



Romans 7:7-25 (ESV)

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! 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.”⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Romans 7:7-25 (HCSB)

⁷ What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet. ⁸ And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life ¹⁰ and I died. The commandment that was meant for life resulted in death for me. ¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

¹³ Therefore, did what is good cause my death? Absolutely not! On the contrary, sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become sinful beyond measure. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am made out of flesh, sold into sin's power. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷ So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that lives in me.

²¹ So I discover this principle: When I want to do what is good, evil is with me. ²² For in my inner self I joyfully agree with God's law. ²³ But I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this dying body? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh, to the law of sin.

English Standard Version Bible - Study Bible¹

Romans 7:7-25

7:7-25 The Law and Sin. The claim that the Mosaic law produced sin and death raises the question, Is the law itself sinful? In this section Paul explains that the law itself is good and that the fault lies with sin. Interpreters differ as to whether the “I” in these verses is Adam, Israel, or Paul himself. The last view seems best—that Paul (speaking as “I”) represents every unregenerate person who tries to keep the law, which also corresponds to the experience of Adam and Israel when they were faced with God’s commands.

7:7 The law defines sin and also provokes sin. Confronted by the law, sin takes on the character of rebellion, so that people enjoy transgressing commands in order to demonstrate their independence. This principle is illustrated from the tenth commandment, which prohibits coveting ([Ex. 20:17](#)).

7:8 The prohibition against coveting exacerbated the desire for what was forbidden. **Sin lies dead** means that sin was latent rather than nonexistent.

7:9 If the verse relates to Paul, he is speaking of his subjective experience. If it relates to Adam, it refers to his relationship with God before he sinned. The prohibition against coveting stimulated the desire to sin, and sin in turn led to death.

7:10-11 God’s commands promise eternal **life** if one keeps them; and yet they lead to **death**, since everyone violates what God ordains. This happens when sin deceives a person and uses the law as its instrument.

7:12 In light of [vv. 7-11](#), Paul affirms the holiness of the law and the goodness of God’s commands.

7:13-25 If the law is not sin, is it the case that the good law is responsible for death? Paul argues that the fault lies with sin, not with the law. Through the law, sin is revealed in all its hideousness, and the law is vindicated as good. The section can be subdivided into [vv. 14-17](#), [18-20](#), and [21-25](#). A long-standing debate centers on whether Paul is describing believers or unbelievers. Although good arguments are given by both sides, the most widely held view—beginning especially with Augustine and reaffirmed in the Reformation—is that Paul’s primary reference is to *believers*. In support of this position:

- (1) the shift to the present tense;
- (2) unbelievers do not desire so intensely to keep God’s law ([v. 21](#));
- (3) the distinction between the “I” and the “flesh” ([v. 18](#));
- (4) the delight in God’s law ([v. 22](#));
- (5) deliverance from the sinful body is future ([v. 24](#); [8:10, 11, 23](#));
- (6) the tension between good and evil in the concluding statement in [7:25](#); and
- (7) the fact that Christians are already righteous in Christ but are not yet perfected until the day of redemption.

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 7".

A second position, not as widely held but supported by a number of evangelical scholars, is that Paul is referring to *unbelievers*. In support of this position:

- (1) the structure of the passage ([vv. 7-25](#) matches the life of the unregenerate previewed in [v. 5](#), whereas [8:1-17](#) fits with the life of believers identified in [7:6](#));
- (2) the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in [vv. 13-25](#) but is referred to 19 times in [ch. 8](#);
- (3) to say that Christians are “sold under sin” ([7:14](#)) and “captive to the law of sin” ([v. 23](#)) stands in tension with chs. 6 and 8, which trumpet the freedom of believers from slavery to sin;
- (4) the suggestion that the present tense does not denote present time but the spiritual state of Paul when unconverted;
- (5) the desire to keep God’s law reflects the mind-set of the pious Jew who wanted to live a moral life (as the verses emphasize, such people do not and cannot keep the law); and
- (6) the section’s opening verse ([v. 13](#)) explains how the law brought death to Paul as an unbeliever.

