

Romans-Chapter 7

Rom 7:1 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?

- Referencing 6:14, Paul here addresses his fellow Jews living in Rome who were converted to Christ via the Gospel. Asking the rhetorical question, know ye not, is from the Greek word (*Gk.50*) 'agnoeo' (pronounce ag-no-eh'-o) which means *not to know*. They knew the Mosaic Law and how it had no hold on any-one once they were dead. Remember, this epistle was written to the church at Rome and was to be read before an audience of both Jew and Gentile Christians. Paul indicated to which group he was specifically addressing (*1:14-15*) since each one had differing backgrounds that pertained to whatever he was attempting to communicate. The Gentile population in the church there understood this as it pertained to the Roman system of slavery. Slaves were no longer under bondage once dead. Obviously, while speaking to whatever group, the message was for all to understand. He mentioned the Law with a specific reason in mind. He had already mentioned death as a separation from their former life (*6:4- Jews under the Law and Gentiles under Paganism*) and was now preparing them to understand the difference between the two Covenants and thus used a specific law the Jews understood to do that. It was sort of an object lesson.

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Rom 7:2 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.

- The apostle could have used other examples in the Law to make his point, such as how a dead person would no longer be accountable to the sacrificial system or be responsible for paying taxes, but chose marriage since in it death would become the primary cause for the emancipation. (*Jesus dealt with the subject of the law of marriage, divorce and re-marriage in Mat 19 & Mk 10*) The person who was the primary benefactor to this separation was the deceased; even though in the next life "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (*Mat 22:30*). The remaining spouse was then free to marry another. Paul explains how this applied to their relationship with Christ in verse 4.

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Rom 7:3 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.

- This same concept of marriage existed in the O.T. between God and Israel when Jeremiah quoted God: "though I was their Husband, declares the LORD" (*31:32, Eze 16:8-14*).

Isa 54:5 For your Maker is your Husband, the LORD of hosts is His Name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called.

- that law- speaking here of the law of marriage, divorce and remarriage. (*Although not specifically mentioned in that phrase there are many different passages that*

show such a law is present in scripture.) But Israel “bowed down like a whore” (Jer 2:20) when she refused to serve Him. That same marital concept exists in the N.T. relationship between Christ and His bride, the church, a.k.a. spiritual Israel (2:26-29, Eph 5:23).

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Rom 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to Another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

- Speaking here specifically to his “kinsmen according to the flesh” (9:3) since the Gentiles among them were never under the Mosaic. Since God “set aside” the Law “nailing it to the cross” (Col 2:14), O.T. Israel was then dead to it, Paul reasoned, that ye should be married to Another. The Jews were the Father’s bride through the Mosaic Law but since the Law was fulfilled it was considered dead. That being the case, Israel (*along with the rest of the world*) was free to enter into a New Covenant relationship by the body of Christ (Heb 10:5) through the death, burial and resurrection process emulated through baptism.

- that- The only way anyone can bring forth fruit unto God (*the purpose for being in this covenant relationship with Christ*) is to “consider [ourselves] dead to sin and alive to God **in** Christ Jesus” (6:11) having been “united with Him in a death like His” (*i.e., baptized into Him, emulating His death-* 6:5) resulting in “no longer [being] enslaved to sin” (6:6). That should be our resolve in order to stand before Him with “a good conscience” (1 Pet 3:21).

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Rom 7:5 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.

- flesh- Gk.4561- *human nature*. Even though living under O.T. rules, Israel was still acting as though living “as the nations” (2 King 17:11) around them. We are either ruled by the flesh or by the Spirit of God (8:9). We either bear fruit for God (“*to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life*”- 2:7) or bring forth fruit unto death (*since “the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law”-* 1 Cor 15:56).

- by the Law- It’s the concept of a cookie jar. If a child didn’t know there were cookies in the jar he would not have desired the sweet treat; not that eating a cookie would be wrong. But if his mother warned him against taking a cookie from the jar, his longing for a cookie is aroused, thus the ‘law’ (*his mother’s warning*) stirred his taste buds to rebel against what he knew as transgressing his mother’s command. His mother’s law didn’t cause him to sin since it was morally neutral. Just like the Mosaic Law was morally neutral even though the ordinances contained in it stirred the motions of sin.

