

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Romans: Charter Of God's Salvation Grace
Part IV: The Sanctification Of The Justified By Faith Through Grace, Romans 6:1-8:39
D. Understanding The Believer's Relationship To His Sin Nature
(Romans 7:14, 15-25)

I. Introduction

- A. One of the greatest needs in believers today is the awareness that it is futile for them to try living the Christian life in their own best human efforts.
- B. Romans 7:14-25 expands on this truth in graphic, personal detail, exposing the believer's relationship to his sin nature that is behind this problem so that a believer learns what he is **NOT** supposed to **TRY**:

II. Understanding The Believer's Relationship To His Sin Nature, Romans 7:14, 15-25.

- A. Having established the fact that the Mosaic Law is holy, just and good (Romans 7:12), Paul hinted in Romans 7:14 that the practical problem that man faces (apart from God's involvement) is the sin nature within himself that keeps him from heeding the Law of God, Romans 7:14b.
- B. Then, in Romans 7:15-24, Paul developed the frustration a believer experiences when he struggles to heed the righteous requirements of God's Law in his own effort, only to find himself condemned by the Law as the sin nature within rules his every effort to his harm:
 - 1. Dr. Charles C. Ryrie has suggested of Romans 7:15-25 that "the intensely personal character of these verses seems to indicate that this was Paul's own experience as a believer. This is his diagnosis of what happens when one tries to be sanctified by keeping the law." (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn.)
 - 2. Accordingly, Paul admitted that what he himself wanted to do in keeping the Mosaic Law, he failed to do, and then even performed the very sins against the Law that he had not wanted to do, Romans 7:15.
 - 3. This conflict between what Paul wanted and what he actually did revealed the Law is not essentially evil, otherwise he would never have wanted to do what it dictates, Romans 7:16.
 - 4. This conflict between Paul's will and what he did revealed he was afflicted by a sin nature that dwelt in him, a nature that kept him from carrying out in his own strength what he knew was good and right as revealed in the law, Romans 7:17-18.
 - 5. [We must clarify that the word "flesh" in Romans 7:18 does not literally mean the body, for that would mean the material body is itself evil, an ancient Gnostic error. If the body itself were evil, then, when Christ became "flesh" and dwelt among us in His incarnation (John 1:14), He would have become a sinner by contact with His body, an heretical error, cf. Hebrews 4:15. Rather, "flesh" in Romans 7:18 (as the context at Romans 7:22-23 implies) is a theological term Paul used to refer to the sin nature inherited from Adam that expresses itself in the physical body, Bible Knowledge Com., N. T., p. 468.]
 - 6. After repeating in Romans 7:19-20 the endless struggle Paul admitted he faced between what he wanted to do that was right and what his sin nature actually led him to do, Paul suggested another "law" existed in him, the "law" of sin that dwelt in the members of his physical body, one that was at war with the mind of his will to heed the Law of God, Romans 7:21-23a.
 - 7. Indeed, Paul admitted he was held captive to the law of sin, a frustrating state, Romans 7:23b.
 - 8. An outburst followed in which Paul called himself a "wretched man" who needed outside deliverance from the body of his "living death", Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Romans 7:24.
- C. Thankfully, there is victory over this wretched state, a victory Paul developed extensively in Romans 8, but to which he alluded only briefly in Romans 7:25: through Jesus Christ his Lord, Paul thankfully acknowledged there was victory out of his stalemate of wanting to serve God's law with his mind, but being forced to serve in bondage to the law of the sin nature with its living death kind of lifestyle!

Lesson: It is impossible for any Christian to achieve an upright, righteous, holy life of heeding God's Law, regardless how much he or any other believer wills to heed the Law, and that due to the BONDAGE he has to his OWN SIN NATURE if left to his OWN effort!

Application: May all of us believers learn to GIVE UP our OWN efforts to live a godly life -- we will NEVER be able to do so! Such a path is only a living death, a "wretched" existence!