Advocates of both positions agree that

- (1) Christians still struggle with sin through their whole lives (see [Gal. 5:17](#); [1 John 1:8-9](#)); and
- (2) Christians can and should grow in sanctification throughout their lives by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them ([Rom. 8:2, 4, 9, 13-14](#)).

Those who hold to the first position usually see this passage as describing both Paul’s own experience and the experience of Christians generally. Although Christians are free from the condemnation of the law, sin nonetheless continues to dwell within, and all genuine Christians (along with Paul) should be profoundly aware of how far they fall short of God’s absolute standard of righteousness. Thus Paul cries out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” ([7:24](#)). The answer follows immediately: the one who *has* delivered Christians once for all (see [4:2-25](#); [5:2, 9](#)) and the one who *will* deliver them day by day is “Jesus Christ our Lord!” ([7:25](#)).

As in many other places in Paul’s letters, this reflects his emphasis on both the “already” aspect of salvation (that believers *have been* saved) and the “not yet” aspect (that believers *will be* saved ultimately and for all eternity at the return of Christ), and that they live in the tension between the already and the not yet. In the section that immediately follows ([8:1-11](#)), Paul shows that the means by which Christians are delivered daily from the indwelling power of sin is:

- (1) by walking “not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” ([8:4](#));
- (2) by not “set[ting] their minds on the things of the flesh, but... on the things of the Spirit” ([8:5](#)); and
- (3) by the indwelling presence of “the Spirit of God [who] dwells in you” ([8:9, 11](#)).

[7:16](#) Paul's reference to the goodness of the law reflects the main point of these verses.

[7:17](#) Paul is not absolving himself of personal responsibility but emphasizing the power of sin.

[7:21-23](#) The meaning of the word "law" in these verses is the subject of debate. Some think that every use of the word refers to the Mosaic law, but most argue that in [vv. 21](#) and [23](#) the term means "principle." All agree that the Mosaic law is in view in [v. 22](#). The Greek word *nomos* can take either meaning.

[7:24-25](#) **Who will deliver me?** The living presence of Jesus Christ is the answer to the problem of sin in one's life.

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible² *Romans 7:7-25*

[7:7-8](#) The law itself is not evil or sinful, but one of its functions is to reveal **sin**. In fact Paul speaks as if sin is an unknown quantity apart from the law when he says, **I would not have known sin if it were not for the law**. Sin, **seizing an opportunity**, uses the law to motivate the flesh (fallen nature) to action. Once again Paul personified sin almost as Satan himself.

[7:9-10](#) The phrase **once I was alive** has been variously interpreted as a reference to (1) Paul before he came to know the law as a young Jewish boy, (2) Paul before his conversion and the conviction brought by the Holy Spirit, (3) Paul speaking as Adam in the garden of Eden before the command came, or (4) any Hebrew before the giving of the Mosaic law at Mount Sinai. The basic point in each of these interpretations is the same: God's intent in the law was **life**, but sin deceived man by the law and brought **death**.

[7:11-12](#) Though **the law** makes sin known and is in fact used by sin to produce death, it is nevertheless **holy and just and good**, reflecting God's perfect and eternal holiness.

[7:13](#) Did the **good** law cause **death**? The correct understanding is that sin used something good to bring human death. God used the law to accomplish His purpose to clarify and to overcome sin.

[7:14-25](#) This section is probably the most difficult and controversial passage in the letter to the Romans. For the most part the Eastern Church has interpreted it as referring to an unregenerate person (e.g., Paul before his conversion). The Western Church has followed Augustine, Luther, and Calvin in thinking it refers to a regenerate person (Paul after his conversion). Some suggest a mediating position. One such view interprets the subject as an OT believer who loves the law ([Pss 1; 119](#)) but struggles to perform it. Living before Christ and Pentecost, this person does not have the permanent and empowering gift of the Holy Spirit, as do new covenant believers. Another view holds that the subject is almost converted to Christ and is now under conviction of sin by the law.

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 7".

The view that the subject of 14-25 is a regenerate person is sometimes modified in the following ways: (1) The subject is saved but has not had "baptism" in the Pentecostal sense or a second work of grace (as held in some types of Wesleyan theology). (2) The subject is an immature believer, not yet equipped for warfare with his fleshly desires. (3) The subject is a believer trying to become sanctified by legalism.

