

## **THE STRUGGLE & THE POWER**

Even as Christians, as long as we live, we will struggle with sin. James says we all stumble in many ways (cf. Ja. 3:2). But here is the thing: **God changes our “wanter”**. We now want to please God.

In Romans 7, Paul was frustrated because although he wanted to please God, he still had this sin principle within him that he struggled with (cf. Rom. 7:15). The new nature desires righteousness. The flesh (old nature) desires sin. The new nature has holy desire but lacks power (cf. Rom. 7:18).

In Romans 7:22, Paul says, **“I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.”** That is a spiritual reality for every true believer. We want to please God, and yet we still experience the pull of the flesh – the sin principle within us. Every believer knows the frustration of this conflict.

As a new creation in Christ, we desire to obey. We desire to do the will of God, and yet we often fail. This caused Paul to cry out in Rom. 7:24, **“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”**

Although we have been delivered from the PENALTY of sin and from the POWER of sin (cf. Rom. 3-6), the PRESENCE of sin still dwells in us. But then, in Rom. 7:25, Paul says, **“I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”**

In this statement, Paul anticipates the time when Christ will come and he will be delivered from the very PRESENCE of sin. In the meantime, the struggle continues.

### **Summary of Romans 7**

**New nature:** Loves righteousness – hates sin (desires holiness)

**Sin nature (flesh):** Loves sin (nothing good dwells in)

**Ensuing Struggle within:**

- The new nature always wants to do what is right.
- The old sin nature always wants to do what is wrong.
- The new nature has holy desire but no power.

However, that is not the end of the story because chapter 8 goes on to address the empowerment that comes from the Holy Spirit, which is KEY to victory.

The answer to this dilemma is the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to empower us in order to have spiritual victory. Praise the Lord that He not only gave us a new nature but also the Holy Spirit to empower us.

We are freed from both the penalty and the power of sin, but not yet the presence of sin. So, even though the power of sin is broken, its relentless presence means we always feel the pull of its influence, and sad to say, we often succumb when we fail to rely upon the power of the Spirit and the spiritual resources that God has given to us.

The first person singular is mentioned in reference to Paul all over chapter 7. However, there is no first-person singular in Roman 8. In Romans 8, the Holy Spirit is the dominant Person. He is mentioned 19 times – more than any other chapter in the Bible.

### **Romans 8:3–4 (NKJV)**

**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,

**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**.

Christ on the cross broke the POWER of sin and made it possible that we might actually live in accordance with the righteous standard of the law. Note it is fulfilled **"in us"** not **"by us"**. It is the work of the Spirit, as brought out at the end of the verse. We are totally dependent upon the Spirit to empower us for righteous living in matters of both holiness and love (cf. Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14).

If you leave the Spirit out of the equation, the frustration of Romans 7 follows. If you bring the Spirit into the equation, then there is power to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law. For the Christian, the Spirit is never entirely out of the equation.

All believers walk according to the Spirit – some are more consistent than others. It is normal in our experience to slip in and out of chapter 7 and 8; and yet, the overall course of the believer's life is the **"law of the Spirit of life"**. With the Spirit come life, liberty, and power.

### ***The Key to Victory is to Walk in the Spirit!***

Until we get to glory, God has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us to live holy lives. The Spirit empowers us and is transforming us.

### **Galatians 5:17 (NKJV)**

**17** For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, **so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

The flesh and the Spirit are in opposition to one another. There is a struggle that goes on inside you as a believer. You want to do right, and you feel the pull to do wrong. Both principles are a reality. You are conflicted.

In Gal. 5:17b, Paul literally says: ***“So that whatever you may wish, these things you are not doing.”*** The sense is that the flesh (the indwelling sin principle) keeps you from doing the good you desire to do. Because of the influence of the sin nature, we often do wrong things that we really don't want to do.

The key to victory is walking in the Spirit.

### **Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)**

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