



# THE STRUGGLE

It starts with the question: “*is the Law sin*”?

It went from there to “*for I had not known desiring if the law had not said Thou shall not desire*”

- The law said don't do it. DESIRE
- The sin nature said do it. DESIRE
- I was deceived by the flesh
- I know the commandment is Holy and righteous and good
- Therefore -*does the law produce death in me?*

## ANSWER

**Not in any sense-**

***<sup>13</sup>Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me?***

***May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.***



## THE CONFLICT

*<sup>14</sup>For we know that **the Law is spiritual**; but I am of **flesh**, sold into bondage to sin.*

*<sup>15</sup>For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

*<sup>16</sup>But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.*

**Self (Flesh) is the believer's indwelling enemy; its degrading bondage is his deepest heartache.**

*<sup>14</sup>For we know that the Law is **spiritual**; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*

***Spiritual***- "Always connotes the ideas of invisibility and of power. It does not occur in the Sept. nor in the Gospels; **it is in fact an after-Pentecost word.**

**Things that have their origin with God, and which are in harmony with His character, as His law is, are 'spiritual.'**



## *Position of spiritual*

Has his origin from and with God, with God, and which, therefore, therefore, are in harmony with harmony with God's character, character, as His law is, are is, are **'spiritual.'**

*<sup>13</sup>which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.*



## *Position of flesh*

**"having the nature of flesh,"** i.e.,

- sensual, controlled by animal appetites,
- governed by human sin-nature,
- Instead of by the Spirit of God

*<sup>14</sup>But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*

*1Cor.2 :13-14*

*but I am **of flesh**, sold into bondage to sin.*

- a) "**having the nature of flesh**," i.e., sensual, controlled by animal appetites, governed by human nature, instead of by the Spirit of God, **Sarkinos – Carnal Vine's**
- b) Not our physical body but our sin nature in that body

**How does he recognize what this skirmish is?**

*<sup>15</sup>For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*



*<sup>15</sup>For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

- ❑ “A sense of spiritual poverty is necessary to spiritual growth.”
- ❑ This awareness of failure becomes acute to the believer during those days when he is attempting to attain holiness of heart through self-effort.
- ❑ Knowing what he ought to be and do, he proceeds to try to reach those goals. He purposes, resolves, promises, struggles, weeps, and fails again.

**However, the reign of self is overthrown by its own enmity, since it creates the needs that cause us to hunger for and appropriate Christ's life and liberty.**

# WHAT I DON'T WANT TO DO, I HATE.

In general, in verses 14 to 17, the emphasis is on the doing what is hated,—put another way, the **inability to overcome evil in the flesh by the flesh.**

In verses 18 to 21, the emphasis is upon **the failure to do the desired good,—the inability, on account of the flesh, to do right.**



# DISCOVERY

*<sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh*

*<sup>20</sup>But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

*<sup>21</sup> I find then **THE PRINCIPLE** that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.*

*<sup>22</sup>For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,*

*<sup>23</sup>but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

This double failure of a believer either to overcome evil or to accomplish good— There must come in help from *outside, beyond himself!* This is the indwelling Spirit, as the eighth chapter vividly describes

*<sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

*<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*



## ***24 Oh, wretched man that I am!***

The word here translated “*wretched*” meant originally, “*wretched—through the exhaustion of hard labor,*”

But the word reads in the Septuagint of [Isaiah 33:1](#), [Jeremiah 4:30](#) “*desolate, bound for destruction,*”

- Revelation 3:17<sup>17</sup> *'Because you say, " I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are *wretched* and miserable and poor and blind and naked,*
- The hopelessness of Paul's condition, unless he be delivered, is here dreadfully revealed!

Denney says, "a wail of anguish and a cry for help." This was Paul's cry during the spiritual experience he describes of himself in this chapter.

# WHY THIS EXPERIENCE IN CHRISTIAN GROWTH?

"Our Father knows that we are weakness incarnate; that we can do nothing. The trouble is that **we do not know it.**

- He must bring us all to the place where we see that we are utterly weak and helpless.
- The more we try to keep the law the more our weakness is manifested and the deeper we get into Romans Seven, until it is clearly demonstrated to us that we are hopelessly weak.
- The Father knew it all the time, **but we did not**, and so

He has to bring us through painful experiences to a recognition of the fact "

**"What would be effected by the law, if all its commands and precepts were carried out and maintained?"**

**It would form man in the flesh; it would make Adam what he ought to be for God in the world. The law would form Adam in us." -C.A.C.**

**The path of faith is the most hateful path possible for the flesh.**

- 1. Faith gives the flesh no place—leaves no “part” for man’s will and energy.**
- 2. The flesh will go to any degree of religious self-denial, or self-inflicted sufferings—anything but death!**



***Who** shall deliver me out of the body of this death?*

Now at once that all self-hope has ceased!