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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.

- The Law was replaced by the New Covenant.

Heb 8:13 In speaking of a New Covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The Law became “obsolete” since the cross, the New Covenant being introduced at Pentecost, but “[vanished] away” in 70 A.D. with the fall of Jerusalem when all remnants of it (*including the Levitical genealogical records*) were destroyed. Without records of lineage back to Arron, anyone who claimed to be of the tribe of Levi to serve as priests would be “excluded from the priesthood as unclean” (Ezr 2:62). Under the Law, only “the priest [could] make atonement before the LORD” (Num 15:28).

“The Jewish religion became a religion without: 1. A shrine, 2. A priesthood, 3 Or a sacrifice.” The Destruction of Jerusalem (pg. 16) by Ray Murray, Jr.

Using the “law to her husband” (v. 2) as an illustration, once Christ came as the Husband of the church (*a.k.a., spiritual Israel*) their former Husband (*God, here represented by the Mosaic Law which bound them to that Covenant relationship with the Father*) has been replaced with the Gospel which now binds the Jew to a New Covenant relationship in Christ (*along with the Gentiles who “were grafted in among [them]”- 11:17*).

- being dead- (see notes v. 4) No longer ‘married’ to the O.T. Law they were now able to serve in newness of spirit. Spirit here has to do with our mental disposition (Gk.4151) and not Holy Spirit even though He does have influence in the conversion process. Once the Spirit of God has influenced the hearts of the sinners toward salvation (*via the “word of the gospel”- Act 15:7*), those rescued souls begin to “walk in newness of life” (6:4), having given up the oldness (Gk.3821- antiquatedness) of the letter (Gk.1121).

“Since the Jews clung to the letter of the law [written code] that it not only became to them a mere letter but also a hindrance to true religion, Paul calls it γραμμα [from where we get the word “grammar”] in a disparaging sense, and contrasts it with πνευμα i.e. the divine Spirit, whether operative in the Mosaic law, Rom 2:29, or in the gospel, by which Christians are governed.”

Thayer

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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.

- Going all the way back to the garden before Adam and Eve “knew that they were naked” (Gen 3:7), there was the law that stated how they weren’t to “eat of the fruit of the tree that [was] in the midst of the garden... lest [they] die” (v. 3). They “were both naked and were not ashamed” (2:25) until they violated God’s law; shame being the result of any transgression. By the first animal sacrifice God made “garments of skins” (Gen 3:21) to cover their shame, which man himself cannot do (3:10) without his “lawless deeds... forgiven, and [his] sins... covered” (Rom 4:7) by today being “baptized into Christ [having] put on Christ” (Gal 3:27). Thus the need “for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus

Christ” (1 Pet 3:21). If Jesus would not have conquered death we would have no hope of eternal life with God in Heaven (Heb 2:14-18).

Paul said he would not [have] known lust until he understood where the Law stood on it. It was always a sin to want something illegally in God’s eyes but it took the commandment “in order that sin might be shown to be sin” (v. 13).

Having been released from the Law (Rev 11:12), we are not to conclude that the Law was sin since it “is spiritual” (v. 14). Going back to the cookie jar illustration; was the mother’s command considered sin? (See notes on v. 13.) The child would not have known about taking one of the cookies as being wrong were it not for that command, “you shall not take a cookie” lest you spoil your supper, even though a spoiled supper would not carry the same consequence as it would to covet (Gk.1937- to set the heart upon, that is, long for [rightfully or otherwise]), i.e., in the Law’s case to have an evil desire to have something that is not rightfully yours.

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Rom 7:8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the Law sin was dead.

- Some might have gotten the idea that sin and the Law were both evil so Paul then explained each in its own rite. Any law that has negative consequences for violating it, Satan employs an occasion by the commandment to tempt people with. In Galatians 5 Paul gave an incomplete list of sinful behaviors concluding “that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 21). He then gave a list of “the fruit of the Spirit” (vs. 22-23) concluding that “against such things there is no law”. Having no negative consequences for performing “the fruit(s) of the Spirit”, the devil will not tempt us with them knowing he wouldn’t get the result he’s looking for, i.e. man’s separation from his God.

