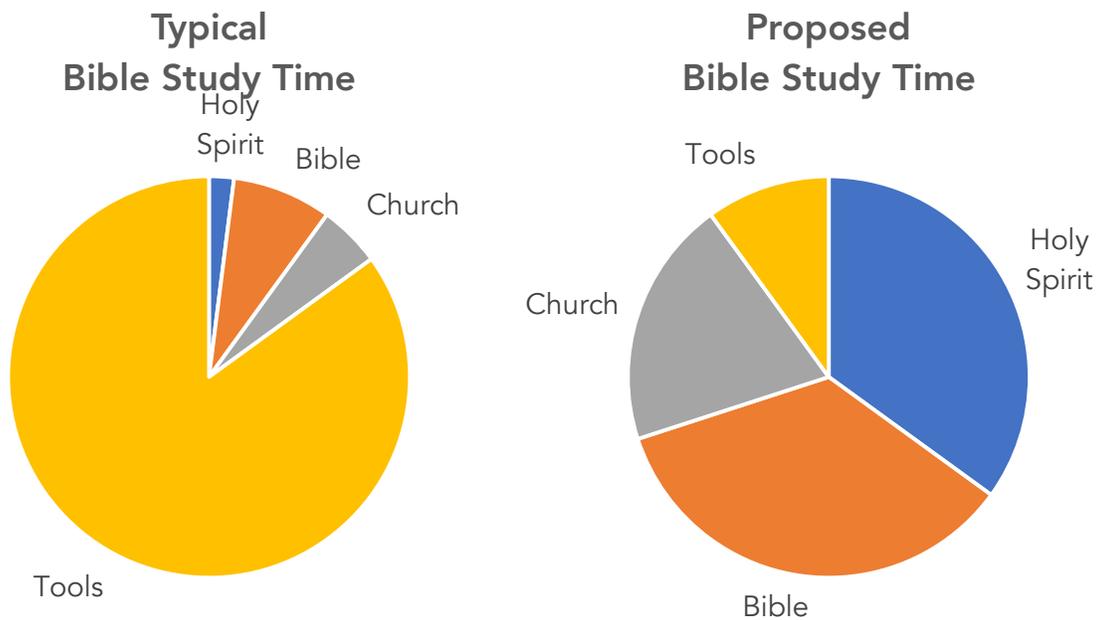


Romans

The Law and Sin ([Romans 7:7-25](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Here's our outline of the book of [Romans](#) (summarized from the ESV's outline):

- ✓ Paul's Introduction & Righteousness Introduced ([1:1-17](#)) (three weeks)
- ✓ Righteous Wrath ([1:18-3:20](#)) (six weeks)
- ✓ Saving Righteousness ([3:21-4:25](#)) (three weeks)
- 4. Righteous Freedom ([5:1-8:39](#)) (post-Easter to July 4) (11 weeks)
- 5. Righteousness → Jews ([9:1-11:36](#)) (post July 4 to Labor Day) (eight weeks)
- 6. Righteous Living ([12:1-15:13](#)) (post Labor Day to October) (nine weeks)
- 7. Paul's Closing ([15:14-16:23](#)) (November to early December) (five weeks)
- 8. Righteousness Summarized ([16:25-27](#)) (December & wrap up) (two weeks)

Today's text ([Romans 7:7-25](#)) is the sixth part of this major section.

Peace with God through Faith

1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. **16** And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. **17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **3** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For one who has died has been set free from sin. **8** Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. **10** For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. **11** So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. **13** Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. **14** For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. **19** I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. **22** But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Released from the Law

1 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? **2** For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. **3** Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. **5** For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. **6** But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

Read: The Law and Sin (7:7-25)

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.

Jim Fleming did "Explain."

Explain: The Law and Sin (7:7-25)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Paul again asks a lot of questions in this section—four in English.

What do the words mean?