The view outlined here takes the position that the subject is a regenerated believer, most obviously Paul himself but generically every believer. Paul describes the new man in relation to the law of God and is looking at only one aspect of the person. The new man will be considered in relation to the Holy Spirit in the next section where the Holy Spirit is mentioned 21 times. The main reason for the position offered here is a consideration of what this man's problem really is. In [verse 14](#) he is said to be **made out of flesh** (Gk *sarkinos*, not *sarkikos*). Many translations confuse these two Greek words. The first word emphasizes composition while the second emphasizes tendency ("fleshy" vs. "fleshly"). In [verse 18](#) **in my flesh** means the whole fallen nature that needs the resurrection body ([Php 3:21](#)). In [verse 24](#) the **wretched man** cries out to be rescued ("out," Gk *ek*) **from this dying body**. As a believer in Christ, Paul longed to be delivered from the fallen human body which still has indwelling sin.

[7:14-15](#) The law is from God and is therefore **spiritual**, but Paul is **made out of flesh** (a metaphorical reference to spiritual fallenness) and thus finds himself conflicted with the heavenly law of God.

[7:16-17](#) Paul agreed with the law and its goodness, but sin is an alien power that has residence within him and causes him to do things he hates.

[7:18-19](#) Even after conversion, there is no part of a person that is sinless, no place without sin's presence, and the believer is unable to keep the whole law. The only **good** in a believer is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

[7:20-23](#) In his **inner self** (Gk *eso anthropos*), in his deepest recesses, the believer delights in God's law, but he finds this alien power living within, waging war with him and taking him **prisoner to the law of sin**.

[7:24-25](#) Many modern commentators and translators try to reorder these verses, but the order makes sense if the interpretation outlined above is followed. In [verse 24](#) the subject cries out for deliverance from the fallen human condition. A cry of thanksgiving is then offered to God because the subject knows that Jesus will deliver him from his body. The believer recognizes that in his mind he wants to serve God's law since it is holy, just, good, and spiritual, but at the same time his fallen nature is in the service of this alien power—sin.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Romans 7:7-25

7:9-11 Where there is no law, there is no sin, because people cannot know that their actions are sinful unless a law forbids those actions. God's law makes people realize that they are sinners doomed to die, yet it offers no help. Sin is real, and it is dangerous. Imagine a sunny day at the beach. You plunge into the surf; then you notice a sign on the pier: "No swimming. Sharks." Your day is ruined. Is it the sign's fault? Are you angry with the people who put it up? The law is like the sign. It is essential, and we are grateful for it—but it doesn't get rid of the sharks.

7:11, 12 Sin deceives people by misusing the law. The law was holy, expressing God's nature and will for people. In the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3](#)), the serpent deceived Eve, changing her focus from the freedom she had to the one restriction God had made. Ever since then, we have all been rebels. Sin looks good to us precisely because God has said it is wrong. When we are tempted to rebel, we need to look at the law from a wider perspective—in the light of God's grace and mercy. If we focus on his great love for us, we will understand that he only restricts us from actions and attitudes that ultimately will harm us.

7:15 Paul shares three lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his sinful desires: (1) Knowledge of the rules is not the answer ([7:9](#)). Paul felt fine as long as he did not understand what the law demanded. When he learned the truth, he knew he was doomed. (2) Self-determination (struggling in one's own strength) doesn't succeed ([7:15](#)). Paul found himself sinning in ways that weren't even attractive to him. (3) Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from a person's life ([7:22-25](#)). Being born again takes a moment of faith, but becoming like Christ is a lifelong process. Paul compares Christian growth to a strenuous race or fight ([1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#); [2 Timothy 4:7](#)). Thus, as Paul has been emphasizing since the beginning of this letter, *no one* in the world is innocent; no one deserves to be saved—not the pagan who doesn't know God's laws, not the person who knows them and tries to keep them. All of us must depend totally on the work of Christ for our salvation. We cannot earn it by our good behavior.