- without the Law- How can a person violate a law that doesn’t exist? Was nakedness a sin before Adam and Eve violated the ordinance to not eat of “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:9)? One can only speculate. If a law did exist in which public nudity was a sin, they were not conscious of it and were thus exempt of any consequence of violating it. But what about “ignorance of the law being no excuse to break it”? Thus the law that has been in place since the very beginning of time, understood as God’s moral law. After all, we are made in His image and we know that the only way man is able to emulate His righteousness is through a moral code of conduct. Even throughout the different dispensations and kingdoms that came and went, morality has been expected of all nations to live by since “He removes kings and sets up kings” (Dan 2:21). It may be possible that Adam and Eve were convicted by the moral code once they broke the law concerning the tree, as were the Jews on Pentecost when they were “cut to the heart” by the fact that they had crucified the very Messiah they had been waiting for (Act 2:37). Doing “by nature...what the law requires” shows that the “Gentiles, who [did] not have the [Mosaic] Law” were still required to live according to a moral code (2:14). They didn’t know, or follow, the specific laws the Israelites were governed by just as people from one country don’t understand the laws of, what could be considered, a foreign nation; which is why it is critical to understand the laws of the nation you are traveling through if you don’t want

to be convicted of any violation you might commit. You will find out very quickly that ignorance will not hold muster in a foreign court.

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Rom 7:9 For I was alive without the Law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

- Moral people are convicted in conscience if they violate known moral laws. Just because something might be legal, according to an existing law, doesn't necessarily make it right. In this verse begins a transition between dispensations.

Again, being without the Law (*Gk.3551- specifically [of Moses; also of the Gospel]*) has to do with the knowledge of it. Once the commandment came it brought the knowledge of what sin is (*depending on the dispensation*), and thus the consequence, whether knowingly or not (*Lk 12:48*), of violating it. Paul began to understand that there were two laws that he was conflicted with here, the "Law of God, in my inner being" (*v. 22*) and "another law (*human nature*) waging war against the law of my mind (*Gk.3563- intellect*)" (*v. 23*). He was "as to righteousness under the [Mosaic] Law, blameless" (*Php 3:6*). But, when he realized, as did the convicted Jews on Pentecost, that he was actually going against the prophecies he had learned concerning the coming One from his youth, "educated at the feet of Gamaliel" (*Act 22:3*), he became stricken with grief at the idea that he could be "found opposing God" (*Act 5:39*). It was at that point to Paul that sin revived, and I died. Thus he found himself to be spiritually separated from God.

On the road to Damascus after meeting Jesus, Paul was blinded from the experience "and for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank" (*Act 9:9*) because of being so distraught. Paul "lived [his] life in all good conscience" (*Act 23:1*) having "persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women" (*Act 22:4*). But now, after realizing the truth that was within the confines of his education, it all became clear. His behavior was against "the law of Christ" (*1 Cor 9:21*) Who he found to be "the end of the (*Mosaic*) Law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ]- Rom 10:4*). To paraphrase Paul, "I once felt I was in favor with God but when I came to the knowledge of the truth I realized I was actually separated from Him."

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Rom 7:10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

Lev 18:5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

- Speaking to O.T. Israel, if they kept the Mosaic Law they would live. But once the Gospel was revealed, that changed. Now Israel (*spiritual*) is saved through having Abraham's faith since "the promise... did not come through the Law but through the righteousness of faith" (*Rom 4:13*).

Rom 4:14 For if it is the adherents of the Law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void.

- Change is hard to accept. The O.T. Law that led to life among the Israelites would now prove to be deadly since it was made null and void by the N.T. law (*i.e. the Gospel*). One could no longer live by it since “it is evident that no one is justified before God by the Law, for ‘the righteous shall live by faith.’” (*Gal 3:11*) Just as it was with Israel upon hearing the negative report on the Promised Land that the ten spies gave concerning it. After they “died by plague before the LORD” (*Num 14:37*) in His righteous anger, God told Moses to lead the children of Israel back into the wilderness for forty years, equal to the forty days the spies spied out the promised land. But “they rose up early in the morning... saying, ‘Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned’. But Moses said, ‘Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed?’” (*Num 14:40-41*) God had given a new command to the Israelites which nullified the earlier one because of their lawless behavior in rejecting the positive report from Joshua and Caleb. Moses warned them that if they went through with it, which they did, they would die since God would no longer be with them. They were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites. God does not change to meet our expectations, we change to meet His. As is the case between O.T. and N.T. as it pertains to our obedience if we want to please Him.