7 **What then shall we say** [future active indicative]? **That the law** [*nomos*] **is sin** [offense, sin]? **By no means** [second aorist active optative (possibility (more remotely possible than subjunctive)); to become, to come into existence, begin to be, receive being; same phrase used in [Romans 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11](#)! **Yet if it had not been for** [*dia*] **the law** [*nomos*], **I would not have known** [*ginosko*; second aorist active indicative; allow, be aware of, feel, known, perceive, be resolved, speak, be sure, understand] **sin** [offense, sin]. **For I would not have known** [*eido*; pluperfect active indicative; to know, be aware, behold, consider, look, perceive, be sure, understand] **what it is to covet** [longing, concupiscence, desire, lust] **if the law** [*nomos*] **had not said** [imperfect active indicative], **"You shall not covet** [future active indicative; set the heart upon, long for, covet, desire, lust after]." 8 **But sin** [offense, sin], **seizing** [second aorist active participle; accepting, attaining, bringing, catching, having, holding, obtaining, receiving, taking] **an opportunity** [starting point, an opportunity, occasion] **through** [*dia*] **the commandment** [commandment, precept], **produced** [aorist active indicative; worked fully, accomplished, finished, fashioned, caused, performed, worked out] **in me all kinds of covetousness** [longing, concupiscence, desire, lust; same word used in [Romans 7:7](#)]. **For apart** [at a space from, separately, apart, beside, by itself, without] **from the law** [*nomos*], **sin** [offense, sin] **lies dead**. 9 **I was once alive** [imperfect active indicative] **apart from the law** [*nomos*], **but when the commandment** [commandment, precept; same word used in [Romans 7:8](#)] **came** [second aorist active participle], **sin** [offense, sin] **came alive** [aorist active indicative; recovered life, lived again, revived] **and I died** [second aorist active indicative; has died off, is dead, died, lies a-dying, is slain; same word used in [Romans 6:2, 7, 8, 9, 10](#) (twice), [7:2, 3, 6](#)]. 10 **The very commandment** [commandment, precept; same word used in [Romans 7:8, 9](#)] **that promised life proved** [aorist middle indicative; found, got, obtained, perceived, saw] **to**

be death to me. 11 For sin [offense, sin], **seizing** [second aorist active participle; accepting, attaining, bringing, catching, having, holding, obtaining, receiving, taking; same word used in **Romans 7:7**] **an opportunity** [starting point, an opportunity, occasion; same word used in **Romans 7:8**] **through** [*dia*] **the commandment** [commandment, precept; same word used in **Romans 7:8, 9, 10**], **deceived** [seduced wholly, beguiled, deceived] **me and through** [*dia*] **it killed** [aorist active indicative; put to death, killed, slayed] **me. 12 So** [so too, thus therefore, insomuch, so then] **the law** [*nomos*] **is holy** [sacred, pure, consecrated, holy, saint], **and the commandment** [commandment, precept; same word used in **Romans 7:8, 9, 10, 11**] **is holy** [sacred, pure, consecrated, holy, saint; same word used earlier in **Romans 7:12**] **and righteous** [equitable, innocent, holy, just, meet, righteous] **and good** [benefit, good, well].

13 Did that which is good [benefit, good, well; same word used in **Romans 7:12**], **then, bring** [second aorist active indicative] **death to me? By no means** [second aorist active optative (possibility (more remotely possible than subjunctive)); to become, to come into existence, begin to be, receive being; same phrase used in **Romans 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11**]! **It was sin** [offense, sin], **producing** [present middle participle; working fully, accomplishing, finishing, fashioning, causing, doing, performing, working out; worked fully, accomplished, finished, fashioned, caused, done, performed, worked out; same word used in **Romans 7:8**] **death in me through** [*dia*] **what is good** [benefit, good, well; same word used in **Romans 7:12** and earlier in **Romans 7:13**], **in order that sin** [offense, sin] **might be shown** [second aorist middle subjunctive; shown, appeared, seemed, shined] **to be sin** [offense, sin], **and through** [*dia*] **the commandment** [commandment, precept; same word used in **Romans 7:8, 9, 10, 11, 12**] **might become** [second aorist active subjunctive] **sinful beyond measure** [throwing beyond others, supereminence, abundance, far more exceeding, excellency, more excellent, beyond measure]. **14 For we know** [*eido*]; perfect active indicative; to know, be aware, behold, consider, look, perceive, be sure, understand; same word used in **Romans 7:7**] **that the law** [*nomos*] **is** [present middle indicative] **spiritual** [non-carnal, ethereal, supernatural, spiritual; same word used in **Romans 1:11**], **but I am** [present middle indicative] **of the flesh** [fleshly, flesh], **sold** [perfect middle participle; trafficked, disposed as merchandise into slavery, sold] **under sin** [offense, sin]. **15 For I do** [present middle indicative; work fully, accomplish, finish, fashion, cause, do, perform, work out; same word used in **Romans 7:8, 13**] **not understand** [*ginosko*]; present active indicative; allow, be aware of, feel, known, perceive, be resolved, speak, be sure, understand] **my own actions. For I do not do** [present active indicative; perform repeatedly, habitually, execute, accomplish, collect, fare, commit, deeds, do, exact, keep, require, use arts] **what I want** [present active indicative; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will], **but I do** [present active indicative] **the very thing I hate** [present active indicative;

