

Romans

Seven

What is wrong with “me”?

Sylvia Pearce

Romans 7

The law is not the problem! (Rom. 7:12)

My human self is not the problem! (Rom. 7:17a&22)

Indwelling Sin (Satan) is my real problem!

Through the body death of the Cross, I am set free.

I can detach myself from the Evil One producing the sin,
disguised as me! (Romans 7:17b & 20).

I can claim my deliverance with no condemnation! (Rom. 8:1)

I now know my true identity as Christ, the Victor, seated far
above principalities and powers. (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 2:20; Col.
2:10).

"Ye have overcome the evil one!"
(I John 2:13 & Rev. 12:11)



Romans 7:7-25 has been one of the most debated over segments in the Bible. Some say, Paul was not saved when he wrote it, while others agree that he was a Christian, but they say the struggles and wrestling he had with himself was his permanent condition through-out his life. Others make the point that we humans have two natures and we, like Paul, will always war with an evil human nature. None of these opinions ever satisfied me. The question then is why did Paul move from generalities concerning his union position being "dead to the law," (7:1-6) to his own strivings about his present tense personal "I" (7:7-25)? And do and can we Christians have

two natures at the same time? ¹ The Bible doesn't support any of these explanations. So what is our answer?

I believe that Paul did a big thing by moving from his own realized union, backtracking from being "dead to the law," to alien himself and identify, as an intercessor, with every born again believer by using the present tense I, I, I. I do that myself. When the need arises, I can be "all things to all people," and I can identify myself with anyone. I find myself speaking as if I am right where they are, even though it is not presently true. I consider that God's love.

Paul says in I Corinthians 9:19-22 that, *"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."* I believe that is just what Paul did in Romans 7:7-25--he expounded on his past experience as if it was his present condition in order to identify with us all.

The sin that so beset Paul in the Roman passage was coveting, the 10th commandment. "Thou shall not covet." Coveting is a inner sin, one that most could hide, but Paul, being true to God, couldn't bear to. Unger's Bible Dictionary defines coveting as, "an inordinate desire for what one has not, which has its basis in discontentment with what one has. It has an element of lawlessness and is sinful because it is contrary to the command, "Be content with such things as ye have," (Hebrews 13:5) because it leads to 'trust in uncertain riches,' to 'love of the world,' to forgetfulness of God, and is idolatry (Colossians 3:5) setting up wealth instead of God. It ranks as one of the worst sins (Mark 7:22; Romans 1:29)."

¹ See Chart # 23

Let us take a historical and maybe psychological look into Paul's background to understand why coveting became his personal sin-issue.

Paul was of pure Jewish decent, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, he was a son of a Pharisee, thus making him a Pharisee. Philippians 3:4-6 says that he was a Hebrew of all the Hebrews, "as touching the law a Pharisee, and as touching the righteousness of the law, blameless." Through his patriarchal birthing, he was a Roman citizen. His Roman citizenship superseded all other citizenships before the law and "in the general opinion of society it placed him amid the aristocracy of any provisional town." Remember how fearful the jailors were when they found out that Paul was a Roman citizen in Acts 22:29? They feared because they had mistreated him.

His rank in life afforded him great riches and personal glory, yet when Paul became a Christian, he gave up his riches and glory and took on Christian poverty and disgrace. Could it be that Paul remembered his past life and started to long after it? Could it be that the devil reminded him daily of his past status in life, as well as the luxury's and comforts he used to have before he became a Christian? Could he wonder why being a Christian meant to suffer, to be rejected, disgraced, and humiliated? Being the brilliant Jewish scholar that he was, why was he exiled to the desert in Arabia barely having enough to eat? Wouldn't it be logical that while there in, sun baked, Arabia, he began to long after all that he had lost, but then on the other hand be convicted for desiring it, because he had willingly given it all up for Jesus? Can't we see why he started to beat himself up for coveting after what he had willingly given up for Christ? Yet he was powerless to stop the mental spin in his head. That made he double guilty, sinful as well as too weak to do anything about it.

Paul was a moral man, as a Pharisee, he had kept the law perfectly, but now as a Christian he couldn't conquer his own sin. Interesting, he had power as a sinner to keep the law perfectly (Philippians 3:6), but as a

Christian he was powerless (Romans 7:11). Keeping the law perfectly in his own strength was keeping it by the power of the devil, yet God wouldn't give **him** the power not to sin as a Christian. I believe that we are starting to get the picture of the dilemma that Paul was in.

Let me say here that this is the only chapter in the Bible that is a lie! Does that shock you? It should, I hope that I have your attention. **Paul's experience is true, but what he is believing about himself is a lie.** Let us investigate.

He begins to muse about himself and analyze his dilemma.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead."

Paul is awakened by the law to see sinful patterns in himself. And now awakened, he was concerned over the particular sin of coveting. His concern drives Him to his first question: "How can I get deliverance over this insidious sin of coveting? It besets me every time. Could it be that if the law didn't shout at me telling me not to covet, then I wouldn't have this sin problem?" "I feel so powerless to keep this commandment, "Thou shalt not covet,"--so what if the commandment was done away with altogether? Then maybe I would be free from this guilt. Could that be the answer?"

