

## Our Struggle with Sin (*Part 2*)

*Romans 7:7-12*

**Sermon-in-a-Sentence:** God's Word is holy, righteous and good because it helps us to know what sin is and it makes us aware of how exceedingly sinful our sinful nature really is.

All of us struggle with sin! Many of us, I suspect, have a bad habit, a besetting sin that defies our best efforts to change. We've tried everything we know to do—we consult the Word of God, we pray, we redouble our efforts—but all to no avail. So, we are tempted to give up.

The Apostle Paul also struggled with sin. As a Jew who held the Mosaic Law and the Hebrew Scriptures (what we call the "Old Testament") in very high esteem, he frequently went to the Scriptures to find help in his battle against sin. But what he discovered was that the Law only served to increase his sense of guilt and actually stimulated him to sin even more! We can identify with Paul's struggle. What are we to do?

In Romans 6-8 Paul teaches us how to be victorious in our struggle against sin. We must learn how to appropriate God's grace. But does this emphasis on God's grace somehow diminish the importance of the Law, God's Word?

- In our own struggle with sin, we may be tempted to think that God's Word is the problem because it condemns and convicts us of sin; and when we try, and try even harder, to live up to its standards, it seems like we fail even more!
- With the Lord's help, under the leading and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we can learn how to deal successfully with sin and our sinful nature.
- The key to victory over sin in our lives is to take the next step of obedience. We must develop a habit pattern of obedience to the Word of God rather than of submission to the evil desires of our sinful nature.
- Used rightly, God's Word serves as a mirror that reveals our inner being and shows us how sinful we really are so that we can take action to correct the problem (cf. James 1:22-25).

**7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin?** [*NLT / TEV*—sinful. Is the Law a bad thing because it highlights our sinfulness?] **Certainly not!** The Law is good...

### **1. Because the Law reveals sin; it helps us to know what sin is (7:7-8)**

**7 Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.**

- Paul reveals his personal struggles with sin (covetousness) and the solution he found (contentment). Don't focus only on the SIN you battle; focus, too, on the SOLUTION! (Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5). Use the principle of REPLACEMENT.
- The Law warns us that sin is real and that it is dangerous but it cannot save us from the death penalty that sin brings upon us nor the deadly power of our own sinful nature.

### **2. Because the Law reveals the true nature of our sinful nature (7:9-11)**

**9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.**

- The Law reveals that we need a Savior to deal with our sin (Christ delivers us from the *penalty* of our sins) and a Sanctifier to deal with our sinful nature (Christ delivers us from the *power* of our sinful nature).
- Self-effort alone in the process of Sanctification is not enough! (cf. Hebrews 12:1-3; Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13). Don't lose heart—we have both a Savior and a Sanctifier!
- Paul is not saying that he was spiritually alive but then died once he became aware of the Law. Rather, he is saying that the Law served to reveal and expose the fact that he was guilty of sin and therefore, spiritually dead. (Philippians 3:2-6 – he was not good enough!)
- "Until we realize how wicked sin really is, we will never want to oppose it and live in victory." (*Wiersbe, Be Right, p. 89*)
- Paul discovered that the Law actually arouses and stimulates our sinful nature.
- "Instead of giving life, the law brought condemnation; instead of producing holiness, it stimulated sin." (*NIV Study Bible, p. 1715*)
- Furthermore, it is unable to give us spiritual life (Galatians 3:21-22).

**11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.**

- "Since the law points out the path of righteousness, it points to life. But since sin reigns in our natures, the law means judgment and death for us. When we focus on the law we are deceived into sinning, which thus 'kills' our spiritual lives." (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 1890*)

**12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.**

- "Our problem with sin is not the fault of the holy law of God, only of how our sinful nature responds to the law." (*NKJV Study Bible, p. 1890*)
- Cp. Mark 10:17-27.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

- In our quest for holiness and righteousness in our daily life, God's Word is holy, righteous and good.
- Used correctly, it helps us to recognize sin as sin and it helps us to realize the depths of our own spiritual depravity.
- God's Word points out our need for a *Savior* from the penalty of sin and for a *Sanctifier* who can deliver us from the power of our own sinful nature.
- We must not fall into the trap of thinking that we can *earn salvation* or that we can *achieve holiness* by our own self-efforts alone!
- We must learn how to appropriate and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit—to live under His control and guidance. (Romans 8)