7:15 This is more than the cry of one desperate man; it describes the experience of all Christians struggling against sin or trying to please God by keeping rules and laws without the Spirit's help. We must never underestimate the power of sin and attempt to fight it in our own strength. Satan is a crafty tempter, and we have an amazing ability to make excuses. Instead of trying to overcome sin with our own human willpower, we must take hold of God's provision for victory over sin: the Holy Spirit, who lives within us and gives us power. And when we fall, he lovingly reaches out to help us up.

7:23-25 The "power within" is the sin nature deep within us. This is our vulnerability to sin; it refers to everything within us that is more loyal to our old way of selfish living than to God.

7:23-25 There is great tension in daily Christian experience. The conflict is that we agree with God's commands but cannot do them. As a result, we are painfully aware of our sin. This inward struggle with sin was as real for Paul as it is for us. From Paul we learn what to do about it. Whenever he felt overwhelmed by the spiritual battle, he would return to the beginnings of his spiritual life, remembering how he had been freed from sin by Jesus Christ. When we feel confused and overwhelmed by sin's appeal, let us claim the freedom Christ gave us. His power can lift us to victory.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1906-1907.

Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary⁴

Romans 7:7-25

God's Law Reveals Our Sin / [7:7-13](#)

But where does the law fit into all this? In this section, Paul shows that the law is powerless to save sinners ([7:7-14](#)) and lawkeepers ([7:15-22](#)). Even a person with a new nature ([7:23-25](#)) experiences ongoing evidence of the law's inability to motivate him or her toward good. The sinner is condemned by the law; the lawkeeper can't live up to it; and the person with the new nature finds that his or her obedience to the law is sabotaged by the effects of the old nature. Once again, Paul declares that salvation cannot be found by obeying the law. No matter who we are, only Jesus Christ can set us free. Yet the law, because it is God's law, is not then cast aside as useless. In the next chapters, Paul grapples with the complexity of life under grace and the believer's relationship to God's law.

[7:7-8](#) Because the law arouses evil desires ([7:5](#)) and because we have been released from the law ([7:6](#)), does that mean **the law of God is evil**? Paul again answers his own question, **Of course not!** The law itself is not evil, but it does tell us what evil is. Paul uses coveting ([Exodus 20:17](#); [Deuteronomy 5:21](#)) as an example—**I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "Do not covet."**

Paul deliberately chose the last commandment as an example. That particular commandment was unique among the laws in the Decalogue, and it obviously had a significant effect on Paul himself. The tenth commandment focuses entirely on our inward nature. At a superficial level, we may claim to have lived up to the first nine, but the last commandment exposes our intentions with shameful clarity. Paul claims that no sooner had he discovered that commandment than it **aroused all kinds of forbidden desires** within him. In telling him not to covet, the law had introduced Paul to the darkest desires. But still Paul could maintain his firm belief that God's law itself was sinless. The bright light that revealed a world of filth was not itself evil for having done so. Without the law, sin goes unnoticed, unknown. Some sins may not even present a problem until they are prohibited.

[7:9-10](#) Before we realize the seriousness of the law and of sin, we believe ourselves to be **fine**. But when we **understand what the law** really demands, then we also come to understand that we have **broken the law**, we are sinners, and we are **doomed to die** eternally. The commands, given to **show** people **the way of life**, instead show merely that all people have been given **the death penalty**.

[7:11](#) **Sin fooled** people by misusing the law. It is filled with false promises and deceptions:

- Sin promises to satisfy our desires even more than the last time.
- Sin promises that our actions can be kept hidden, so no one will know.
- Sin promises that we won't have to worry about consequences.
- Sin promises special benefits: wisdom, knowledge, and sophistication.
- Sin promises power and prestige in exchange for cooperation.

In the Garden of Eden (see [Genesis 3](#)), the serpent deceived Eve by taking her focus off the freedom she had and putting it on the one restriction God had given. Since that time we have all been rebels.

4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 603-605.

[7:12](#) Although it gave him the death penalty, Paul could not speak against the law. **The law itself is holy and right and good** because it reflects the character and will of God himself, who is holy. The commandments define sin but are not sin ([7:7](#)). The purpose of the law is to teach us right from wrong, to give us guidelines, and to show sin for what it is. The law helps us live for God, but it cannot save us.