"That can't be the answer, for it was through the law that I saw how heinous sin was in the first place. God uses it to be the spot-light that exposes sin. He spotlighted sin in me, which drove me to find Christ, in the first place. I can't eliminate God's spot-light, God intends for broken law in us to be seen as sin. Somehow, sin must get its power from the law because

the law arouses in me all manner of evil desires. However, without the law those evil desires die away. So, I'm still wondering if the law is my problem."

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by it slew me."

Paul experienced New Covenant grace, not law, when he first became a Christian. However, when he was tempted to covet, the commandment, "Thou shall not covet," shouted at him and exposed the sin of coveting in him, which in turn killed him because he couldn't conquer it. How is it that the law, being an instrument of life, caused him to die and why does it deceive him and slay him? Good question. He was frustrated and defeated—challenged by the law, yet laughed at by sin, making it plan that it had him under control. Look further.

"Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. Sin working death in me by that which is good: that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Paul finds his answer by the process of elimination. "The law can't be my problem, it is, holy, just and good. Then how can God's outer law be death to me when I try to keep it? The holy spiritual law is working death in me—good is producing death so that sin might appear what it is, exceedingly sinful.

Ok, I see it, the law is defiantly not the problem, then the blame must be on **me**, I am too fleshly to keep it because my flesh seems to be a slave to sin. If the problem is the human me, then I am guilty, yet I am totally frustrated, in despair, and confused."

The first question is answered, "the law is not my problem," but Paul's self-assessment was not true, but it sure seems to be. Actually, most of our lives we have a mentality of, "What is wrong with me." The human me, that is. That is why I call this presentation, "What is Man?" basically because this question is the most misunderstood in Christianity, as well as in the world.

He goes on to the second compelling question, "Is my human self the problem?"

"For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good."

Paul is declaring that he is committing sin even when, in his will, he wills against it. He willed over and over again not to sin, but he ends up sinner anyway. This says to us that Paul could not will himself out of his sins.

As he analyzed it further, he saw that his will was in agreement with God's law and not at all contrary to it. That told him that the human spirit, our choice-maker/self, couldn't be the problem either. This is an amazing discovery. The devil had accused Paul's human self of being Paul's biggest problem, but now Paul didn't have to believe that lie anymore. His human self wasn't the evil culprit, he wasn't against God, nor God's laws, so then **he** wasn't the evil one doing the evil. "OK, then what or who was the real problem?"

“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwells no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

This is a vital revelation. Something wholly other than Paul was doing the sinning, yet the other, is accusing him of being the evil culprit. That is an amazing discovery—“no more I that do it.” The human Paul wasn’t producing his own sins, the truth is that the human vessel is totally incapable of producing sins. Big, news! Only a deity nature can produce sin or righteousness, the human being doesn’t have its own nature, so therefore it has no power to product sin.

This passage is the negative counter part to Galatians 2:20. Galatians says, “I live, yet **not I**, but Christ lives in me.” Romans 7 says, “**No more I** that do it, but sin that dwells in me.” There it is, the human cannot produce it’s own righteousness, (Galatians 2:20) nor can it produce it’s own sins (Romans 7:17), the human is a simple vessel.

Then who is it producing the sins, and what or who is sin? **The sin that dwelled in him was masquerading as self-effort.** Sins are the fruit/product of the producer of sin, and everyone knows that the fruit doesn’t have power in its self to bring forth itself. Jesus said in John 15 that without me, the vine, you cannot produce your own fruit.

Therefore sins must be the product of a person called Sin or Satan. I John 3:8 says that, “He that commits sin is of the devil; for **the devil sins** from the beginning. If the human can produce it’s own sins, then there is a possibility that it can produce it’s own righteousness. That is blasphemy; because the human would then take Christ’s place as Savior, and Lord. We would be our own God and fall right into Satan’s devious plan for man to become like God, that is, the creature to become the Creator, and for fallen flesh to try to become Divine Spirit, which would make man a son of Satan, instead of a son of God.

Now how is it that sin/Satan dwells in Paul, the Christian? How can Satan produce sins through Paul who is indwelt by Christ? The human is tripartite, spirit, soul and body. Christ is one with us in Spirit, but Satan can get an advantage in us through the flesh (soul and body) if we believe his lies of human performance. Verse 23 says there is, *"another law in my members brings me into bondage to the law of **sin in my members.**"* A law, or principal, or person in my members (soul/body) brings me into bondage. So, Satan is not in Paul's spirit, but dwells in my flesh as an adulteress spirit ruling my flesh as long as I give power to him by believing in my own abilities to perform. That is why Paul cries out, *"How to perform, I find not."* Performance based righteousness doesn't work. This scripture is the proof. The human doesn't do its own sinning (7:17) nor its own goodness (7:18).

