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**THE BATTLE WITHIN**

# Romans 7:15-8:2 (HCSB)

**15**For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. **16**And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. **17**So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. **18**For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. **19**For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. **20**Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that lives in me. **21**So I discover this principle:[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28112a)] When I want to do what is good, evil is with me. **22**For in my inner self[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28113b)] I joyfully agree with God’s law. **23**But I see a different law in the parts of my body,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28114c)] waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28114d)] **24**What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this dying body? **25**I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord![[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28116e)]So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh, to the law of sin.

**8**Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28117f)]**2**because the Spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus has set you[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7%3A15-8%3A2&version=HCSB#fen-HCSB-28118g)] free from the law of sin and of death.

How do we battle the sin which so easily besets us?

Is there any way to be completely delivered from the sin that has plagued your life for years and years?

A person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ may be delivered immediately from sin's grip at the point of his salvation. But this experience is not shared by all believers. Most are not totally delivered from all besetting sins when they first trust God. Instead they find themselves still falling into sin.

There is no doubt that they have received eternal life, but their difficulty with sin remains. They are:

- going to quit smoking someday

- going to stop drinking someday

- going to quit lusting with their mind someday

- going to get organized someday

- going to quit cussing - losing temper, talking so about other people

- going to quit talking -gossiping about other people someday

- going to stop procrastinating & get busy someday

- going to stop eating so much someday

- going to start attending church regularly, pray regularly, read Bible regularly, witness regularly someday.

- going to stop looking at porn someday

And on and on the list goes. **These and other sins keep the Christian and non-christian alike in senseless bondage.**

Paul was being defeated by (the law of) sin, forcing him (his renewed mind) to search till God could reveal to him the way of deliverance (the Law of the Spirit).

**The law of sin is too strong for anyone so you must yield to a higher law if you would have victory.**

God's purposefully reveals to us that in and of ourselves, even our new man, our redeemed self, we are weak and wretched and unable to serve Him.

Only as we submit - surrender to the control of the Spirit of God can we find deliverance from the bondage of sin and the freedom to serve God.

We understand from this passage that the apostle Paul was once a Christian living a defeated life.

**Look at the turmoil that was going on in the apostle Paul's life.**

**I. THE DETERMINATION (15-16).**

**(15a) - For that which I am doing, I do not understand**

Paul states that he is not personally doing what he wants to be doing but something else. He is asking why can a person not do that which he is determined to do.

**(15b) - for I am not practicing what I would like to do."**

Paul states that he is not continually living the Christian life which he so wants to practice doing.

**(15c)- For I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate."**

We see Paul battling over why he is so prone to do evil when he hates evil. Paul is confused over why he cannot do what he desires to do, yet does the things he hates.

**(16) - "But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law [confessing] that it is good."**

**Here we see the difference between the carnal saved and the unsaved man.**

**A SAVED PERSON...**

- Their heart has been soften.

- They earnestly endeavors after the life of God.

- Their consciousness has been revived by salvation and when they do anything wrong, they realize it and is repentant.

- They agree with God about the evil they do and hate it.

- They agree that God's Law is right, and in that agreement strive to live by it.

**A LOST PERSON...**

- They know to do right (Romans 1:19).

- God has placed within every one of us the inborn knowledge of right and wrong.

- Yet the unsaved person does not strive forcibly to do right.

**- He may not like the evil he does, but he does not hate it.**

**II. THE DEFEAT (17-21).**

**(17a) "So now, no longer am I the one doing it,"**

Paul acknowledges that his fierce determination not to do sin, ***proves*** that he has chosen sides, and ***pitted*** himself against the evil he does despite his doing of the evil. Now he is no longer the one doing it.

But the reverse is also true. **The unsaved man is responsible** for doing it because he has not pitted himself against the sin he does.

**(17b) "So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me."**

Paul's fallen sinful nature, (the old man or old self), the fleshly nature he and we live in, drags him down. If it can drag an apostle, a trained Pharisee down, know full well that it will drag you down also.

**(18a) "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, my flesh."**

**Flesh** here means man as he is apart from the reign of God in his life. Paul opens his eyes and accepts the fact that he is evil, and that he will do evil.

In the second half of verse **18(b) we find Paul's realization. "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, my flesh, for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not."**

**Again we see that the constant striving of this determined apostle is not enough to conquer the evil within him.**

Since his flesh is what fights him, the one who desires to do good. The flesh, his sin nature, is overcoming his ability to do right. **The good in him is not strong enough to make him good.**

Since evil is the victor, there can be no good thing in him. His self-will, his self-fighting is not winning out.

