



# Recognising The Real Battle And Winning It

**“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity...” (Romans 7:22-23).**

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“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. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 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. 12 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 sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 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.” (Romans 7:7-25).

## Introduction

In this solemn passage the Apostle Paul opens the inner chamber of the believer's conflict. He speaks not as a philosopher speculating about evil, but as a regenerate man wrestling with indwelling sin. Here we are shown that the spiritual life is not a placid stream but a battlefield. Christians in particular must understand this conflict lest they despair; others in general must recognise the depth of the human problem lest they trust in mere morality. There are six vital points to note here:

1. The Law Reveals Sin — It Does Not Create It
2. Sin Exploits the Commandment
3. The Law Is Holy — But the Flesh Is Carnal
4. The Agony of the Divided Will
5. The Cry of Desperation
6. Victory Gained By Deliverance Through Jesus Christ

### 1. The Law Reveals Sin — It Does Not Create It

Paul begins by defending the holiness of the Law. In **Romans 7:7** he declared “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”.

The Law functions as a mirror. A mirror does not create dirt upon the face; it reveals it. Likewise, the commandment exposes what already resides within. Paul specifically cites the tenth commandment in **Exodus 20:17** - “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any



thing that is thy neighbour's". Notice that coveting is inward. The Law reaches into motive and desire. This is critical because sin is not merely external behaviour but inward corruption.

Also in Romans 3:20, the Scripture affirms: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin".

Christians must beware of confusing conviction with condemnation. The Law convicts; Christ redeems. Unbelievers must beware of thinking themselves righteous simply because their outward conduct appears respectable and morally okay.

## 2. Sin Exploits the Commandment

Paul continues in **Romans 7:8** saying - "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead". The problem is not the commandment; it is indwelling sin. The fallen heart reacts against restraint. Like a child told not to touch a forbidden object, the prohibition itself awakens desire.

The Bible describes this internal mechanism in **James 1:14–15** - "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death".

As an illustration, a speed limit sign does not create recklessness, yet it reveals the driver's impulse to exceed it. Likewise, divine prohibition reveals the rebellious bent of the flesh.

Believers must understand that temptation is often intensified when conscience is awakened. This does not mean the Law is defective; it means the flesh is corrupt.

## 3. The Law Is Holy — But the Flesh Is Carnal

Paul is emphatic in showing where the tension lies by stating that the Law is spiritual but man is carnal. The term carnal denotes flesh-governed humanity under sin's influence.

- **Romans 7:12** - "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."
- **Romans 7:14** - "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Jeremiah states the universal diagnosis - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Christians must never adopt a naïve anthropology (an approach that lacks critical analysis and depth, often relying on oversimplified explanations of cultural phenomena). The reality is that regeneration does not eradicate the temptations of sin; it breaks its dominion. The flesh remains, though dethroned.

## 4. The Agony of the Divided Will

Paul describes his experiential conflict as follows:

- **Romans 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".
- **Romans 7:19** - "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

This is not hypocrisy but an honest recognition of the warfare. The presence of struggle indicates spiritual life. **Dead men do not fight**. Paul explains further in **Romans 7:22–23** - "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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." The fact that the "inward man" delights in God's Law is evidence of regeneration. Yet another law operates in the members. In Galatians 5:17 Paul describes this same tension - "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so



that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

Christians need to come to the same realisation that conflict is inevitable. Do not interpret struggle as proof of abandonment by God. Rather, it evidences the Spirit's presence opposing the flesh. Non Christians should note that moral resolve alone cannot conquer indwelling sin. The problem is not ignorance but corruption.

### 5. The Cry of Desperation

The passage climaxes in anguish as Paul exclaimed - “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). This is not theatrical despair but spiritual realism. The believer recognises his own insufficiency.

Compare David's confession in **Psalm 51:3–4** - “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight...” True spirituality involves honest self-assessment.

### 6. Victory Gained By Deliverance Through Jesus Christ

Paul does not leave us in lamentation, but shows the victory. In **Romans 7:25** he declared “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”. This confirms that deliverance is not self-generated. It is mediated “through Jesus Christ our Lord”.

The wider testimony of Scripture affirms this hope:

- **Romans 8:1** - “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”; and
- **1 Corinthians 15:57** - “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

As an illustration, a drowning man cannot rescue himself by greater effort; he must be lifted by another. So Christ delivers from sin's penalty and progressively from its power.

In Summary, here are some Practical Exhortations for the Spiritual Walk:

- 1) **Do not trust the flesh.** **Romans 13:14** says “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof”.
- 2) **Walk in the Spirit.** **Galatians 5:16** says “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”.
- 3) **Confess and depend daily upon grace.** **1 John 1:9** admonishes - “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

### In Conclusion, Romans 7 teaches us that:

- The Law is holy.
- Sin is indwelling and deceptive.
- The Christian life involves real conflict.
- Deliverance is found not in self-effort but in Jesus Christ.

The final word in Paul's discuss is not “wretched man” but “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”. The believer must walk humbly, vigilantly, and dependently. The unbeliever must recognise that reform alone cannot cure corruption. We need salvation and deliverance by Jesus.

May we know both the realism of the struggle and the triumph of the Saviour.