



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Romans

Lesson 11: Romans 7:13-25

As we begin the next section Paul is continuing his thoughts from the first 12 verses of chapter seven. He is further explaining how the law brought sin, and yet is still righteous. In 7:1-6 Paul was fairly abstract, then in verse seven he began to make his argument very personal as he used himself as an example. This will continue throughout the rest of chapter seven. In fact, there are 38 personal pronouns found in 7:13-25. In using himself as an example Paul is pointing out that, although he is an apostle who is miraculously inspired by the Holy Spirit, he is also still just a man who struggles with sin just like you and I do. Yet, because of Jesus Christ Paul is ultimately victorious over sin, and we can be as well!

Before you begin read Romans 7:13-25 and mark any key words or phrases that you find. Also, pay special attention to Paul's specific comments about himself.

Read Romans 7:13-14

Verse 13 begins with a rhetorical question, "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me?" Paul's response is, "By no means!" He has already established that the law itself is righteous, therefore it's absurd to

suggest that the law is responsible for spiritual death.

Paul is clearly discussing spiritual death here, yet the same can be applied to physical death:

Spiritual Death

- Cause-sin
- Exposed the nature of sin
- Demonstrated the purity/blessing of the law

Physical Death

- Cause-sin
- Exposed the nature of sin
- Demonstrated the purity/blessing of the law

The fact that we know we will one day die helps us to appreciate every day that we are blessed to live. In the same way, the vile nature of sin helps us understand and appreciate the righteousness of God's laws. I frequently tell my children and the teens that we work with that even if there was no Heaven/Hell I wouldn't change anything about how I live. Whether we are talking about the Law of Moses or the new covenant, God's laws are righteous and good. They are not a burden (1 John 5:3), but rather they are a guardrail that keeps us safe from the hurt



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and pain that are inevitable consequences of sin.

In verse 14 Paul begins his diatribe over the impact that sin has had on his life. He once again uses the phrase, "We know," which was found repeatedly throughout chapter six in order to emphasize his unity with his readers and remind them of the convictions they have had. He also switches from past to present tense. The law has already (past tense) shown the vile nature of sin, yet it is still (present tense) a daily struggle for Paul because he is of the flesh. The Greek word used for, "of the flesh," means to be characterized by sin and rebellion to God, which he is about to discuss in more detail. He is also returning to the slavery language, which was found throughout 6:15-23.

Paul also uses the word "flesh" both here and in verse 18. Throughout this entire section, Paul is comparing and contrasting his desire to be right with God with his human tendency towards sin. His use of the word "flesh" refers specifically to his own sinful nature and tendency towards rebellion to God. This serves as a bridge between his discussion of slavery to sin in previous chapters and living according to the spirit in coming chapters.

Do we view God's laws as burdensome, or as a righteous guide to our best life?

What are ways that the law exposes the true nature of sin?

Read Romans 7:15-20

This is a longer section than we typically approach at once, however it is important to keep Paul's entire thought process in context. His overall point is simple, yet profound. He wants to be righteous and avoid sin, yet he still finds himself neglecting the good and engaging in the bad. If we are truly honest, I believe we can all say the same thing. I want to be described by Titus 2:3-5 and Proverbs 31. I want to fulfill Matthew 28:18-20 and Romans 6:1. Yet laziness, selfishness and pride are a daily struggle for me.

Verse 16 can be a little confusing, however what Paul is saying is this: if I can put my selfish desires aside and do the good that I don't really feel like doing, then I am showing that the law is good and more important than my own desires. For example; in our home we have been striving to make a lot of positive changes regarding our health this year. Six days a week, almost without fail, my husband and I begin our day with a workout. Neither of us hides the fact that we really do not want to start our day panting, sweating, and at times in pain as we push our muscles to get stronger.



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So why do we do it? Because the good of being healthy is more important than sitting on the couch watching television like I really want to do. What is really interesting is that not one single time, even when I could barely move the next day, have I ever thought, "Wow, what a waste of time! I really regret that workout!"