detest, love less, hate]. **16 Now if I do** [present active indicative] **what I do not want** [present active indicative; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word used in [Romans 7:15](#)], **I agree** [present middle indicative; say jointly, assent to, consent to] **with the law** [*nomos*], **that it is good** [beautiful, good, valuable, virtuous, better, fair, good, honest, meet, well, worthy]. **17 So now** [just now, now] **it is no longer I who do** [present middle indicative; work fully, accomplish, finish, fashion, cause, do, perform, work out; same word used in [Romans 7:8, 13, 15](#)] **it, but sin** [offense, sin] **that dwells** [occupies a house, resides, cohabits] **within me**. **18 For I know** [*eido*; perfect active indicative; to know, be aware, behold, consider, look, perceive, be sure, understand; same word used in [Romans 7:7, 14](#)] **that nothing good** [benefit, good, well; same word used in [Romans 7:12, 13](#) (twice)] **dwells** [present active indicative; occupies a house, resides, cohabits; same word used in [Romans 7:17](#)] **in me, that is** [present middle indicative], **in my flesh**. **For I have** [present middle indicative; lies near, be at hand, be present] **the desire** [present active infinitive; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word used in [Romans 7:15, 16](#)] **to do what is right** [beautiful, good, valuable, virtuous, better, fair, good, honest, meet, well, worthy; same word used in [Romans 7:16](#)], **but not the ability** [present middle infinitive; work fully, accomplish, finish, fashion, cause, do, perform, work out; same word used in [Romans 7:8, 13, 15, 17](#)] **to carry it out**. **19 For I do not do** [present active indicative] **the good** [benefit, good, well; same word used in [Romans 7:12, 13](#) (twice), [18](#)] **I want** [present active indicative; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word used in [Romans 7:15, 16, 18](#)], **but the evil** [worthless, depraved, bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked] **I do not want** [present active indicative; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word used in [Romans 7:15, 16, 18](#), earlier in [19](#)] **is what I keep on doing** [present active indicative; perform repeatedly, habitually, execute, accomplish, collect, fare, commit, deeds, do, exact, keep, require, use arts; same word used in [Romans 7:15](#)]. **20 Now if I do** [present active indicative] **what I do not want** [present active indicative; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word used in [Romans 7:15, 16, 18, 19](#) (twice)], **it is no longer I who do** [present middle indicative; work fully, accomplish, finish, fashion, cause, do, perform, work out; same word used in [Romans 7:8, 13, 15, 17, 18](#)] **it, but sin** [offense, sin] **that dwells** [present active participle; occupies a house, resides, cohabits; same word used in [Romans 7:17, 18](#)] **within me**.

21 So I find [present active indicative; find, get, obtain, perceive, see] **it to be a law** [*nomos*] **that when I want** [present active participle; determine, choose, prefer, wish, inclined, be about, delight in, desire, intend, list, love, mean, please, will; same word

