

Doctrine of the Man in Romans 7

1. The man in Romans 7 is concerned about the issue of sanctification, which may be understood as following.

There is Radical Sanctification, which takes place when a person is converted.

- *1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:*
- *1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

There is Progressive Sanctification which occurs in time as the believer is made holy and is conformed to the image of Christ.

- *1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.*
- *2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*
- *Phil 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

There is Complete Sanctification which will take place when the believer steps into eternity and there is a glorification of the soul where by the sin nature is removed and a body suited for the eternal is given.

- *Romans 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
- *1 Corinthians 15:38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.*

2. The man in Romans 7 is Paul himself for he speaks in the first person.
3. Paul shares his pre-conversion experience in verse 7-13 (note the passive voice) and then his present experience in 14 (note present tense).
4. Paul is referring to the Ten Commandments in these verses.
 - *Romans 7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?*

When Paul wants to identify sin he appeals to the Ten Commandments.

- *1 John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*
- *Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Paul begins his work in Romans 1 as he expounds the judicial wrath of God and then proceeds to appeal to the law throughout the work.

- *Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*
5. Paul is vindicating the moral law in its condemning work. By the moral law he came under conviction of sin and thus the need for a Savior.
 - *Romans 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

There is nothing wrong with the law of God, it is holy, just and good.

- *Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

Like a bucket with sludge in the bottom but clear water on top, the Law stirred up the corruptions in the heart—selfishness, pride, covetousness. The Law magnified his corruptions, and he died.

- *Romans 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Self-righteousness was destroyed.

The only way to convince men in modern society of sin is to preach the law.

6. In the context of vindicating the law Paul presents the perpetuity of it.
 - The Law Paul speaks of in the chapter is the Moral Law, not the civil law, or the ceremonial laws.
 - The Law is spiritual. *Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*
 - The Moral Law is not legalistic but spiritual. The Law is designed for the purpose of grace.
 - The Law of God is the ruling principle in Paul's life and the Christians life. *Romans 7:23ff* with the mind. The Law is not for justification, and we are not under it.
 - Paul delights in the law of God. *Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*
 - That is hard to believe unless one is converted. *Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*
7. To struggle with sin is normal.
 - *Romans 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

The struggle with sin is not understandable. Why is it hard to pray? Why do I wander from the God I love? Why the anger? Why depression? Selfishness and pride? Paul said he did not understand the flesh when we know we love God and cherish His Son.

- Paul draws a distinction between the Law of Sin. *Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me....25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

This is an evil active operating principle, and the Law of God, which he serves and is committed to. The First is in the Flesh (v. 25) the other is in the heart and mind. *Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

The two are separated in verse 17 and 20. Paul does not say he does evil but sin is in him. There is an alien power in him. He is not saying he has two natures. He is a new man. He is transformed. There is a new king. But there is an alien power in his life, an enemy within his own breast.

In the country of Iraq there has been an invasion in that country, and there has been a deposing of the evil ruler. There is a new ruling power in Iraq, but there are still many bloody skirmishes in the form of landmines, suicide bombers etc.

In like manner there is within the believer a present enemy that is seeking to destroy him who is powerful.

- *Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*
- *Romans 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

There is continual opposition to righteousness. The goal of sin is captivity.

- *Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

How does Paul handle this? With honesty and humility. Paul is helpless before his enemy.

- *Romans 7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

He is defeated by his sin. His inner man longs to be drawn near to God but he is in a cycle of loving the world. He concludes in Rom 7:14 that he is carnal.

- *Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

Not always but essentially.

- *Romans 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

That is an honest assessment of his wickedness.

- *Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*
- *Romans 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

He is sold under sin. The bondage is partial, and involuntary, but real. He is not like Ahab who abandoned himself to evil. He is wretched.

- *Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Paul's wail is one of anguish. He is utterly miserable. He sees the coldness of his love and his lack of love for God. And there is no quick fix. There is no simple secret or experience to bypass the struggle with sin. Samuel Rutherford cried "*Oh that I would sin no more.*"

The greatest of saints have struggled with this same sense of inward secret sin. The problem is that while trying to confess inward corruptions, the believer appears all the more saintly, and spiritual, and thus the confessions are discounted as excessive humility.

It is no wonder that modern Christians do not want to talk about sin and sanctification.

8. The solution for Paul was Christ. In Romans 8 he will deal with this dilemma, which is to be in Christ. By keeping an eye on Christ and amazing grace, and by applying the law to life, and the grace of forgiveness, victory will come. Trust and obey. Mortify lusts and yield to God. Yield to God and put to death evil.