Our spiritual lives are the same way. Just like Paul, I not only struggle with sin, I often don't want to do what I know I should do. I am by nature a very introverted person. This means that I often do not want to visit, even with my brethren. It can be difficult for me to reach out to people and offer to study with them because peopling makes me tired. I don't always want to get up early enough on Sunday morning to make sure that God is getting my very best. However, just like with exercising, not one single time have I visited with my brethren and thought, "Wow, what a waste of my time!" Not once have I gotten up early enough to prepare myself physically, emotionally and spiritually for worship on Sunday morning only to later think, "I should definitely have slept that extra 30, it wasn't worth it at all."

When it comes to our spiritual struggles it is important to be specific. What sin are you struggling to get out of your life?

What specific good do you know you should be doing for the Kingdom of God that you are neglecting?

Choose one specific sin in your life and one specific good that you are neglecting and create a plan to begin working on each area in your daily life.

Verse 17 is so important for us as Christians, "So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." This is called distancing language, and it is Paul separating who he is as a person from the sin that tempts him. Sisters, this truly comes down to how we define ourselves. I see the power of this every day in my work as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Without fail when a new client comes to me, I hear statements such as, "I am depressed," or "I am anxious." It can even be the same in the health world with statements such as, "I am diabetic," or, "I am obese."

There is a tremendous difference in saying, "I am...." and, "I struggle with..." Paul is saying, "I am a child of God, but I struggle with sin." I struggle with having a godly attitude and the right actions, I struggle with my weight, but I AM a daughter of the King!" Like Paul I refuse to be defined by my



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struggles, instead I choose to be defined by the one who believed I was worth dying for!

In fact, for Paul this idea was so important that he repeated it again in verse 20. He has spent six verses describing for us, in detail, his daily struggle with sin. Yet twice in these six verses he specifically tells us that he is no longer defined by his sin even though he still struggles with it on a daily basis.

How do you speak of yourself? What do your personal, "I am," statements reflect?

Write a new, "I am," statement that reflects who you truly are in Christ Jesus.

Read Romans 7:21-23

Here Paul describes the inner battle we all face between mind (heart) and body. It never fails that when we want to do right temptation is close at hand. I believe we do a disservice to new Christians if we do not prepare them for this struggle. Sometimes we inadvertently give people they idea that once they become a Christian life will be smooth sailing, yet nothing could be further from the truth! As my daddy always says, "The battle begins when you become a Christian. Satan didn't have to worry about you before, he already had you. But now, he wants you back and will do anything he can to get you!"

Nonetheless, in the midst of describing this inner struggle, in verse 22 Paul gives us one of the most beautiful statements of faith found in Scripture, "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being." Although he still struggles with sin Paul's true delight is found in the law of God. Despite his struggles, in the depths of his soul he is someone who loves the Lord and his word and wants nothing more than to be obedient to his creator.

Does Paul's statement in Romans 7:22 define us as well?

Read Romans 7:24-25

Taken together verses 22 and 24 are powerful! Verse 22, "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being." Verse 24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death!" Paul is a man in anguish! His soul delights in the Lord, nevertheless his fleshly temptations continually drag him away from the one he loves. This brings to mind Psalm 130:1, "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!"

Paul is in turmoil over his sin. He longs to be pleasing to God, but he also knows that he continually fails. He is acknowledging that there is no way he can do it on his own, he is crying out for deliverance from the only one who can provide it: Jesus Christ. "Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So



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then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin," 7:25.

It's OK that Paul is not where he needs or wants to be. It's OK that he still struggles with fleshly temptations, because Jesus Christ has delivered him. Once again referring back to chapter six, through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ Paul has been freed from the physical death he deserves through his spiritual death in baptism. Although Satan is fighting tooth and nail to draw us back to him, Jesus will deliver us from our body of death!

Does our sin cause us turmoil the way Paul's did?

Verse 25 starts with, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Spend some time in prayer just to thank God for the salvation that has been brought to us through Christ.