used in **Romans 7:15, 16, 18, 19** (twice), **20** **to do** [present active infinitive] **right** [beautiful, good, valuable, virtuous, better, fair, good, honest, meet, well, worthy; same word used in **Romans 7:16, 18**], **evil** [worthless, depraved, bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked; same word used in **Romans 7:19**] **lies close** [present middle indicative; lies near, be at hand, be present; same word used in **Romans 7:18**] **at hand. 22 For I delight** [present middle indicative; rejoice within oneself, feel satisfaction concerning, delight] **in the law** [*nomos*] **of God, in my inner** [inside, inward, inner] **being, 23 but I see** [present active indicative; look, behold, beware, lie, look on, perceive, regard, see, take heed] **in my members** [limbs, members] **another** [other, different] **law** [*nomos*] **waging war** [present middle participle; attacking, destroying, warring against] **against the law** [*nomos*] **of my mind** [intellect, mind, understanding] **and making me captive** [present active participle; leading away captive, making captive, bringing into captivity] **to the law** [*nomos*] **of sin** [offense, sin] **that dwells in** [present middle participle] **my members** [limbs, members]. **24 Wretched** [enduring trials, miserable, wretched] **man that I am! Who will deliver** [future active indicative; rescue, deliver (through the idea of a current)] **me from this body of death? 25 Thanks** [*charis*; graciousness, acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, gracious, grace, joy, liberality, pleasure, thanks, thankworthy; same word used multiple times in **Romans**] **be to God through** [*dia*] **Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve** [*douleuo*; present active indicative; be a slave, be in bondage, do service] **the law** [*nomos*] **of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law** [*nomos*] **of sin** [offense, sin].

Are there any repeated words?

Law (15x), sin (15x), commandment (6x), Jesus, God,

Are there any repeated topics?

Tim Archer did "observations, applications, and personalizations."

What are some observations of the text?

As I begin our lesson I truly feel a need to get it right when we look at these verses. First, let me point out that I cannot imagine what it would have been like to have been a first-century Christian and hear Paul's letter read for the first time. The foundations of Christendom and the Gospel were being laid and already many false teachings were attempting to hijack the amazing thing Christ had done for us. As we look around us today we can see these same things still going on. I recall during last week's lesson that Jim asked us the question, "Can you imagine sitting there while someone read the entire letter to us?" My initial thought was, "This certainly would have been tough and overwhelming." As I dwelled more on this question over the week, I realized that there

were so few Christians at that time. There was no completed Bible to study and they may have been so hungry for the words from Paul that this may have been an easier step for many of them than we think. This question caused me to think of a time that I was so excited about hearing the word of God shared and that I was hungry to be with my brothers and sisters in Christ learning God's word. The occasion that came to my mind was Fort Benning, Georgia, during Basic Training. Sure, it was tough physically and mentally but it was tough spiritually as well. I longed to be with believers and couldn't wait for the occasions when we would be able to attend church services worship and hear God's word together.

So, I thank God for calling Paul to this true salvation and his willingness to suffer for the spreading of the true message of the Gospel. Understand: all we have known, learned, and taught are things that have been passed down to us for many years and we can easily take these teachings for granted. In my case, I was raised in a Christian home, with some of my earliest memories being that of having family devotions and my mother teaching me in Sunday school. I understood early in life that God loved me and knew that Christ was there with me even when others were not. In fact, I began my walk with Christ at age 7 during Vacation Bible School. This wasn't some strange or foreign teaching because we did receive the message that has been passed on for generations and we have had multiple biblical scholars to help us with the tougher portions. However, even today, we can see that the message is still needed because we continue to struggle with understanding how to walk in God's Grace. We can still fall into the wrong thinking that following a list of laws or behaviors to prove we are finding favor with God or, if we're not careful, go to the other extreme of, "I can do whatever I want because Jesus came."

With that being stated let's jump into [Romans 7:7-25](#) and observe the fact that Paul has spent a large amount of time in this letter pointing out that following the law is not the answer to salvation and ultimately the pleasing of God. Paul has revealed in the previous chapters the fact that there is a need for God's righteousness and the fact that all of us are unrighteous. It was probably a shock to some at what they were hearing at this point of the letter, wondering what else lay in store in the next pages.