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law (*Gk.3551- [of Moses; also of the Gospel]*).

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Rom 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

- Paul thought he was righteous in persecuting the church. He had been “zealous for God” (*Act 22:3*) thinking he was performing a righteous act as Steven was “cast out of the city and stoned”, those stoning him having “laid down their garments” at his feet, thus showing his approval, while they made Steven a martyr (*Act 7:58*). Satan used Paul’s zeal for God, knowing the change in Testaments, to wreak havoc on “the people of God” (*Heb 11:25*). Paul hadn’t learned yet that he was actually being deceived by Satan through sin in it taking occasion by the commandment; “you shall have no other gods before Me” (*Exo 20:3*). The deception by which Paul was deceived was what spiritually slew him, i.e. it separated him from God.

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Rom 7:12 Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

- Paul concluded that the Law had nothing to do with sin since the Law was neutral (*it didn’t produce sin*); again, the illustration of the cookie jar applies.

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Rom 7:13 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.

- If someone or something (*the law in Paul’s example here*) points out the evil that exists in any given act, thought or circumstance, how is that evil? If merely presenting something to be evil causes whoever to then perform the act in

question, how can the constructive critique be found to be the cause of it? Example: Stop signs exist in order to keep people safe, either the driver from being t-boned or the pedestrian from being hit. The stop sign didn't cause the driver to run it since the sign itself has no control over the driver's decision. Laws exist for our own protection. They ultimately "have been instituted by God" since "there is no authority except from God" (13:1). The O.T. Law, which is what Paul referenced here in his inspired writing, was as Jesus said concerning the Sabbath, that it "was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27).

- Our loving God gave us free agency, i.e. to make the choice to follow either evil or good. He also gave instructions to follow for His creation to mark the difference in order that sin might become exceeding sinful (*shown to be sin*). We are made in God's image (Gen 1:26) and thus He has granted us "to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in [our] inner being" (Eph 3:16). With such strength to "discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (12:2) we can better understand the destructive nature of lawlessness. It was only by the commandment that Paul found sin to become sinful beyond measure. Only through God's righteous ordinances throughout His word can we understand how terrible sin can be. It is without a doubt, when we consider the result of sin, in sending countless souls to a fiery Hell, that we can even get a grip on its ill nature. Understanding this, imbedding it in the conscience and bringing it to the forefront of the mind when situations arise, where choices are made between following the good or evil in any situation, would help us in making decisions that will please God, if that is our own will, and thus "in the shadow of death, guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk 1:79).

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Rom 7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

- Paul understood the words of Jesus as they pertained to the N.T. when He said "My words will not pass away" (Mat 24:35). The Law being spiritual is to say that it is *non-carnal* as opposed to *carnal*. The Law is Divine in origin as opposed to man's existence on earth being *temporal*, having come from "dust, and to dust [he] shall return" (Gen 3:19). It was not made for the righteous, as Jesus said He did "not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Lk 5:32).

1Ti 1:8 Now we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 understanding this, that **the Law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient**, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 **in accordance with the Gospel** of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. (*Emp. added*)

- sold under sin- or 'being a slave to its influence'. Jesus said "no servant can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and money" (Lk 16:13). Paul said the Law influenced his flesh into disobeying it even though he was the one ultimately in control. That baffled him. We are either owned by Satan or by God (*having been bought "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"; 1 Pet 1:19*). If a person believes they were tempted by the Law,

thus making the Law sinful, they are also saying they are tempted by God Who gave it. That would be putting God on the same level with Satan, thus blasphemous.

Jas 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

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Verses 15-21: Paul's life before he became a Christian when he was subject to the Mosaic, speaking as if in present tense. Compare 8:1. Wretched vs. victorious.

