miss the heart and mind of God; they do not convict people nor challenge them to enter into grace for holiness.
- 3). A preacher must clearly teach the commands of God, and teach that one must choose to obey God and then the only way to carry out that choice is by the grace of God, through faith.

(a) Paul, in His epistles, always taught God’s people about grace first, he taught practical holiness (what grace will look like in your life) second.

3. Rom 7:15-25 Paul now pictures the strife of the two natures, in the life of the believer, from his own personal experience.
 - *Rom 7:15 For that which I do I allow (understand) not: for what I would (want to do), that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*
 - a. I understand not: **The strife of the two natures is often very confusing to the believer.**
 - b. Would = **to intend, to purpose, to determine, to desire, to wish.**
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- f. Note that “the flesh” is “you”; (i.e. the carnal nature that you were born with and still possess even as a Christian).
- g. For to will is present with me= I am able to make the choice; I want to do what is right.
- h. But how to perform (*accomplish*) that which is good I find not (*i.e. I come not upon after searching*).
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- o. *Rom 7:21 I find (lit. I have found) then a law (a principle), that, when I would (want to) do good, evil is present (available; figuratively, easy) with me (lit unto me).*
- j. Paul states that “I have come upon this principle: that though I choose to do what is right, evil is still easy to fall into”.
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5. Paul has also shown us that ...
- a. If you try to please God by law, you negate the power of God and are therefore striving in your own effort (*the flesh*); one can not help but fail in this capacity, since you are attempting to keep God’s laws by the very thing that you must conquer; your flesh (*self*). It is not possible to please God in the flesh, (*Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*). Pleasing God is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit.