

Romans 7:22-25 – How to Handle the World’s Greatest War

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Rienecker, Steele, Calvin, Geneva, Lightfoot, Robertson, Poole, PNT, Handfuls, Vincent, Trapp, Henry, Koning, JFB, Family, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: The last time you heard Apostle Paul called Roman Christians to live like they were justified–to live victoriously.

His call to live victoriously implied something important – it implied they were in a fight of some sort...a war!

Now I don’t know a lot about war and how to fight them. I don’t know the best solution to the Ukraine/Russia or Israel/Palestine wars. Sometimes there are hidden agendas and manipulations that hide the truth.

But I do know about this war, the most significant war everyone struggles with, especially Christians. Hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Apostle Paul’s Consternation

Apostle Paul’s Confession

Apostle Paul’s Confidence

Our goals are: That even though you know your weakness in succumbing to sin, you will make it your duty to acknowledge and confess your sins, knowing your Savior loves you, will forgive you, and will strengthen you to help build his kingdom.

Apostle Paul’s Consternation (with the war)

22 For I delight in the **law of God** according to the **inward man**. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity** to the law of sin which is in my members.

1. Apostle Paul declared he delighted in the law of God in his renewed heart – his inward man – his regenerated part! (Important link to V25)

2. Why? Apostle Paul delighted in God’s law because he knew God’s law was good and nourishing to the soul and brought blessings to him, he knew God’s law **brought glory to God,** and he knew that keeping God’s law **brought blessings to his neighbor.**

3. But Apostle Paul had a struggle in his life– a war that brought him into bondage.

The **word bondage-a military word**-meant going to war and taking captives by a spear and imprisoning them. **His struggle, his war, was with sin!**

He knew God's law. **His mind had been renewed.** He saw the **blessings that came from it.** Yet, he chose, of his own free will, to sin against God!

And **this was a war...not an occasional battle.** (**Augustine** called it the "**Christian struggle.**")

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

The **Devil wanted** to capture him and make him sin and be cursed, but the **Spirit of God wanted** him to submit to God's law and be blessed.

4. Apostle Paul couldn't understand why he would sin, knowing all he had in Christ; to him it was a mystery.

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. **For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.** 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.** ¹⁹ For **the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**

Three times in the previous verses Apostle Paul showed a sense of frustration with his redeemed soul!

How could the saved act like that? **That mystery brought him consternation.**

5. Lessons:

a. People who say they don't sin or they aren't struggling with sin are lying! They are not ignorant. They know in their heart they sin. Everyone knows it!

The most perfect Christian struggles with sin!

1John 1: 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

James 4:1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? **Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

b. Those who teach Christians don't struggle with sin cause confusion and hurt among weak Christians.

They cause people to doubt their salvation because they know they struggle with sin.

Christian perfectionism is a false doctrine from the Devil.

c. Be patient when others sin and when they struggle with sin. They know it, of course, but the pull of sin is strong.

Think of your own struggle with sin so you can be patient.

d. Delight in God's law. God's law is more to be desired than the finest gold and the finest foods in this world.

But you have to eat it up to enjoy it.

You have to read it, believe it, meditate on it, and obey it.

Psalms 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, **And in His law he meditates day and night.**

Psalms 119:77 Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; **For Your law is my delight.**

Delighting in God's law is a means of a good life! It will bring blessings. It will keep order. It will help the kingdom of God to spread. It will bring glory to the Savior.

Apostle Paul's Confession

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

1. In deep consternation, that even though he was renewed in the inner man, he was still overcome by sin, Apostle Paul cried out, a cry from the depths of the soul.

2. What was that cry? 3 things!

a. He confessed he was wretched! This word is a little unique. It signifies one who is tired of enduring toils or war. **You can get Apostle Paul's sense of frustration** as he described himself.

b. He implied that there was none who could deliver him. He couldn't deliver himself and no man could do it.

