

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39

God's holiness – man's sinfulness – 1:18-3:20

Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21

Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39

- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Slide # 2

Romans Thematically...

- **Universal Sin Problem** – Rom. 1-3a
- **Justification** by Faith – Rom. 3b-4
- **Solidarity** with Christ – Rom. 5
- **Sanctification** – Rom. 6-8

Slide # 3

The Believer is...

Dead to Sin/Dead to the Law but...

- Alive to Christ
- A Slave of Christ
- Married to Christ

These are POSITIONAL realities and the believer is now called to live accordingly. However, being dead to sin and the law does not mean we no longer struggle with sin. And Paul deals with this reality at length in Romans 7.

Slide # 4***Colliding Realities for the Believer***

- Law** (God's Moral Code)
- Sin Nature/Flesh** (Unholy Desires)
- New Nature** (Holy Desires)
- Holy Spirit** (Power)

How these realities all relate simultaneously to the believer is challenging to define exactly, hence so much discussion and debate over various nuances in the text.

In my judgment, one of the most difficult theological issues in the Bible is that of the believer's relationship to the law of God. Since the word *law* is used 19 times in [Romans 7](#), clearly that is Paul's theme. I was hoping that the Lord might come before I got to this chapter!

-Steven Cole

This is what Paul is grappling with in Romans 7, but he does so, leaving out the Holy Spirit until he gets to Romans 8.

Slide # 5***Colliding Realities for the Believer******Romans 7***

- Law** (God's Moral Code)
- Sin Nature/Flesh** (Unholy Desires)
- New Nature** (Holy Desires)
- ~~-Holy Spirit~~** (~~Power~~)

As Christians, we are complex, conflicted, and often seemingly contradictory in our experience. Romans 7 reflects this. And because of this mix commentators (good Bible commentators) often disagree on the specific nuances in the passage. They disagree at certain points on whether Paul is describing a believer or an unbeliever, whether he is describing an immature believer or a mature believer. When he says "I" they debate whether he is speaking of his own experience or personifying that of Adam or Israel or some combination.

This definitely is a place for humility as good scholars disagree.

I am not going to give you all the views on all the various nuances as that would just be confusing. I am going to give you my studied view of what I think Paul is saying, but hopefully with an air of humility.

The most natural way to take “I” in the passage is to take it as Paul’s personal experience. Paul uses “I”, “me”, or “myself” 47 times in this section.

Slide # 6

Rom. 7:7-13 – Pre-conversion Experience (**Past tense** of the verbs). The law can’t save but it does reveal sin.

Rom. 7:14-25 – Post-conversion Experience (**Present tense** of verbs). The law can’t sanctify.

Paul has just stated that the law aroused the flesh to bear fruit to death but now having died to the law we serve in newness of spirit as seen in Romans 7:5-6.

So the question arises – is the law then sinful since it activates sin?

Paul answers emphatically that this is NOT the case.

Romans 7:7 (NKJV)

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.”

Paul dogmatically states that the law is not sinful! The law is not the problem. James illustrates that the law is like a mirror (cf. Ja. 1:22-25). The function of the mirror is to show the person that their face is dirty. The problem is not with the mirror – but with the person’s face. You can’t blame the law for exposing sin any more than you can blame a mirror for revealing dirt.

In fact, the law is helpful in that it helps us to see our sin. Paul says he would not have known sin except through the law. This is a KEY purpose for the law – it reveals sin (cf. Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:20).

Slide # 7

Romans 3:20 (NKJV)

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

Paul does not mean that people without the law do not know sin at all; he has said the opposite (2:14-15; 5:12-14). All people have some idea of right and wrong; a moral code of some sort is almost universal. People who do not have the law may well know that they have done wrong. But people without God's law do not see wrongdoing as it really is, as sin against God. – **Leon Morris**

Paul now, via his personal testimony shows how the law revealed sin in him. I think outwardly Paul as an unbeliever was pretty impressive. Outwardly it seemed he kept the law very well.

Slide # 8

Philippians 3:6 (NKJV)

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**

Outwardly no one could find anything on Paul. It seemed like he had kept the law perfectly. But then that law about “***you shall not covet***” grabbed him by the throat (cf. Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

Outwardly Paul did not really know sin. He was good outwardly, but inwardly he had a problem. You see all the other commandments have an outward emphasis but coveting is an inward thing – a matter of the heart. And if he was honest, he had a problem in the heart with coveting.

