

## Romans Lesson 6

**Reading: Romans 7**

**Memory Verse: Romans 7:6**

**Definitions:**

Wretched – miserable, distressed

**After reading the lesson, answer the questions using the following link:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScq1lolS8vQ9givr5kCHd4nuV0Kk4WHKLkI DTZROPaukjL\\_g/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScq1lolS8vQ9givr5kCHd4nuV0Kk4WHKLkI DTZROPaukjL_g/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### The Battle within the Heart of the Christian

There is a battle going on inside every Christian. The new creation we are in Christ (our new nature) struggles against the old, sinful us (the old nature). We are going to have to fight this fight as long as we are on earth (Galatians 5:17, Romans 7:23). And today's culture does not make the battle any easier. Everywhere we turn, we hear that it is up to each of us to decide what is right and wrong for us.

In explaining this struggle to the Romans, Paul talked about four different laws.

First, Paul wrote about **the law of Moses**, a law he had already mentioned several times in his letter. The law of Moses was the written account of what God expected from the people of Israel. Remember, the people to whom Paul was writing would have been very familiar with the Mosaic law. Some of the people (like Paul himself) were Jews by birth. The law was their religion. The Gentiles in the Roman church could have had access to the writings of Moses, so they too would have been familiar with the law. Paul

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explained that there was not anything wrong with the law itself. God gave us the law so people would know exactly what sin is. The law defines sin (7:7). But if we had to follow the law of Moses in order to get or to keep our salvation, then we would be saved by works, not grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Since Paul had studied the law of Moses, he knew some facts he wanted to share with the Romans.

- The Mosaic law is not a set of rules for the Christian to follow in order to be acceptable to God. The Christian is acceptable to God only because of Christ's work on the cross. We cannot keep the law as a way of life as Christians.
- The law does not provide the ability to do the good that is needed in our everyday lives (7:6).
- The law can only show us the guilt of our sin (7:7).
- The law creates discouragement, frustration, and conflict in our lives, and it does not give us victory (7:15-20).

Paul had already explained the standing the Roman Christians had in Christ (see lesson 4). The law does not give us victory. It is our relationship with Christ that gives us victory.

Paul continues his explanation by writing about three additional laws. These laws are defined differently than the Mosaic law. They are not codes of conduct, but rather principles that always hold true.

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In Romans 8:2, Paul wrote about the **law of sin and death** (another name for the old nature). This is the law that governed us before we were saved. Our lives (before knowing Christ as Savior) were characterized by sin and disobedience. Now that we are Christians, that law of sin and death is superseded. Yet it is still active, battling against the third law - **the law of the Spirit of life** (another name for the new nature).

The Holy Spirit works through the law of the Spirit of life in the believer. At the moment of salvation, we each receive new life in Christ. Instantly, there is conflict. The new creation we are in Christ struggles against the old nature we are in sin (7:19-25). Both want to express themselves through our thoughts, words, and actions. The Holy Spirit lives in the Christian to enable our new nature to be in control. Then we produce good works that glorify God. We have a choice. We can choose to let our old nature be in control, or we can choose to let our new nature be in control.

The fourth law Paul writes about is **the law of the mind** (another name for our new nature) (7:23). After his conversion, Paul desired to do what was right. Remember, he knew the Mosaic law; he knew what “right” was. He discovered that in his own strength, he still could not do the good he knew he should do. He needed to rely on the Holy Spirit.

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The struggle between the old and new nature caused the apostle Paul major problems. Why could he not do what he knew was right? Why did he do the things that he knew were wrong? The battle continued to rage. The battle continues to rage in us too.

Finally, in anguish, Paul cries out, “*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*” (7:24)

Yes, Paul was in anguish. Yes, Paul struggled. But he knew the answer to his struggle. He understood that he was no longer under law, but under grace! He understood that the answer is not in the law of Moses. The answer is in a person: Jesus Christ the Lord. He understood that in Christ there is no condemnation. That is what he writes about next: the solution to the struggle!

### Fast Fact

Paul uses the example of a husband and wife to illustrate his point. He says that as long as a woman has a husband, she is bound by law to that has been for as long as he lives (7:2-3). When her husband dies, that law no longer applies. She is no longer legally (by law) bound to him and is free to marry another man. The law that legally united the husband and wife is no longer in effect since the husband is dead. A dead man cannot live by a law. The same concept applies to our Christian lives. Our old sinful self has been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Our new life is in Christ. It does not need a set of laws.