Rom 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

- Paul was baffled how his own flesh could have been so influenced under the Law. Everything he once did seemed to be the opposite of what he understood as now being what was right. Not that everything he was doing consciously was against righteousness. He was obviously using hyperbole. But the fact remains, and many of us if not all have had trouble with this fact, we have all been guilty of sin to some degree or another, but how many of us, as Christ, ever "suffered when tempted" (*Heb 2:18*)? Paul had that very mindset (*1 Cor 2:16*).

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Rom 7:16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law that it is good.

- Paul professed that it was not the Law's fault that he transgressed it.

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Rom 7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

- Here referencing his sin that originated from his flesh, now striving to walk according to his having become "a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God" (*Gal 6:15-16*). Paul was distancing himself from what he was ashamed of, stating any time he transgressed he blamed it on the sin that [once dwelt] in him. (*2 Pet 1:4-8*.) No one has ever been able to mature in a completely moral and un-stained life (*other than Christ*). We all have our 'skeletons', even though that's no excuse "to continue in sin that grace may abound" (*6:1*). Our "walk" has to be continually "in the light" if we want "the blood of Jesus" to continually "[cleanse] us from all sin" (*1 Jn 1:7*).

1Jn 3:8 Whoever **makes a practice of sinning** is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. (*Emp. added- ESV*)

1Jn 5:18 We know that everyone who has been born of God **does not keep on sinning**, but He Who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (*Emp. added- ESV*)

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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.

- in my flesh- Gk.4561- *human nature* (with its frailties [physically or morally] and passions). In and of itself, human nature is neutral; it is acted upon by our free agency. We were created in God's image so evil is not "natural" within mankind. We are here directed to the source of sinful behavior. The half that is guided by the flesh is in conflict with the other half that is guided by the spirit. One side or the other has to be stimulated, "either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (6:16). There is good that dwells in man's God-influenced side, but no good thing can dwell in his fleshly-oriented side which is influenced by Satan and thus has a tendency toward evil.

- Paul wrote to the Philippians "I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me" (4:13). The desire to do that which is right could only be accomplished with the help of "Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25). Any good that Paul wanted to perform could not be accomplished by relying on the Old Law.

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Rom 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

- Somewhat in repetition of v. 15; shows how this thought was so implanted in the mind of the apostle before he was converted. His actions against the church before his conversion, were enacted on according to what he thought was right at that particular time. And there were probably other things that must have pricked his conscience for him to have been so perplexed by his (*what appears to have been*) emotionally exhausted conscience.

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Rom 7:20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

- To say "the devil made me do it" will be no excuse at the Day of Judgment. There will be no 'passing the buck' then. Paul was not excusing his ill behavior via the sin that dwells within so much as he was referencing the origin of it.

Mar 7:20 And He said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For **from within, out of the heart** of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things **come from within**, and they defile a person." (*Emp. added*)

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Rom 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

- There will always be an evil influence (*call it Murphey's Law*), at the time of wanting to do what's right, that will confuse and thus attempt to prevent the good from being accomplished.

“There can be no doubt that he refers here to his carnal and corrupt nature; to the evil propensities and dispositions which were leading him astray. His representing this as a law is in accordance with all that he says of it, that it is servitude, that he is in bondage to it, and that it impedes his efforts to be holy and pure.”

Albert Barnes

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Rom 7:22 For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man:

- delight- Gk.4913- to *rejoice in with* oneself, that is, *feel satisfaction* concerning.

- Law of God- This was with reference to Divine Law, whether Mosaic under the Old Testament or the Gospel under the New, if it originated with God it is Divine.

- inward man- This is the “inner self [that is] being renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16). It was through this avenue from which Paul directed his rejoicing in the Divine Law (*here the Gospel*). This is “the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Pet 3:4) where no corruption can ever breach. This is the part of man that needs to be stimulated with the word of God “for training in righteousness” that he “may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). It is also the area in each person that the devil cannot influence since, if he could, there would be no such thing as free-agency.

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Rom 7:23 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.

- in my members- This is the area of the human makeup from which sin originates as “thought”. It is “from the heart” (Mat 15:18) from whence it is “conceived”, where it “gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (Jas 1:15). But we are to control this area by converting it from “sin as instruments for unrighteousness... to God as instruments for righteousness” (6:13).