Covetousness is the sin of desire. It means to wrongfully desire what does not belong to you and what is not rightfully yours to have. There is something in the sin nature that wants to have what is not right to have. It desires what God has forbidden!

You see, outwardly, people might be disciplined to restrain themselves to a point – especially a self-righteous moralist or religionist, but at the same time, inwardly, they desire what they should not have. It is this sin of desire that got to Paul.

Every illicit desire is really a form of idolatry.

Slide # 9**Colossians 3:5 (NKJV)**

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.**

Covetousness puts your selfish desire above God and therefore is a form of idolatry.

Actually we break this last commandment, not to covet, before we break any of the others. Any time that we break one of the other commandments of God, it means that we have already broken this commandment, in coveting. – **Francis Schaeffer**

8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Paul here is talking about his pre-conversion days. When he really began to study the law - it was then that the sin of covetousness really began to stir within him. And then sin used the commandment to not covet as a base of operations to arouse all manner of evil desire within him.

Sin is here personified as an internal enemy. Really in view is the sin nature that is also called the flesh. We are born with a sin nature that when told not to do something it really wants to do it. Tell a little child no and their natural tendency is defiance. We have to train them to respond otherwise. We all come with this natural sin bent. This is what Paul is dealing with here.

Law is not the cause of the act of sin; the principle or nature of sin within an individual is. – **The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

The sin nature inside us feeds on forbidden fruit.

Proverbs 9:17 (NKJV)

17 “Stolen water is sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”

Why is that? It is because we have a sin nature that naturally feeds on sin.

When it says in verse 8 that “sin, taking opportunity by the commandment,” – the word ***opportunity*** (Gk. amphorae) was a word used for a military base of operations. So, sin takes God’s commandments and uses them to stir up sin in us.

How ironic! As soon as Paul attempted to keep the law, “thou shalt not covet,” the very commandment he was trying to keep provoked all manner of evil desires within him.

So strangely, the law not only reveals sin but it also stirs up our sinful nature to want to do more sin.

In his book *Confessions*, the church father Augustine described how this dynamic worked out in his life as a young man: “There was a pear tree near our vineyard, laden with fruit.

One stormy night we rascally youths set out to rob it and carry our spoils away. We took off a huge load of pears – not to feast upon ourselves, but to throw them to the pigs, though we ate just enough to have the pleasure of forbidden fruit.

They were nice pears, but it was not the pears that my wretched soul coveted, for I had plenty better at home. I picked them simply in order to become a thief.

The only feast I got was a feast of iniquity, and that I enjoyed to the full. What was it that I loved in the theft? Was it the pleasure of acting against the law? The desire to steal was awakened simply by the prohibition of stealing.”

In American history, the Prohibition Act in place from 1920 to 1933, prohibited the manufacture, sale, transport, import, or export of alcoholic beverages. How did that work? It didn’t stop drinking! In fact, in many ways it exacerbated the drinking problem all the more as people turned to the black market. The human sin nature has an inborn desire to break the law.

Paul says, “apart from the law sin was dead” meaning it kind of lie dormant until it was stirred up by the law. However, the rebellious sin nature is stimulated by the law to where it sins all the more (cf. Rom. 5:20; 1 Cor. 15:56).

If you put a sign up not to throw rocks through this window, prepare for broken glass. The prohibition of law is like shaking a can of Coca-Cola. Prepare for an eruption of sin!

Slide # 10

The sin nature reacts to “thou shalt not” with “I really want to”. It is the “***forbidden fruit SIN-drome***”.

9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Paul is speaking relatively here in terms of his experience. Evidently, he is referring to the time when he was a young person before he really knew and understood the command against coveting. They say ignorance is bliss. In his ignorance Paul felt free (alive). But then the commandment came and his sin nature responded to it with sinful desire – and it killed him.

It killed him in the sense of showing him to be unrighteous before God. It showed him to be guilty and worthy of death. Law breakers deserve death! The law condemns those who break it with DEATH. In 2 Cor. 3 Paul called the law “the ministry of death” and “the ministry of condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:7, 9).

