

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:25 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 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

When I was a young boy *Candid Camera* was in its heyday. We watched it religiously. I vividly remember one stunt. A handcuffed man dressed like a prisoner went around asking people to help him get out of the cuffs. After a while evidently someone called the police. They came and assumed he was an escapee. He told them "*Smile, you're on Candid Camera,*" but the camera crew stayed in hiding – playing a joke on their own guy!

- being changed to bring change -
If you were handcuffed you might eventually break free. Paul presented a situation in which it was impossible to break free without help. It was the dreaded **body of death**.

We said earlier in the chapter that the **body of death** was an illustration drawn from the high seas. If you were found guilty of murder, the body of your victim would be tightly bound to you and you would both be thrown overboard. It was how murderers at sea were condemned to death.

Paul had been discussing the ongoing presence of indwelling sin and the flesh. Are we hopelessly condemned to keep on sinning? It sounds like it at first as he cried out,

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Our understanding of what Paul meant is helped by a proper understanding of the word **wretched**. The ancient Greek word **wretched** is more literally, *wretched through the exhaustion of hard labor*. You are **wretched** if you are trying to free yourself from the body of sin by the hard labor of keeping God's law. You must instead be delivered by someone else.

In every instance we can appeal to Jesus as our **deliverer** from sin and sinning:

Romans 7:25 I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!

He thanked **God** because there *is* deliverance **through Jesus Christ**. When I cry out, *O wretched man*, it is because I am not calling upon Jesus to help me overcome indwelling sin. I'm trying to walk with a corpse strapped to me.

Romans 7:25... So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

The **mind** is a reference to your new nature. Your new nature is more than willing to **serve the law of God**.

The **flesh** is that principle you find still at work within you to use your members sinfully to satisfy its various lusts.

It's the classic war between the spirit and the flesh that we often experience.

When Paul said **I myself** he meant that the new nature within him can overcome the **flesh** with its drive to sin. But it's not me versus the flesh. It's the new me empowered by the Holy Spirit that is versus the flesh. Chapter eight brings the Spirit of God boldly into the conflict as the deciding factor.

As you are probably already aware, the Bible as it was originally written had no chapter breaks. The translators added them later for

your convenience. What is chapter eight to us is still part of Paul's discussion from the previous verses.

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

You are no longer condemned to sink deeper and deeper into defeat. You are **in Christ Jesus** and have been released from its hold.

But since the **flesh** still exists you must learn to **not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit**. It is this Spirit-walking that gives you victory.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

The **law of the Spirit of life** refers to the fact that the indwelling Holy Spirit is always available to me. Think of the law of gravity. It's always there ready to work. I count on it.

God's Holy Spirit indwells you and always has sufficient power by which you may be **free from the law of sin and death**. By putting yourself under the Spirit's loving authority your new nature is empowered to win the war within.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

God's law **was weak through the flesh** means that it could not empower you to keep it. It could not change you, it could not deliver you from indwelling sin. It could only prepare you for the Savior.

"Do this and live, the Law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands.
"A better way the Spirit brings. He bids me fly and gives me wings."

Jesus was **sent** from heaven in the incarnation. He took a body that was **in the likeness of sinful flesh**. It was a human body, but without a sin nature like you and I are born with.

He came **on account of sin**; that is, He came because you and I were condemned sinners to take our place. Instead of you being condemned by your sin, Jesus took the condemnation.

Not only that, Jesus **condemned sin in the flesh**. The flesh still exists, still fights, but it is condemned. Think of a prisoner at Corcoran State Prison. Let's say we still executed murderers. He may be condemned and awaiting death but that doesn't mean he won't cause trouble for the guards. He's biding his time violently until his execution.

Your flesh will one day be completely done away. But until that day – until you die or are raptured – you must overcome it by walking in the Spirit.

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

As a Pharisee Paul could say he had kept the letter of the Law. But he had not ever fulfilled its **righteous requirements**. The Law couldn't change his heart; and that is where the problem lie.

As believers, with the Holy Spirit in us, we have a new heart. When we walk **according to** the leading of the **Spirit** we are fulfilling the righteousness required by God's Law.

- being changed to bring change -

This is not saying, "Let go and let God." The Bible doesn't teach that. It's more like "Be led by God and let's go!"