**And neither will yours.**

**God wants to demonstrate to us that we can do nothing good at all, nothing of eternal worth without Him**. Until that fact is fully accepted our despair and disillusion will never cease.

A Christian brother who was trying to struggle into victory remarked to his pastor "I do not know why I am so weak." The pastors response is note worthy...

**"The trouble with you, is that you are weak enough not to be able to do the will of God, but you are not weak enough to keep out of things altogether. You are still not weak enough. When you are reduced to utter weakness and are persuaded that in your natural self you can do nothing whatever, then God will do everything through you."**

We all need to come to the point where we say: "Lord I am unable to do anything for you, but I trust you to do everything in me."

WATCHMAN NEE was once staying in a place with twenty other Christian brothers. There was inadequate provision for bathing in the home where they stayed, so they went for a daily swim in the river.

One day a brother got a cramp in his leg, and suddenly saw he was sinking fast, so Watchman motioned to another brother, who was an expert swimmer, to hurry to his rescue. But to Watchman's astonishment he made no move.

Growing desperate Watchman cried out: "Don't you see the man is drowning?" The other brothers, as agitate as he was, shouted too. But the good swimmer still did not move.

**Calm and collected, he remained just where he was, apparently postponing the unwelcome task**.

The voice of the poor drowning brother grew fainter and his efforts feebler. In Watchman's heart he said: "I hate that man! Think of his letting a brother drown before his very eyes and not going to the rescue!"

When the man was actually sinking, with a few swift strokes the swimmer was at his side, and both were soon safely ashore.

When Watchman got an opportunity, he let the man have it! "I have never seen any Christian who loved his life quite as much as you do," he said. "Think of the distress you would have saved that brother if you had considered yourself a little less and him a little more." **But the swimmer, Watchman soon discovered, knew his business better than he did.**

"Had I gone earlier," he said, "he would have clutched me so fast and hard that both of us would have gone under. **A drowning man cannot be saved until he is utterly exhausted and ceases to make the slightest effort to save himself."**

Do you see the point? When we give up the case, then God will take it up. He is waiting until we are at an end of our resources and can do nothing more for ourselves.

God has condemned all that is of the old creation and consigned it to the Cross.

Every attempt to do His will is a denial of His declaration in the Cross that we are utterly powerless to do so.

Paul's self-realization is continued in **verse 19. "For the good I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish."**

Paul cannot even force himself, against his sinful nature, to do the good he so seeks after. **And not only can he not keep doing the just and right thing he wills himself to do, he cannot continuously keep himself from doing the evil thing that he wills himself not to do.**

**If you have fallen down on your knees and earnestly sought God, and crying out in desperation that you do not want to do that sin any longer, and you resist with all your strength, and repeatedly resist and beg God for strength each time; then it is no longer you sinning, but the Law of Sin which ruled or rules each one of us.**

In verse 20 he reaches a conclusion. **"But if I am not doing the very thing I do not wish, I am -- no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me."**

We are a slave to eventually serve the sin within us. We may hold out for a while, but it wins out in the final analysis. But if we were holding out then we know that we did not choose to do it, but sin wore us down to where it lives, and gets its way with us.

Paul gives us the biblical principle in verse 21of indwelling sin. **"I find then the principle that evil is present in me the one who wishes to do good."**

Each one of us is carrying around in us material with which Satan can work. Our evil desires are constantly searching out temptations to satisfy their insatiable cravings.


# **You need to realize that evil is right there within you, drawing at you, wearing your self-resistance against doing evil down, keeping you from even doing the good things you so desire to do.**

In verse 22 Paul gives acceptance to the reality. **"For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man."**

As the believer struggles with the sin within himself, he is enabled to "see" with spiritual sight, his true natural self.

***Then*** he will agree with the Law written on the tablet of his heart. God' law is right but fallen man has lost the ability to conquer sin and live for God. **Only God can conquer sin and only God can live the holy life (Mark 10:27).**

(**23a) "But I see a different Law in the members of my body, waging war against the Law of my mind"**

*He is finally able to perceive is intertwined within the members of his body. It is the Law that sin conceived in the desires of the flesh eventually conquers the will or the determination of the mind.*

*The Law of the mind is man's ability to think what he wants and then do what he determines to do.*

**In our brain the fallen nature works well enough, but in the realm of the eternal and the spiritual, the strength of the flesh is nothing.**

**Verse 23(b) continues, "Waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members."**

Yes, the good things God wants Paul to do, those things recorded in the book of Acts, and his epistles, the apostle Paul could not do. He was a prisoner, bound as if in chains, held back as if by spear point.