Some have suggested that this time of “innocence” in Paul’s life was perhaps before his “**bar mitzvah**” at the age of 13 (cf. Mt. 10:20; 19:20; Lk. 18:21). At the Jewish bar mitzvah, a young man is then considered an adult and becomes a “son of the commandment” where he is now responsible to keep the law. Perhaps, this is what is in view, but Paul doesn’t give us specifics.

In his ignorance, everything seemed fine. It is like the person with a filthy dirty face who has not yet looked into the mirror. They have not yet seen their dirtiness. They think everything is fine but it’s not fine. The problem of sin is there even though they don’t yet realize it.

10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

The commandment “**was to bring life**” but with one condition – you have to keep it. You have to keep all of it all the time in thought, word, and deed.

Slide # 11

Leviticus 18:5 (NKJV)

5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 4:1 (NKJV)

1 “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, **that you may live**, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you.

But Paul found that which could theoretically bring life, to actually bring death – and the reason is because he broke the law. And right there is the problem – no one can keep the law as it is too much for sinners like us who have a sin nature like we do (Gal. 3:10-12).

There were 613 laws under the Mosaic Law code. It was a UNIT. To break even one of them was to break the whole thing. God demands total perfection!

Slide # 12

James 2:10 (NKJV)

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet **stumble in one point**, he is **guilty of all**.

John Gerstner, who years ago was a Seminary professor one day was preaching in Romans at a certain church. He expounded on the law and used it to expose sin. After the service, a woman came up to him. She held up her hand with her index finger and thumb about a half-inch apart and she said, “Dr. Gerstner, you make me feel this big.”

Dr. Gerstner replied, “But madam, that’s too big. That’s much too big. Don’t you know that that much self-righteousness will take you to hell?”

Slide # 13

Galatians 3:10–11 (NKJV)

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue **in all things** which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

11 But that **no one is justified by the law** in the sight of God is evident, for **“the just shall live by faith.”**

Slide # 14

Galatians 3:21 (NKJV)

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

Those who have clean faces do not have to fear the mirror, but alas we all have dirt on us! Therefore, as Paul says in Romans 3:19 all the world is shown to be guilty before God.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

The word “occasion” here is the very same word as “opportunity” in verse 8. Sin, using the commandment as a base of operations, deceived Paul and killed him.

Paul initially thought the commandments were the way to life. His sinful heart thought he could keep them. But this proved to be deceitful! Because of his sin nature he could not do it, and the result was spiritual death.

Here he apparently means that sin took advantage of the fact that one does not expect God’s commandment to be the occasion of death and it thus used that commandment to bring about death. We should be clear that it was not the commandment that slew Paul. God’s commandment is always directed towards life. It was sin that killed the apostle. Sin took advantage of the situation and used the commandment to bring about Paul’s death. - **Leon Morris**

Sin is again personified here. It first deceives and then it kills by way of the commandment (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:4). This is the objective of SIN – to kill you eternally! Sin is pictured as a personal enemy within.

Slide # 15

Genesis 4:7 (NKJV)

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, [to kill you] but you should rule over it.”

12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Verse 12 answers the question raised in verse 7 – “***Is the law sin?***” Most emphatically the answer is NO! In fact, the law is holy, just, and good.

Sin may have used the law but the law itself is perfectly HOLY.

God is holy and His law is holy. Holy means “set apart”. God’s law is the holy standard that reflects His holiness. It reflects God’s holy character.

Thus, the law is a perfect reflection of the HOLY God who gave it. In effect, it is a perfect mirror – a mirror of holiness. It is perfectly able to show us the dirt on us, but it can’t make us clean!

It is also “just” meaning “righteous”. It is RIGHT in all it declares. It is never unjust or unfair. It is perfectly equitable in every way. If you want perfect justice you will find it under the law. But alas we need GRACE!

And the law is good in that it aims at life. It has the beneficent good of mankind in view. It helps us to see our need for a Savior. As Paul says in Gal. 3:24, “The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Thus, it ultimately helps us on to God by showing us our need for a Savior!

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The problem has never been the law. It is perfectly good and it is not responsible for our death! The law is not the culprit for our death doom!