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." [There is little doubt that Paul needed to address one of the primary conclusions that people could have come to at this point in his letter: "Is the law now sinful?" Was the law, the revered words that God Himself had penned through Moses, now being considered sinfulness by some of the babes in Christ? Remember, there was no finished Bible and many of the leaders were themselves new Christians. Paul is quick to show what God's true intentions were when

providing these statutes. Aren't we so like this? We hear words spoken and yet certain portions seem to rub us in a wrong way and before you know it, we've lost the true meaning because we were quick to judge or tune our ears out to the rest of the message. We must also remember that the early church was filled with a mix of individuals from various walks of life. Is it possible that he was bringing this out because there were old Jewish teachings that were seeping into the church at Rome? Were some of the leaders stating that following the old Jewish teachings concerning the law still needed to be adhered to and that this needed to be addressed? Were there other teachings going to the other extreme? **Charles Spurgeon: Even with the light of nature, and the light of conscience, and the light of tradition, there are some things we should never have believed to be sins had we not been taught so by the law.]** **8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.** [I love how transparent the apostle becomes in this verse; he is not saying how much better he is; or be like me because of how holy I am. No, he points out that by God's word he not only sees his sin but he sees **all kinds** of this sin, pointing out his own unrighteousness. Amazing; this man who was once among the Pharisees and someone that all were to look up to as the example, was now an amazingly humble follower. Understanding how much man had perverted God's true teachings. He had witnessed firsthand and realized too that we needed to know the truth which lay at the foot of the cross. The law wasn't meant to be the burdensome weight like "He himself" had once thought. The religious leaders demanded that these had to be followed to such an extreme level that Christ himself addressed the fallacies and perverted teachings. Christ came and by the law we are led to the one and only conclusion: we need a Savior because we do not and none will ever measure up to God's holy standard.] **9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.** [Again, this former Pharisee and ultimate "Law Keeper and Enforcer" points out that he didn't understand it at one point in his life but God had opened his eyes to the reality of what the law was. When this occurred, he realized that the law had condemned him to death and without hope.] **10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.** [**John MacArthur: Theoretically, perfect obedience to the law could bring eternal life, and with it happiness and holiness. But no one except Christ has—or could—ever fully obey it.** I have even heard some well-meaning Christians say that Jews can still make it to heaven and please God by keeping the law! As we've studied **Hebrews** with Brian over the last several months (especially the review of all the Old Testament champions of faith in **Hebrews 11** this past week), prior to the Messiah coming, it was their faith that saved them—not following the law. Even these great champions of the Old Testament were condemned by the law. It was their faith in the coming Messiah that truly led to salvation.] **11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me**

and through it killed me. [Paul had once believed that the law was his salvation and the keeping of it was the pinnacle of his Jewish upbringing. He had once walked the holy haughty life of a Pharisee. However, Christ's coming had changed all that. The Messiah had come and by doing so revealed the true meaning of the Law: it could not be kept. It was an impossible task and the sentence in a court of the Almighty was death.] **12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.** [Ha, ha; wait, what? Didn't he just sell me on the fact that the Law is not the answer? At this point, some truly could have thought that Paul was pointing out the reason for not following the law but he was simply trying to help change the wrong and historical thinking concerning the law.]

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. [For those of us familiar with Ray Comfort and The Way of the Master, his use of the Ten Commandments has been nothing less than brilliant when witnessing! Why? Because it exemplifies exactly what the law was meant for. It reveals that there is absolutely no doubt that we are all sinners. There is no way around it! When was the last time we stopped and truly saw ourselves based on how we measure up to what the law demands? Oh, that's right, if you've been in Sunday school lately, at least once probably. I recall during last week's lesson how I pictured the law revealing our sins. In my mind's eye, I remember thinking of a time when we first moved to Chattanooga. We lived Highland Park near the old Tennessee Temple University campus. The home we lived in was built in 1913 and had seen many different residents over the years. I just know that some of the residents didn't leave when some others moved in. What do I mean by that? I recall that there was a different kind of battle that took place between my family and the insects that lived there. The metaphor that entered my mind was the disgusting, nasty, gross, roaches that lived there. I hate roaches and can recall the battle that ensued. We would turn the lights on and the filthy things would scurry to hide. I would spray poison I would put out bait, I put my faith in several of the top extermination companies of that day and yet, we could never get rid of them. Ultimately, we were told that it would be impossible to ever rid the home of the vermin. Is this not the perfect picture of our lives and how our sin is? We think we've taken all the precautions: read my Bible, prayed, gone to church, Sunday school, Wednesday evenings, and get this: I sang in the choir only to end up with seeing the nasty stinking reality that sin is still there.] **14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.** [From the time of Adam, the earth and all men and women within it, has lived in corruption, there is no getting around it. **David Stern writes in the Jewish New Testament commentary concerning the law as spiritual: This remark shows that Sha'ul as a Messianic Jew retained a high view of the Torah,**