[Illustration of THE LAW OF GRAVITY] Why does this handkerchief fall downward? (Drop the handkerchief, then throw it up). And I guarantee you, every time I drop it, it will go down. Why? Because it is a law, thus it remains unchanged, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Gravity is a natural power, it does not need to be manufactured by man.

**Now what is the will?**

**It is man's determination, his decisions.**

It is the power of man.

Man just discovers laws, God makes and upholds them. Natural law takes nothing to engage it, its just there.

The will takes my deciding to enact it.

**What happens when the will and law conflict?**

(Hold Bible out) At first I may appear to overcome gravity, but what about an hour from now, 2 hours, 3 hours? What about when you come back tonight, will I still be holding this Bible up.

**I guarantee you no matter how strongly I determine to hold this Bible up, tomorrow morning it will be on the floor. Why? Because the Law of gravity is stronger than my will. It never tires, my arm does though.**

Man himself cannot overcome God's natural Law.

The same God who decreed the Law of gravity, decreed the Law of the Ten Commandments, which places man under sins domain.

**You can overcome the Law of gravity by your own will at first, so you may be able to overcome the Law of sin at first.**

So the apostle Paul discovered this Law of indwelling sin, which eventually drags you down into it. Paul opened his inner eyes and realized all his own mighty efforts were futile. As soon as he saw sin as a Law, not just an influence, he immediately conceded that to will against it was useless.

You can fall on your knees and pray and ask God to give you strength to overcome, then get up from your knees and do the same sin again, because no amount of human effort, no matter how strong, can overcome the Law of Indwelling Sin.

**III. THE DELIVERANCE (7:24-8:2).**

Paul lays out the only way of deliverance. **(24a) "Wretched man that I am."**

There is nothing sweeter to the Lord's ears than these words. Paul states the seriousness of his personal condition and that he cannot do anything about it.

Like someone who awakes suddenly to find himself in a burning building, his cry is now for help. He has come to the point of complete despair.

Notice all the first person personal pronouns in this section. **"I, me, my"** are used **35 times**.

Have you despaired of you self-hope or do you still think "you" can make yourself into a better Christian?

Listen to Paul's despondent cry over his fallen nature in the second part of verse **24(b). "Wretched man that I am: Who will set me free from the body of this death?"**

Paul realizes that he cannot deliver himself from his predicament.

Finally void of self-hope he looks outside himself for the solution.

He does not place his hope for deliverance in things or even doctrines, he looks beyond himself and people like himself and **looks for a supernatural Deliverer, a Savior, and finds Him.**

Verse 25 declares the only hope for fallen man. **"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord."**

In a flash his cry of despair changes into a song of praise. He realizes and acknowledges the only being who can provide his deliverance. He transfers all dependence for doing the will of God from himself to Christ alone.

**From start to finish salvation must always be of and from Christ. He not only must save us initially, He must save us -sanctify us- continually and fully, or there will be no salvation. For there is no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved.**

I know that justification is ours through the Lord Jesus and requires no work on our part, but I think sanctification is dependent on our own efforts.

I know we can receive forgiveness and salvation only by entire reliance on the Lord; yet we believe we can obtain deliverance by doing something ourselves.

I fear that if we do nothing, nothing will happen.

**Notice the very precious first words of the delivered man; "I thank God."**

Why did Paul say "Thank God?" Because God was the one who did everything. Had it been Paul who did it, he would have said, "Thank Paul." But he saw that Paul was a "wretched man" and that God alone could meet his need; so he said, "Thank God." God must do all the work, for all the glory belongs to Him. If we did some of it, then we could claim some of the glory ourselves. But God will have it all. For He does all the work -all the saving- from beginning to end.

What I have said might seem negative and unpractical if we were to stop at this point, as though the Christian life were a matter of sitting still and waiting for something to happen.

**The Christian life though calls for our active engagement.**

Paul makes a final analysis of battling forces within his life in **25b. "So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the Law of God, but on the other with my flesh the Law of sin."**

**Chapter 8, verse 1 relay a blessed promise. "there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

**Now that Paul has done his analysis and made the discovery he is brought to the point of decision. He can try to live in himself in his old man or he can yield to God and live in Christ Jesus.**

Paul has failed, but his failures will not be held against him for he has found the way of forgiveness, the way of cleansing, the way of victory. He has surrendered to living life in Christ, in the power of Christ's Spirit.