The criminal who is caught red-handed for breaking the law and is then sentenced to prison for it cannot blame the law for the consequences. He has no one to blame but his sinful self! And so it is with us! Our real problem is not the law, but SIN!

The culprit is SIN! And the function of the law is simply to expose it for what it is. To find the culprit we need look no further than indwelling SIN. Our own sin nature is to blame – not the law.

Sin, by way of the commandment, is shown to be exceedingly sinful. The law exposes SIN for just how sinful it is. The law exposes sinful depravity for the monster it truly is – and it is shockingly horrible. It shows the true colors of SIN!

SIN – that is the sin nature, is exceedingly sinful! Unsaved people may realize that there is such a thing as sin, but apart from the law, they have no idea how horrifically sinful SIN really is.

The terribleness of SIN is seen in that it takes something as perfectly holy, righteous, and good as the law and uses it to KILL us. SIN turned God's blessing (the law) into a curse! SIN made use of what is good to bring about evil! SIN is indeed exceedingly sinful!

John Bunyan's classic Pilgrim's Progress has a scene in which Christian is taken into a room by Interpreter. It's a large room, and it's thick with dust, and the dust is lying settled. Then a man walks in with a broom and he starts sweeping the dust. And so much dust arises that Christian is almost suffocated by the dust. The imagery pictures the large room as the heart. The dust is sin. It lies settled until Interpreter takes Christian in. The man who comes in with the broom is the Law, and what the Law does is just raise dust everywhere, enough to almost suffocate a person. And the more the Law sweeps, the more suffocating the experience becomes.

Just as a broom by itself cannot clean a room filled with dust but rather only stirs it up, making things worse, so also the law cannot cleanse the heart of sin. But it does do a great job of exposing the sinfulness of SIN!

As seen in our text the LAW does 3 things with respect to sin.

Slide # 16

The LAW...

REVEALS sin – v. 7

AROUSES sin – v. 8

MAGNIFIES sin – v. 13

At verse 14 Paul shifts gears. From verse 7-13 he has been talking in the past tense. I take it that this section essentially refers to Paul's experience with sin and the law prior to his conversion.

But then verses 14-25 are in the present tense related to his present struggle with sin after becoming a Christian. I take it this is representative of the "present tense" struggle for all Christians. This battle with sin never goes away until we get home to glory.

However, there has been no end of discussion about verses 14-25 and whether they are descriptive of Paul as a mature Christian, an immature Christian, a carnal believer, or an unbeliever. Lots of ink is spilled over this discussion.

Since Paul in chapter 6 has so strongly stated that the believer has been freed from the slavery of sin (6:18), some, therefore, believe that Paul cannot be describing a true believer here in Romans 7:14 and on. Others emphasize that Paul, at this point, delights in the law of God as seen in 7:22, which is indicative only of a true believer. And round and round it goes with many points and counterpoints.

However, my view is that the transition from the PAST tense in verses 7-13 to the PRESENT tense of verses 14-25 is indicative of conversion. In this transition, Paul moves from being under the condemnation of sin to now delighting in God's truth and yet struggling with indwelling sin.

The transition point of conversion is saving faith as seen in Romans 5:1...

Slide # 17

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

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

This is the receiving of grace and of the gift of righteousness as seen in Romans 5:17. This is the obedience of faith as seen in Romans 6:17.

Paul, having made a transition from his PAST relationship with sin and the law, now has a PRESENT struggle with sin, as noted in verses 14-25. Our relationship with sin and the law is now different as believers, but our battle with sin continues – and that is what Paul now deals with in the remainder of the chapter.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Verse 14 begins with Paul saying, “***we know that law is spiritual***”. “We know” is an appeal to shared knowledge. The law aligns with what is spiritual as emphasized in verse 12. It is holy, just, and good.

However, Paul says, “***I am carnal, sold under sin.***” The imagery here is that of the slave market where slaves were bought and sold. Sold under sin means that SIN is now commanding the person like it owns them.

I do not think Paul is talking categorically. Paul here is not addressing his POSITION in Christ, but rather speaking FUNCTIONALLY. In Romans 6 Paul is very clear and emphatic that we are POSITIVELY DEAD to sin (Rom. 6:7); yet at the same time he says...