- It is not; **how** shall I deliver myself?
- or even, **how** shall I be delivered?
- But it is a frantic appeal for a deliverer!

***Who** shall deliver me?*

- Instinctively as a believer and definitely,  
Paul knows that no process will deliver  
him.

<sup>24</sup> "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the **body of this death?**

- What a fearful description of the body!—unredeemed, unchanged, under the law of sin in all its members.
- No matter what the "*delight*" of the quickened human spirit in the things of God may be, to dwell undelivered in such a body is to find it a "body of death."
- Paul is not crying out for DEPARTURE from his body but for delivery from the condition of defeat which his residence in his physical body makes possible.

# *The body of this death*

The words "this death" refer to the miserable condition of the Christian who is yet dominated by the evil SIN nature which all the while he is desiring to gain victory over.

- It is the death Paul speaks of in verse 9. The body here is the physical body, as that body in which the sinful nature dwells and through which, when it is in predominance, it operates.
- The body is the vehicle through which sin is committed
  - Meyer, "Who shall deliver me out of bondage under the law of sin into moral freedom, in which my body shall no longer serve as the seat of this shameful death."

<sup>25</sup>*I thank God, [for deliverance] **through** Jesus Christ our Lord.*

- The answer to Paul's self-despairing question, "*Who shall deliver me?*" is a new revelation,—even identification with Christ in His death!
- For just as the sinner struggles in vain to find forgiveness and peace, until he looks outside himself to Christ who made peace by the blood of His cross.
- The quickened soul, struggling unto despair to find victory over sin by self-effort, looks outside himself to Christ—in whom he is, and He died to sin and to law!

Paul was not delivered **by** Christ, but *through* Him;

Not by anything Christ then or at that time did for him;

but **through** the revelation of the fact that he had died with Christ at the cross to this hated indwelling sin, and law of sin; and to God's Law, which gave sin its power. Rm 7:4-6



**It seems that God's Spirit has to take every growing believer through a drastic process of self-exposure.**

- **That fleshly principle lurking within must be looked in the face.**
- **Its presumptuous claim to be a sufficient source of wisdom and ability must be exposed in its big lie.**
- **Its save-yourself attitude must be recognized and rejected.**

**And such knowledge can only come through failure, humiliation and despair." -N.G.**



*<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

What a delightful day it is for the growing believer when he realizes that 'in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing' ([Rom. 7:18](#)).

Only then does he, in his failure, cry out, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'



# **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

-comes back the reply. He begins to recognize that God expects only failure from the flesh, never success, but that 'in Christ' is his sanctification, his growth. Thus, it is that freedom comes through bondage, life through death. W. Williams

- **The sinner is not forgiven by what Christ now does, but by faith in what He did do at the cross,**
- **And the believer is not delivered by what Christ does for him now; but in the revelation to his soul of identification with Christ's death at the cross: for again,**

**The word of the cross is the power of God.**

# To sum up Paul's Great Discoveries in this Struggle of Chapter Seven:

1. That sin dwelt in him,—though he delighted in God's Law!
2. That his will was powerless against it.
3. That the sinful self was not his real self.
4. That there was deliverance through our Lord Jesus Christ!

*I thank God [for deliverance] through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

<sup>25</sup>*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with **my mind** am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

- I myself, with the mind,—this is the real renewed man, which Paul has over and over said that “*sin that dwelleth in him*” was not!
- “*With the mind*”—all the spiritual faculties including, the soul-faculties of intellect, will, emotion—which even now are “*being renewed*” by the Holy Spirit, day by day.

- *I am subject to God's law [or will]*—all new creatures can say this.
- But with the flesh subject to sin's law.
- He saw it at last, and bowed to it, that all he was by the flesh, by Nature, was irrevocably committed to sin.

**So, he gave up**—because he saw himself wholly in Christ

**"There is no joy like that of realizing our nothingness, while at the same time reposing upon the Father's all-sufficiency." MJS**

"When my agony of soul was at its height, a sentence in a letter from \_\_\_\_\_ was used to remove the scales from my eyes, and the Spirit of God revealed the truth of *our oneness* with Jesus as I had never known it before.

"How to get faith strengthened? Not by striving after faith, but by resting in the Faithful One.

"As I read I saw it! 'If we believe *not*, He abideth faithful.' I looked to Jesus and saw (and when I saw, Oh, how joy flowed!) that He had said, 'I will never leave *you*.' 'Ah, *there* is rest,' I thought. 'I have striven in vain to rest in Him. I'll strive no more. For has He not promised to abide with me - never to leave me - never to fail me?' The sweetest part, if one may speak of one part being sweeter than another, is the rest.

"I am no longer anxious about anything. It makes no matter where He places me, or how."  
Hudson Taylor