because in support of his main argument he presents the statement undefended, expecting his readers not to demand proof. It is a given, an axiom to which all can agree without requiring further demonstration. Paul further explains that his flesh/earthly body is like a slave which is owned by someone. In this example, it is 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. [Paul is being so transparent. He knows what God's desire is and he strives for it only to realize that he has failed in its pursuit again. He continues with pointing out that even the leader continues to struggle with sin and that although he strives for perfection and is focused on doing so, he still ends up being sinful and failing.] **16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.**

[Understand that if we are dead in our sins then we either don't know or truly don't care about what the law means, but believers pursuing holiness with the law as our teacher and faith as our keeper in the Gospel, need to realize that the battle waging is the very evidence of not being dead but alive in Christ. This is a great thing to remind ourselves of.] **17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.** [The recognition that we will always be sinners, admitting that we are all weak and bent towards doing evil is the first step of preparing for your walk with Christ. Recognizing that even in our pursuit of pleasing God we can end up producing sinfulness. One example of this is in the book of Proverbs. Solomon warns us in [Proverbs 16:17-19](#) about our attitude when he wrote: **17 The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; whoever guards his way preserves his life. 18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.** **Matthew Henry: Verse 17: A sincerely religious man keeps at a distance from every appearance of evil. Happy is the man that walks in Christ, and is led by the Spirit of Christ. Verse 18: When men defy God's judgments, and think themselves far from them, it is a sign they are at the door. Let us not fear the pride of others, but fear pride in ourselves. Verse 19: Humility, though it exposes to contempt in the world, is much better than high-spiritedness, which makes God an enemy. He that understands God's word shall find good.]**

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. [Do not ever depend on your flesh to do what is right! Paul is absolutely correct with this and warning against trusting in our own abilities to do what we should. Sure, there may be occasions when we have victory over a sin but that is short-lived. Does the temptation go away? The moment we feel the confidence in our ability to do, be very careful because the flesh is so very weak.] **19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.** [I can remember early in life hearing the previous verses and thinking how strange they sound. In fact, I found them hard to follow and generally read through them for many years without fully understanding what they meant. Later, I came to see that Paul is giving us a great

picture of the battle that is taking place within all who have come to know Christ. We so want to measure up and believe we are righteous by the doing, when in fact it is nothing that I do but what Christ has done that makes me righteous. **Isaiah 64:6: We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.**

This is an accurate picture of how God sees our righteous acts. However, being covered in the righteousness of Christ, God is pleased with us.] **20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.** [We can lay the fault of our wrong doing on the sinfulness that remains in our broken bodies. We will never get away from this while we remain here. **MacArthur Study Bible: Greek Dualism. . . . taught that the body is evil and the spirit is good, so its adherents sinned with impunity by claiming they were not responsible; their sin was entirely the product of their physical bodies, while their spirits remained untouched and unsullied. But the apostle has already acknowledged personal guilt for his sin His sin does not flow out of his new redeemed innermost self ("I"), but from his unredeemed humanness, his flesh "in me."**]

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. [Our pursuit of righteousness is waiting to be marred by evil.] **22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,** [Yes, he loves God's law and so should all Christians because it is our teacher.] **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.** [The understanding for this finally came to me as I was teaching children about the very warring that takes place if you are saved. We had some teaching materials that shared how the new man was fighting with the old man if we were Christians and the fact that these two men warred inside of us continually. Wait, what? Yes, think about it—there is no war for those who are dead in their sin. Understand too that sin will always be in us while we fill these earth-suits—they are corrupted beyond measure. Think on these questions: Are there spiritual battles waging in your life? Do we recognize these occurring? If not, then why not? Have we become hardened to certain sins in our lives?] **24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?** [Paul has just laid out the argument that he is a total complete failure and lost without hope in this sinful, earthly body. He is trapped and there is no way out—but wait, there is hope.] **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.** [Hallelujah and praise God the Almighty for at this point in Paul's letter the people had to have some hope. He has just laid out condemnation based on the merits of the law and the sin that it reveals in their lives. We are weary at times and truly need something—or should I say, "Someone" to help us and that "Someone" is Jesus the Messiah—the one who fulfilled the law. He didn't do away with it, he revealed what it was truly meant for. I can recall