You know this when he asked rhetorically who will deliver him. The expected

answer was “no one.” **“Body of death” literally means “dead body.”**

No man could save one who is dead.

c. He then cried out for deliverance from the overwhelming pressure of sin. This language is that of a soldier who calls out to another soldier for rescue from death.

It is a cry of anguish -a cry of desperation.

This was what was the cry of the Psalmist!

Psalms 55:6 So I said, "**Oh, that I had wings like a dove!** I would fly away and be at rest.

3. Apostle Paul’s question was not showing uncertainty in his mind, rather, he asked this question to teach his spiritual children.

Apostle Paul knew in whom he believed and persuaded his God would keep them till the end of times.

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

4. Lessons:

a. If man doesn’t see this internal war, this struggle with sin (or deny it is real), he will have no basis to cry out to God for help.

But Christians see it. This is why you cry out to God for deliverance.

Pray for victory over the struggle. Be honest! **You struggle with sins, so you must plead for forgiveness.**

b. Man’s inability is consistent with man’s responsibility; it does not exclude it.

Muslims, for instance, believe God will not ask us to do things we can’t do!

Allah doesn’t; Yahweh does! **It is man’s fault he lost the ability to do what God commanded.** God gave man the ability to keep his law when he made man!

c. Groan for your sins by seeing how they hurt you, hurt your neighbor, and hurt the cause of Christ.

Apostle Paul's Confidence

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.**

1. Apostle Paul came to his senses and recognized all his burdens were put on Christ when Christ obeyed and suffered for him and then Christ's righteousness and holiness were put on him!

He did not try to do good works to get victory over sin, as other religions teach.

He did not try to be moral in order to get victory over sin, as most people believe today.

He could only cry to the one who had the power to free him – who obeyed and suffered for him!

2. The recognition of the fact that all his burdens were put on Christ, caused Apostle Paul to thank God for Christ's work for him.

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God, who **gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

3. Apostle Paul then reiterated he would have a lifelong war with sin – and he had to do this by keeping the law of God.

4. Lessons:

a. Although you are plagued with sin, your sin will never win over you nor condemn you.

Jesus took your condemnation on the Tree of Life – the cross – your full condemnation. Christ's righteousness was then reckoned to your account.

Jesus is the wall that blocks you from the Devil's fiery arrows.

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.

b. While every believer will have victory over sin, you must not expect total victory over sin in this life! Only in heaven will you be totally free of sin.

c. Rejoice in this promised and assured victory over sin, promised by Christ, and assured by his Holy Spirit. You can't secure this victory, but Christ will.

d. Reject those who believe they must be despondent, or appear to be despondent, as a form of piety. Smile. Your sins are gone!

“You ask me why I’m happy, well let me tell you why. My sins are gone!”

Conclusion:

Yahweh’s child **will feel consternation, frustration, with his sins** which bring shame to himself, the bride of Christ, and Christ himself.

He will confess his sins, even with a painful cry.

Then he will reflect back on what Christ did for him and he **will have confidence that the victory was won!** His chains were not really chains at all.

Beloved in the Lord

1. Isn’t it wonderful that though you have this battle, this raging battle, the battle than neither you nor any man can win by himself, that you have a heavenly Father who guarantees you victory?

This victory was totally won by Jesus.

Sin brings death, but Jesus destroyed death when he rose again!

2. So live like those who are not longer enslaved!

Sing with passion.

Love God and love your neighbor.

Fulfill your duties as husband, wife, child, parent, friend, elder, or deacon.

Don’t let the Devil make you feel ashamed when you sin!

3. While you will win in this great war, many who don’t have Jesus to free them will be destroyed in hell – that is, unless you work to rescue them.

Will that be one of your resolutions this year?

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you are still in chains and will be taken to hell, bound!

But if you want the chains to be lifted, and they can be for free, ask God to count Christ’s punishment as yours. He will take your penalty – and then adopt you as his child.