If the law causes so much difficulty, what useful purpose does it serve? (1) It is a revelation of the nature, character, and will of God. (2) Its ethical components were incorporated in Christ's teaching. (3) It teaches us about sin. (4) It demolishes self-righteousness.

[7:13](#) Paul asks, "**Did the law, which is good, cause my doom?**" Again he answers his own question, **Of course not!** The law was given by God; it tells us what God desires of us, and it is good. It is sin, not the law, that brings death, and it is only through the law that **we can see how terrible sin really is**. Sin **uses God's good commandments** to continue to produce death in people because people cannot keep the law in their own strength. But, by using the commandments as instruments of death, sin reveals itself in all its ugliness.

Struggling with Sin / [7:14-25](#)

Paul's intense desire to view the law with high esteem helped fuel his next thoughts. He made every effort to clarify the tension between the holy law and the sin that uses the law for its deadly purposes. The law comes from God, has his character, and tells his will for his people. But as the majesty of the law fills Paul's mind, along with it comes the vision of his own standing before the law. Paul wants to make the point that sin does not besmirch the law. But he also realizes that he must clarify his own ongoing relationship to the law.

[7:14](#) How can we be free from sin and yet continue to do wrong? In Christ, we are free from the penalty of sin (judgment) and the power of sin (hopelessness). But while still in the flesh, we are not free from the presence of sin (temptations) and the possibility of sin (failures). Paul never claimed that being under grace instead of under the law meant that a believer was somehow above the law. In fact, having described such a great distance between the law and sin, he realized that he was still far more acquainted with the reality of sin than the righteous standard of the law.

So, Paul writes, **the trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master**. The law has an uncanny capacity for reminding us of what we once were, and of how captivating that old life can still appear. Our hope never shifts back to the law. We must daily focus on Christ.

[7:15](#) By introducing his personal dilemma, Paul invites us to consider how well we understand our own behavior. As long as believers live in this world as men and women of flesh and blood, they will face a constant tension—the conflict between their sinful nature and their new spiritual life. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict" ([Galatians 5:17](#)).

Paul shares three lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his old sinful desires. (1) Knowledge of the law is not the answer ([7:9](#)). (2) Self-determination (to **want to do what is right**) doesn't succeed ([7:15](#)). (3) Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from a person's life ([7:22-25](#)).

Being born again starts in a moment of faith, but becoming like Christ takes a lifetime. Paul compares Christian growth to a strenuous race or fight ([1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#); [2 Timothy 4:7](#)). Thus, as Paul has been

emphasizing since the beginning of this letter, no one in the world is innocent; no one deserves to be saved—not the pagan who doesn't know God's laws, nor the Christian or Jew who knows them and tries to keep them. All of us must depend totally on the work of Christ for our salvation. We cannot earn it by our good behavior.

7:16-17 We want to obey God's law, yet we still fail. Our failure is not the law's fault, nor is it our own fault: **It is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things.** If sin did not exist, then the law would give us guidelines for living perfectly. But sin perverts everything. Paul is not abdicating responsibility for his sin; instead, he is making the point that his desires and the sin within him are in constant conflict. Sin is a power that, at times, can still win because his redemption is not yet complete.

7:18-20 In our sinful nature, there is nothing good. Paul sees this as part of being human. Although we belong to Christ and have died to sin, we still live in a sinful world and have a **sinful nature** that is **rotten through and through.** The tension continues—trying to do good and not being able to do it. Paul describes the person who knows what is good and might even desire to do it, but this person lacks the power. Believers still have a sinful nature that pulls them to do what they **don't want to do.** The seeming contradiction of "I do—I don't do" emphasizes how difficult it is to identify the sources of our sinful behaviors. Without the Holy Spirit's help, the person is dominated by the power of sin and continues to do evil when he actually desires to do good.

7:21 The **fact of life** at work here is the reality that evil is within us, even when we **want to do what is right.** In fact, it is when we most want to do good that we become most acutely aware of our propensity not to do so. A swimmer has no idea how strong the current is until she tries to swim upstream. When she faces the current, she finds this law at work: the current is against her.