when I was a youth pastor telling my young people, "Please call me if you ever need me for something, no matter what is; because although you may do things that disappoint me there is nothing you can do that will cause me to stop loving you." So much more we need to see that Christ is our true example of this. He and only He, is our Salvation. Our ability to save ourselves is impossible apart from Him.]

Apply (What is the point?)

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

We can personalize this text with these questions:

1. How has God's law uncovered our sin?
2. How has it helped us to see our need for Christ?
3. How might losing sight of the fact that we are human and struggle daily lead to deep discouragement?
4. How might it lead to hypocrisy and superficiality in us and in the church?

Next week: Life in the Spirit (8:1-11)

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. **3** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6** For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. **8** Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10** But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read (**Romans**)
- Talk (about **Romans**—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

The seventh chapter of Romans is a passionate piece of writing. Paul wants us to feel the emotion he experiences in trying to live up to God's standards in his own strength. . . . A believer who tries to please God in his or own strength will always come to disheartening, aching, frustration—always!

When the believer realizes he is helpless he will receive God's help. As long as we think we can do it ourselves we are in [Romans 7](#).

Matt and I have been living [vs 24-25](#). Trying to do it on our own. Thinking that our way is best and that we have a plan. Every time we give our situation over to God we are blessed in ways we can't imagine, sometimes little ways sometime crazy big ways! We continue to try and take control back, again thinking that we can handle it from here. I can picture Him just shaking His head at us. But thanks to God . . . thanks for forgiveness, for compassion and for His grace and mercy.

Love these two verses in The Message:

24 I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

25 The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

The Law was not evil but it became the base of operations from which Satan could assault Paul with the desire to covet. The Law isn't the cause of death, sin is. The Law is but the instrument by which we may be shown that sin is causing our physical and spiritual death.

Paul has been delivered from the penalty of sin through justification, but daily he still faces the struggle with the power of sin. When sin is Paul's master, lord, and kind, Jesus Christ cannot fill the same position. Paul is:

1. Justified by faith in Jesus Christ
2. Sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit
3. One day will be glorified by the grace of the Father.

Julia Gregg (Schreiner)

Firstly, a few moments of clarity where things connected for me in ways they had not done previously:

Paul's "testimony" is a mirror of Adam's and Israel's. For me, this realization gave Paul's testimony (which he used as evidence that the law itself cannot liberate from sin) more power and drive. It creates an element of "preponderance of evidence" in the argument that Paul continues to deliver against justification by works . . . for it is only through Christ. He does however, clarify, that the law made him aware of his sin. Though we have been examining sin in context of the law and of Christ's payment for that sin, this section of scripture is, at its core, about the goodness of God and His laws.

Secondly, I found it interesting the split vision that Paul presents of the law . . . as his argument is developing throughout the text. He drills the fact that the law became an ally to sin; yet, there is spirituality and rectitude in [verses 14, 16, 22](#) and [25](#) because there is goodness in the law of God. Paul takes issue with the view that the law was the transforming agent in the hearts of men because that responsibility/purpose belongs solely to Jesus Christ. He IS the transforming work!! Further, the differentiation between sin and transgression is necessary to realization that "[commandments from the law alone cannot stem the desire to worship self above every other god.](#)" (367). The law does bring an "awakening" to sin—which I feel is an awareness and this thought drives back to the garden when awareness of sin began.

Lastly, without the transforming work of Christ in the hearts of men, living under the law will only produce bondage. WE are NOT enough; however, HE IS. I was left with the thought of "dying to self" . . . and what that potentially means in light of [Romans 7:7-25](#). I will ponder that this week outside of the realm of "clichés."