- law- Gk.3551- (through the idea of prescriptive *usage*). Here, Satan is its author and the source of its rule. This pertains to what has been practiced, as a form of habit. Before conversion, there were things practiced that, even though publicly acceptable or not, were spiritually unacceptable according to the Biblical definition. The newborn saint is to develop new habits in becoming selfless in order to “please his neighbor for his good, to build him up” (Rom 15:2). In a convert’s mind (Gk.3563- *intellect, that is, mind [divine or human; in thought, feeling, or will]*) those old habits would be considered as warring against God’s “judgments [which] are true and just” (Rev 19:2). Paul later deals with this in chapter 8 as “the law of sin and death”.

- law of sin- It is so difficult to go ‘cold turkey’ on any behavior that has been practiced for such a long time. It becomes so ingrained in our everyday activities. Ask anyone who has smoked for most of their lives how difficult it is/was to quit, or a former drunk who often thinks about drinking socially, or a former addict who contemplates only using recreationally. These are behaviors, unless

exchanged with others, that lead each of us into captivity (*Gk.163 from 164- a prisoner of war*).

Luk 11:24 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25 And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. 26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first."

This is the battle between good and evil. It is so serious because the one who loses will suffer "the second death, the lake of fire" (*Rev 20:14*) but "the one who conquers [Christ] will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God" (2:7), they "will not be hurt by the second death" (2:11), Christ "will give [them] some of the hidden manna..." (2:17), He "will give [them] authority over the nations [ruling] them with a rod of iron" (2:27), they "will be clothed in white garments... [Christ] will never blot his name out of the book of life" (3:5), and "the one who conquers, [Christ] will grant him to sit with [Him] on [His] throne, as [He] conquered and sat down with [His] Father on His throne" (3:21).

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Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

- The two laws conflicting in Paul's mind, one godly and the other concerning his flesh, intensified by his new understanding that what he thought was right was found to be wrong after he was converted, being magnified by his own persecution, led him to ask this rhetorical question. He knew the answer. The part of him that was being held as prisoner of war with the painful reminders that he was, for some time, a tool of the devil in persecuting the church, was fast becoming in such a conflict from within, that he finally, through being humbled (*Act 9*), concluded that his loyalty was misplaced. He was loyal to something that was replaced with something better (*Heb 8:6*), yet his pride wasn't allowing him to listen to his educated, inner self, the things that were being revealed that the prophets had foretold. This may have been part of his answered prayer after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus (*Act 9*).

- body of death- See notes on verse 18. It was as though there was a part of Paul that he once lugged around as dead weight that was hindering him from doing what he really wanted to do. The flesh (*from which comes pride and fear*) is usually responsible for holding anyone back from being righteous.

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Rom 7:25 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.

- Between the O.T. Law and his own flesh, Paul realized his deliverance from sin was not possible. Only through the Gospel plan of salvation (*the Law of God*) could forgiveness be found. "Victory" is only possible "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*1 Cor 15:57*). If only all of mankind came to this realization, what praise there would be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! He is "the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [Him]" (*Jn 14:6*).

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- So then- In conclusion to what he once struggled with, Paul made a point as to where he (*and we*) stood (*should stand*). No longer being “conformed to this world” having been “transformed by the renewal of [his] mind” (12:2), and with “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), Paul was able to “discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (12:2).
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- I myself- Paul was the same person who “persecuted this Way to the death” (Act 22:4) and “was convinced that [he] ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (26:9) but once he was converted, he humbled himself to serve the Law of God with [his] mind. No longer in service to “the letter”, he finally became the inward Jew where “circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit”, no longer desirous of the praise “from man but from God” (2:29). Through his mind (Gk.3563- *intellect*) he continued fervently in his service to God, but with the understanding that the updated New Law (*the Gospel*) came from God via the sacrifice of His “only begotten Son” (Jn 3:16).
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- with the flesh- As John was so inspired to pen the nature of how a godly saint regards sin (1 Jn 5:18-19) the only way it would be possible to transgress the Law of God would be through Satan’s seduction (2 Cor 11:3) of the earthly, fleshly nature which abides in everyone until destroyed in death. Whatever transgression after the moment of true conversion would come from allowing ourselves to be seduced by Satan’s subtlety (2 Cor 11:3).

Charli Yana- February 2023
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