Slide # 18

Romans 6:12 (NKJV)

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

The point is that the believer is not to let sin reign but if we allow it to do so – it can reign. At the moment sin has its way in a believer – at that moment sin is reigning. At that moment the believer has given the reign over to sin.

Functionally the believer in that moment is not being spiritual but rather carnal – acting as if sin is the master. It is contrary to the POSITIONAL truth, but FUNCTIONALLY, it depicts the believer's experience in the moment!

Paul addressed the saints at Corinth as “carnal” because of how they were living. They were spiritual in their position as sanctified saints, as he says in 1 Cor. 1:2, but in practice, they were functionally carnally, as seen in 1 Cor. 3:1-4.

My point is that, FUNCTIONALLY, it is possible for a believer to be carnal where sin is having its way, as described here in Romans 7:14.

Realize that Paul describes the believer as a person with two natures. In him he has the flesh (what I call the old sin nature) in which nothing good dwells. But at the same his true identification (his new nature) delights in what is holy. Both of these realities are true within the life of every believer.

Slide # 19

Romans 7:18 (NKJV)

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Romans 7:22 (NKJV)

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. Nowhere do we find the unbeliever in a struggle like this. Rather they are in bondage to sin and don't even desire the things of God. Rather they are hostile to God as seen in Romans 8:7. As Paul shows in Romans 1:32 they approve of their own sin and also that of others. They don't hate it!

I think the struggle with sin is itself evidence of true salvation. Only the believer has the conflict of two natures operative within him, namely, the flesh (the sinful nature) and the new nature (cf. Gal. 5:17). In Romans 8 Paul describes this struggle in terms of "groaning" (Rom. 8:22, 23, 26).

Paul is here baring his heart as he shares his personal struggle with sin related to the flesh and his new nature which he describes as the "newness of spirit" in Romans 7:6.

Keep in mind that Paul is not "in the flesh" which is descriptive of the unbeliever as seen in Romans 7:5 (cf. Rom. 8:9). However, the flesh is still in him as seen in Romans 7:18. The reality of indwelling sin is still a reality as seen in Romans 7:17.

Paul does not have the carnal mind of enmity against God that defines the unbeliever as seen in Romans 8:7; but rather a mind that serves the law of God as seen in Romans 7:25.

The believer has been freed from the penalty of sin and from the power of sin, but not yet from the presence of sin. It's right there in us crying out for attention. The sin nature is still represented in the believer. Indwelling sin is ever present. We still wrestle with sinful inclinations; we still have the flesh. And this battle is real. We are always just one step away from falling.

Slide # 20

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV)

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed** lest he fall.

Galatians 6:1 (NKJV)

1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, **considering yourself** lest you also be tempted.

The spiritual are those who are walking in the Spirit, the one who needs to be restored is functionally being carnal and in need of restoration.

Here is Paul's point up to this point. Paul has emphasized our position as being dead to sin and dead to the law. And he has emphasized our position of being in the realm of "newness of spirit" reflecting the reality of a new nature. However, he has not yet gotten to the power source which is the Holy Spirit. He will get there in chapter 8, but for now, he is dealing with the struggle with sin that is common to all believers.

We have the flesh and feel the strong pull of sin. At the same time, we have a new nature that has holy desires and wants to do what is right. We as believers all have this struggle because we all still have the flesh and we all now also have a new nature in which we are partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). This makes for a conflicted experience in which we groan awaiting final redemption – final deliverance from the very presence of sin.

So, how is it possible for a Christian to be carnal, fleshy, a slave of sin? Well, FUNCTIONALLY, if we don't walk in the Spirit, we yield to SIN, and it is more than ready to take the reign if we let it. They say, "Nature abhors a vacuum". If we are not walking in the Spirit – SIN will aggressively move into that space and reign in our mortal body (Rom. 6:12).

Slide # 21

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

But if we don't walk in the Spirit the lust of the flesh is bound to have its way with us. We have to be proactive here. We choose whether we will obey the Spirit or obey the lustful desires of sin! But here is the point: We are dead to sin and to the law so that we don't have to obey sin! It is no longer our master!

However, we do need to realize we can't do this on our own. We need God's help! We need the power of the Spirit to overcome sin in our walk. Even though we have a new nature, the power is of the Spirit. We need to walk in the Spirit – that is always the key to victory.