7:22-23 Believers **love God's law** (referring to the path of obedience to God that the entire Old Testament presents) because they long to know it and do it and thus to please God. This is one of the marks of wisdom ([Psalm 1:2](#)). The problem is that there is **another law at work within.** That other law is the law of sin. Sin is constantly **at war** because it will not give up the control over us that it lost when we came to faith in Christ. Sin fights against our **mind** because our mind is where we make our decisions and our moral judgments. We cannot resist our sin nature in our own power. When we try, we will be defeated.

Paul does not say that these powers are equal, but he knows they are both there. We must realize the same. One power must be resisted while relying on the other. When we fail to rely on Christ's strength for our daily strength, we in essence provide sin with more power over us. Sin's power will not have grown, but our relative weakness will make it seem that way. Sin's power is not an excuse for us to drift spiritually, or openly give in to temptation. Believers must not forget that they have already won because the Spirit within is greater than the spirit in the world ([1 John 4:4](#)).

7:24 Our bodies are mortal; they are bodies of death. As long as we live on this earth in our human bodies, we will face this conflict with sin. Our place of residence is our place of least resistance. And, as seen above, as long as we are confined to this world, we will experience a measure of struggle and defeat. But, we are not left in **miserable** defeat, **dominated by sin**—rescue will come!

7:25 The triumph is sweeter because the struggle is real. In the last few verses, we have glimpsed the struggle of a genuine believer. Now the answer is shouted in exclamation.

Many who claim to know Christ never see themselves well enough to appreciate as deeply as Paul did what they actually have in Christ. Because of Jesus Christ, we are assured of a great future. We will one day join him in

eternity with a new body that is free from sin. In the meantime, however, we must realize that we remain in the **sinful nature** as slaves **to sin**. But the **answer** to who will set us free **is in Jesus Christ our Lord**. The battle ends with a shout of victory. The winners know who really won. The winners also know the war isn't over. But in the meantime, there are more lessons to learn, and there is more freedom to experience.

Study and Discussion Questions



Struggling With Sin - [Romans 7:7-25](#)

Topics: [Conflict](#), [Death](#), [Discouragement](#), [Law](#), [Sin](#), [Weaknesses](#)

Open It

1. As a child, how did you respond to the commands given to you by your parents?
2. How do you tend to respond to authority?
3. *What sort of bad habits are hardest to break?

Explore It

4. What is the purpose of the Law? ([7:7-8](#))
5. What bad effect does knowing the Law have on a person? ([7:7-8](#))
6. When a person has no knowledge of the Law, what becomes of sin? ([7:9](#))
7. *How does knowing the Law bring the possibility of death to a person? ([7:9-11](#))
8. How does the Law put a person to death? ([7:11](#))
9. What are the characteristics of the Law and the commandment? ([7:12](#))
10. How does the awareness of the Law produce death in a person? ([7:13](#))
11. *What did Paul share about his own attempts to follow the Law? ([7:14-16](#))
12. *What did Paul blame for his continuing failure to do good? ([7:17-20](#))
13. How did Paul describe his own struggle to do what was right? ([7:21-23](#))
14. How did Paul describe himself and his situation? ([7:24](#))
15. To whom did Paul turn for rescue from his agonizing situation? ([7:24](#))
16. What division did Paul acknowledge in his own mind and nature? ([7:24](#))

Get It

17. What are some of the various ways people respond to God's law?
18. How can reading and understanding God's law be discouraging to a person?
19. How can a Christian continue to commit sins even though God is his or her master?

20. *How have you experienced a struggle with sin similar to what Paul describes?
21. *What hope do we have of deliverance from sin here on earth?
22. How can we take hold of the power of Christ to overcome sin?
23. What should we do when we become discouraged and confused in our Christian lives?
24. How can knowing that God has achieved the ultimate victory over sin affect your prayers, thoughts, and attitudes?

Apply It

25. *How can you remind yourself each day this week of God's victory over sin?
26. What recent struggle with sin do you need to hand over to God today?