

Romans 7:1–25

Dead to the Law, Alive to Christ

Introduction: The Frustration Every Honest Believer Knows

Have you ever found yourself wanting to do what is right—really wanting to—but somehow doing the very thing you hate? You love God. You love His Word. You want to walk in obedience. And yet there is this inward struggle that refuses to go away.

If you’ve ever felt that tension, Romans chapter 7 speaks your language.

This chapter is not written to excuse sin, nor to glorify failure. It is written to expose the limits of self-effort, to strip away confidence in the flesh, and to prepare us for the freedom of life in the Spirit. Romans 7 is meant to bring us to the end of ourselves—so that grace can finally do its work.

1. Released from the Law to Belong to Christ

Romans 7:1–4

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

Paul begins with a legal illustration: death ends legal obligation. The law has authority only as long as a person lives. And Paul’s startling declaration is this—in Christ, we died.

Through the body of Jesus Christ, through His death on the cross, our former relationship to the law as a means of righteousness has ended. The law no longer defines our standing before God. We are not merely forgiven lawbreakers—we are joined to a new Husband, the risen Christ.

This is not freedom to live recklessly. It is freedom to live fruitfully.

The Christian life is not lawlessness—it is relationship. We are not released from the law to indulge the flesh, but released from the law to belong to Christ, and belonging to Him produces fruit that the law could never produce.

Practical Application

If your Christian life feels like constant pressure, constant guilt, constant striving, it may be because you are trying to relate to God through rules instead of relationship. Fruit does not come from effort—it comes from abiding.

2. The Law Reveals Sin but Cannot Cure It

Romans 7:5–13

“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

The law is holy, just, and good—but it was never designed to make anyone righteous. Its purpose is diagnostic, not therapeutic. It reveals sin; it does not remove it.

Paul explains that sin actually uses the law as an opportunity. When the commandment exposes what is wrong, sin reacts, rebels, and multiplies guilt. The problem is not the law—the problem is sin in us.

The law tells us what God requires. Sin shows us we cannot meet that requirement on our own.

Practical Application

Trying harder does not fix a sinful nature. Moral resolve identifies the problem but offers no power to change it. The law can show you that you are drowning—but it cannot pull you out of the water.

3. The Inner Conflict of the Awakened Conscience

Romans 7:14–23

“For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.”

This is one of the most honest passages in all of Scripture. Paul describes the inward war between the desire to please God and the weakness of the flesh.

This is not the struggle of an unbeliever who loves sin. This is the struggle of someone who delights in the law of God in the inward man, yet discovers another force at work within.

The flesh does not disappear at conversion. The believer now has new desires—but not yet a new body. The result is tension, frustration, and conflict.

This passage destroys self-righteousness. It also destroys despair. The struggle itself is evidence that God has done a work in the heart.

Practical Application

If you are grieved by sin, you are not defeated—you are alive. Dead people do not struggle. The presence of conflict is not proof of failure; it is proof that a new nature is at work.

4. The Cry of Despair and the Turning Point

Romans 7:24–25

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

This is the moment God waits for—the moment when self-effort finally collapses. Notice Paul does not ask, “*What method will fix me?*” He asks, “*Who will deliver me?*”

And the answer comes immediately:

“I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Deliverance is not found in better discipline, stronger willpower, or spiritual techniques. Deliverance is found in a Person.

Jesus Christ did not only forgive your sins—He shed His blood to break sin’s dominion, and He rose from the dead to give new life. The resurrection declares that He is Lord, Savior, and victorious over everything that enslaves us.

Romans 7 ends in dependence so that Romans 8 can begin in freedom.

A Challenge for Believers

Stop trusting the flesh—even religious flesh.

If you are weary from striving, frustrated by repeated failure, or discouraged by your inability to live up to what you know is right, God may be inviting you to stop trying to fix yourself and start trusting His Spirit.

Victory does not come from trying harder—it comes from yielding more fully. The Christian life is not self-reformation; it is Spirit-transformation.

An Invitation for Non-Believers

If you are honest, you know the struggle Paul describes. You have tried to be better. You have tried to change. And you have discovered what Scripture declares—sin is stronger than human resolve.

But God has done what you cannot do.

Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to pay for sin completely. He rose from the dead to offer new life freely. Forgiveness is not earned—it is received.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Today, you can stop striving and start trusting. You can come to Christ—not to clean yourself up, but to be made new.

If you will turn to Him, confess your need, and trust in what He has done, He will forgive you, change you, and give you life that the law never could.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank You that what we could never accomplish through effort, You have accomplished through grace. Teach us to walk not in the confidence of the flesh, but in the power of Your Spirit. Draw every heart—believer and unbeliever alike—to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ. Amen.