As we grow in grace – the closer we get to God the more we see our own sinfulness. When Isaiah, the holy prophet, saw a vision of God and the seraphim crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts," he cried out...

Slide # 22**Isaiah 6:5 (NKJV)**

5 So I said: **“Woe is me, for I am undone!”** Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

Peter was a fisherman. He knew all about fishing. Having fished all night he caught nothing. Peter knew full well that if you hadn't caught anything at night you sure would not catch it in the day because the fish go lower during the day. Yet, at Jesus command they threw out their nets and caught so many fish that the net was breaking. Peter, realizing the greatness of this miracle and how this reflected on WHO Jesus was as LORD, said...

Slide # 23**Luke 5:8 (NKJV)**

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, **“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”**

The closer we get to the LORD the more we realize our own sinfulness. I think when Paul would mess up he was keenly aware of his sinfulness and expressed it in these graphic terms: “I am carnal, sold under sin.” In the moment of sin that was his felt experience.

But praise God we don't have to live there as Paul will show in chapter 8.

Slide # 24**Romans 8:4 (NKJV)**

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 we walk in the Spirit we are not functionally carnal, but rather fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. So the Spirit is the empowering KEY as will see.

However, the struggle is real and that is what Paul deals with throughout the remainder of chapter 7.

Paul is showing that while the law is valuable in showing us the reality of our sin, it is useless in empowering us to have victory over it.

Slide # 25

It has been said, “The old nature knows no Law, the new nature needs no Law.” The Law cannot transform the old nature; it can only reveal how sinful that old nature is. The believer who tries to live under the Law will only activate the old nature; he will not eradicate it.

- **Warren Wiersbe**

Those that place themselves under the law are only going to exacerbate the sin nature that is still within them. That is not the key to victory.

If you study Church history you will find that some of the most legalistic of professing Christians often were found out to be the greatest of hypocrites. SIN secretly had its sway with them. Living under a legalistic code only stirs up sin all the more. Legalism does not set us free. Rather it stirs up SIN within and brings us functionally into bondage. No wonder Paul so adamantly said...

Slide # 26

Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and **do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**

One of the hardest things to get through to Christians is the reality of our freedom in Christ in terms of our practice. Part of the struggle with the influence of indwelling sin is that we feel the pull to again go back to legalism as the solution – but in truth that is a killer (cf. Jn. 8:32, 36). We constantly need to come back to the truth of Jesus...

Slide # 27

John 8:36 (NKJV)

36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Before launching into this turbulent section on sanctification Paul emphasized justification by faith alone (Rom. 5:1) and the security of eternal life that is found through our Lord Jesus Christ. He ended chapter 5 by saying for the believer grace reigns “through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Grace reigns – not sin – not the law!

I am so glad Paul laid down the security of eternal life on the basis of grace through faith before dealing with the conflicted turbulence of our ongoing struggle with sin in chapters 6 & 7.

Footprints in the Sand is a poem written by Mary Stevenson in 1939. It goes like this:

One night I dreamed I was walking
 along the beach with the Lord.
 Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
 In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
 Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
 other times there were one set of footprints.
 This bothered me because I noticed that
 during the low periods of my life, when I was
 suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat,
 I could see only one set of footprints.
 So I said to the Lord, "You promised me
 Lord, that if I followed you,
 you would walk with me always.
 But I have noticed that during the most trying periods
 of my life there have only been
 one set of footprints in the sand.
 Why, when I needed you most,
 you have not been there for me?"
 The Lord replied,
 "The times when you have
 seen only one set of footprints,
 is when I carried you."

No matter what we as believers go through in all our struggles with sin the Lord has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

No matter how conflicted, complicated, or contradictory our walk at times may seem to be, we can say with Paul, who at the end of this long section on sanctification said, that absolutely nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:39).

In your darkest hour, never forget that it is the LORD Who carries you, and it is HE Who will carry you through to the end! Grace reigns – not sin – not law (cf. Rom. 6:14).

If you do not know Christ – come to Him. He invites you...

Matthew 11:28 (NKJV)

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

It's all about Jesus! He is our deliverer! He is the Savior and Lord of all who will believe on Him! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!