

# Leader's Guide

LESSON 10

Dr. Jerry Nelson

*In response to the sermon on November 11th.*

## Romans 7:1-25

### Key Points

This passage is rich with the doctrinal truths of our internal struggles with sin, struggles that we may not even be aware of, yet battle daily. The scriptures will reveal to us:

- Our freedom from the condemnation of the Mosaic law
- Sin's negative use of the Law
- The new way of the Spirit
- Paul's struggle with sin in his inner man

In this chapter Paul continues to **build toward chapter 8** and how it is that we may live in the Spirit. In this passage Paul presents the reality of our internal struggles and the hopelessness we face in conquering sin through our wills. Paul's best efforts were not enough to conquer the ruling passions of his life. In his despair he cried out "Who will rescue us from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ!"

Paul's example teaches us to pay attention to our inner being, for when sin is brought to light by the Spirit and when we confess our sin, we know that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from unrighteousness. The next important step is to realize that promises to do better next time will fall short. We must acknowledge that it is only through the power of the Spirit—his enabling—that we will overcome future temptations. Our cooperation with his leading then becomes our act of submission to his will and obedience lived in faith. While we will never be sinless, this process of sanctification will continue to conform us more and more to the image of Christ.

## Personal Reflection

As you study and pray this week, be especially mindful of the battles that you face in your inner being. Allow those thoughts to come to the forefront, and think of them in light of the text. As you grow in this area, you will be better able to help your group gain discernment and strength to fight the internal struggles with sin.

## Special Considerations

In this passage Paul describes his struggle with sin. In verses 1-13 he illustrates the relationship of sin to the law, and how that relationship resulted in death. In verses 14-25, we find the Apostle wrestling with the current reality of the persistent nature of sin. This text is one of the most controversial texts of Romans. Is Paul talking about his pre-conversion state, is he describing his struggle with sin as a believer, or something else? There is reason to believe that it *may* be the former, but after further examination, we can conclude that the latter is more likely.

Up to verse 13, we find Paul talking about his former way of life in the past tense. In verse 14, we find that “the personal pronoun and the verb, taken together, suggest that Paul is describing his present (Christian) experience.” While we may struggle with the fact that he calls himself “*unspiritual*”, we must remember that “even a believer has the seeds of rebellion in his heart”. After understanding the law and its relationship to sin, and our freedom from sin in Christ, we might conclude that “*sold as a slave to sin*” would refer to an unregenerate state. “A phrase so strong that many refuse to accept it as descriptive of a Christian. However, it may graphically point out the failure even of Christians to meet the radical, ethical and moral demands of the gospel. It also points up the persistent nature of sin.” (*quotes from the NIV Study Bible*)

**Note:** *There are supplemental study materials that accompany this lesson. They have been sent via email to each leader, and print copies are available in the Welcome Center at the Romans kiosk.*

## Discussion Questions

1. What change is there in the new way of the Spirit over the old way of the written code? What is the fruit?
2. The law produces a greater desire within me to sin. Why?
3. Sin deceives us; what is good appears to be evil, and what is evil appears to be good. What situations have you faced that led you to believe something false, either about God or about someone else? Did your false belief lead to action? What were the consequences?
4. Is there a sin which continually defeats you? Are you focusing more on the law against that sin than you are on Christ?
5. How have you seen righteousness realized in your life by focusing on the Spirit’s help instead of merely your ability to meet the letter of the law?
6. In what ways have you thanked God recently for his righteous standards that reveal your need for him?
7. Do you ever blame God and his righteous standards, for your sin instead of taking responsibility for your sin?
8. Our sin nature will always be with us. It is never reformed, nor does it die. How are you prepared to be engaged in spiritual conflict for the rest of your life? Have you come to accept the reality of the power of sin in your life?