LOOK>>>>> **verse 2 of chapter 8. "For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death."**

**The Spirit's ability to give life in Christ Jesus is another Law, a higher Law.**

Only a higher Law can overcome another law.

**If we**, in submission, will yield our ourselves to Christ's reign over our life then we can live under another Law.

**If we** will moment by moment yield our self to the Spirit of God then the Law of the Spirit of Life, instead of under the Law of sin and death will rule in us and them over us. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Cor. 3: 17).

**[DENSITY AND THE LAW OF BUOYANCY] In school we learn objects have density (the ratio of the mass of an object to its volume- For instance if the density of an object is less than water (1000 kg/m3) it will float in water and if it is more than water's it will sink in water.).**

**The mass of an object is determined by dividing the weight of the object by the acceleration due to gravity.**

THINK ABOUT THIS... **We see density overcoming the equilibrium point in matter when we fill a balloon with hydrogen or helium. If you release it, the balloon goes up in spite of the law of gravity operating against it. The density of the gas is too low for the law of gravity to grasp a proper hold on it. Another law has overcome the law of gravity. The law of buoyancy gives the balloon and its cargo the ability to rise upward.**

Just as the law of buoyancy conquered the law of gravity, so does the Law of the Spirit conquer the Law of Sin within us [indwelling]. And how is this done in the life of a believer? By exercising his will and his mind to submit, surrender himself to the Law of the Spirit, to the reign of Christ Jesus within his life.

When the temptation to sin comes, you must deal with the motives and power of indwelling sin by submitting yourself to Christ, because only His ability to overcome will carry you through. You must abide in Christ .

**1 Corinthians 10: 13 says; "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. "**

**God knows when self-will runs out and He has provided the way of escape.**

What is the way of escape? Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

**"No temptation has over taken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful."** Depend upon the faithfulness of God because God is the only One Who can overcome His Laws. We see this in the reason for the Cross of Christ.

No man is perfect, not even one. Every one of us has turned to his own way.

So Jesus had to come down and live that sinless life, so God could lay upon Him the iniquity of us all.

**Still today** man cannot overcome God's Law.

**Still today** only God can.

God has said that the only way to victory is through Him, through submission to God. To live the life of victory you need to do now what you did initially at the Cross. You believed in Jesus as your risen Savior.

You believed and you submitted your life to God. Still, with each and every opportunity that Satan is allowed, to put before your indwelling sin nature, you must submit to God or you will serve, sooner or later that evil nature.

This is a way God gets you close to Himself, and it is also the way He keeps you near to Himself, in utter dependence unless you should fall.

Thank God that we are not left to ourselves. The Law of Sin serves its purpose well when it leads us to despair of any existing hope of victory within our carnal selves.

**[THE ENEMY WITHIN] In Victor Hugo's story, "Ninety-three," a ship is caught in a storm. The frightened crew hears a terrible crashing sound below. Immediately the men know what it is: a cannon has broken loose and is crashing into the ship's side with every smashing blow of the rolling sea! Two men, at the risk of their lives, manage to fasten it down again, for they know that the unfastened cannon is more dangerous than the raging storm. Hillery C. Price made this application: People...are like that ship - their greatest danger areas lie within their own lives."**

If our "flesh" ... that old tendency to envy, pride, malice, covetousness, and deceit, is not "fastened down" by yielding -ourselves to God's Spirit, we will live under the constant threat of defeat. So believer, let's be alert to that enemy within and surrender to the Christ within.

**Master that sin in your heart or it will master you.**

**A number of years ago, a famous wild BEAST TAMER gave a performance in England. He would take lions, tigers, and leopards through their part of the program; then as a closing act, he would introduce a huge boa constrictor, 25 feet long. He had bought it when it was only a few days old and, for 25 years, had handled it daily. He considered it perfectly harmless and completely under his control.**

**The curtain rose on an Indian woodland scene. To the sound of Oriental music, the huge serpent glided its way through the undergrowth. It stopped, its head erect, its bright eyes sparkling. The tamer came forward and at his signal, the snake slowly approached as it had done every day before. It began to coil its heavy folds around him. At that moment the deadly serpent-nature seemed to return. The tamer screamed as the serpent embraced him for the last time, cracking bone after bone in a final death squeeze. The man's plaything had become his master and destroyer.**

So it is with sin. People play around with sin, too, often unaware of its destructive nature.

 [TO THE SAVED] Yes the penalty of sin has been paid for by Christ and if you have believed, you no longer bear its condemnation of a devil's hell. But are you still trying to operate under the power of sin?