Another vital point here is that the human doesn't have its own will power. That is interesting, because everybody thinks that the human has will power, but no, this verse proves that we don't. "The will is present with me, but how to perform I find not." It certainly is true that Paul is saying that the human has a will, that is not even the point, the point is the human doesn't have the power to fulfil its own will not to sin. We humans have the faculty to choose, but we don't have the power behind our choice. What we can do, which Paul didn't understand at this point, is to will or choose, the one with the power to fulfill the union--Spirit/spirit-- choice. So I say there is no such thing as **WILL POWER**. Human will, yes, but the human will is powerless without the Spirit's strength to fulfill it. Therefore Paul couldn't even will or choose his way out of Roman 7.

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."

Paul reiterates again, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. The Spirit often repeats Himself when He is making an important point as He does here. Next Paul says that he finds a principle at work whenever he tries to do good. When he does try to do good, evil is present with him. Boy, that ought to catch our attention. We must conclude that doing good by our own self effort, which is actually an expression of Satan, is evil. It is the creature trying to be like the Creator, and it is Satan's age-old deception, "I will be like the most high God." Satan wasn't trying to be evil, he didn't know what evil was. This event spoken of in Isaiah 14:14 was the first time a creature ever tried to be like God. Trying to be like God is **replacing** God. This Satanic act was the first evil in all the universe, yet it was hidden under the guise of goodness. It is the same pharisaical religious spirit which works in us today. So Paul in Romans 7, like Satan, is doing the same evil by trying to be good. Remember, I am not saying the doing good is evil, but **trying** to do good by self-effort is where the real evil lies hidden, posing itself as Christian goodness. **Self-effort is an expression of Satan. "Sin that dwells in me," is Satan masquerading as my own self-effort, my own ability, my own sufficiency, and an independent life of my own.**

The **"Sin that dwells in us"** is a false reality. We Christians are operating from a false satanic reality. Remember, "as a man thinketh, so is he." If we believe that self-effort is a reality and the human is responsible for keeping himself from evil, or being the strength of his own righteousness, then that is what is real to us. What we believe is very creative, false believing produces a false reality, while right believing produces true reality. My good friend, Kathryn Magnotto said, "Everything fulfills the word spoken over it, whether negatively or positively."

Do we have it clear, how does Satan get his advantage over us? He deceives us into thinking that the human vessel should be like God by trying to be good. We strive to do it, but because that very act of self-striving is

sin, then Satan traps and steals our bodies temporarily and misuses us by producing his sinful fruits through us.

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

What a dilemma! How is Paul going to get out of this satanic trap? His soul and body is a bloody battlefield of confusion, tension, and agony. This is wretchedness and even suicidal. This scenario is starting to sound like “The Kingdom of the Middle Ground” chart.² It is necessary for Paul to go through this agonizing season in his life, discovering this all-important life changing truth in Roman 7. Paul is **not an independent-self** able to produce sin or righteousness, and when he tries he ends up sinning more, and more. Satan is the culprit and sinner, not Paul. And this false ‘able’ self is **not** who Paul is.

“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. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

² Chart number 15

This is the lightening flash point of the Cross in operation transforming negative desperation to positive revelation. This is the birth of "the faith of the son of God," eliminating Paul's self-striving-self. The only way out of the trap of Romans 7 is to **leap out by faith**. Paul's leaps from "O wretched man that I am," to a positive affirmation and thanksgiving to Christ for what He has already done at the Cross to transform him from mere fallen flesh consciousness to a united divine consciousness.

Paul continues to recognize how faith works. He sees that he as a Spirit person serving God with the new mind by affirming and receiving the truth. He will not act from flesh to try to change his actions even though those behavior pattern might continue to manifest for sometime. On thing is for sure, Paul will not try to change himself. He is not going to take condemnation because he is serving God by faith, and trusting the Spirit to transform his behavior. So, he is not in sin, because, "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." By faith, he is not going to try to conquer his temptations and sins any more, that is the job of the Holy Spirit who, at the Cross, has already set him free from the striving-self, "I am crucified with Christ." "Mortify, therefore the deeds of the flesh, **by the Spirit**." The word, "mortify" sounds like hard work, yet it simply means, consider yourself already dead to the deeds of the flesh, and trust the Holy Spirit to make manifest the transformation.

A new principal manifest itself, "the law of Spirit and life." Whenever we move to a new dimension, a new principal comes into operation. This new law or principle of believing has set Paul free from striving and trying. It is just like the law of gravity being overcome by the law of aviation which lifts the airplane to another level of operation.

Christ's substitutionary bodily death on the Cross-has set Paul's soul and body free from Satan's dominion of self-sufficiency and self-activity. With the life of Christ as our life then Christ himself fulfills the outer law by

being the inner law in us. James calls it, "The perfect law of liberty"--the perfect principal/person of liberation, Jesus Christ himself.

Did Paul ever realize a life free from covetness behavior? I believe that Acts 20:33 proves that he did. Paul was leaving Ephesus after a prosperous three years of teaching the "all council of God." As he was leaving the city, he delivers his farewell speech--one filled with love and concern. Then he mentions this, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Why would Paul even say such a thing unless he himself use to have the problem of coveting, but now found it expedient to work his own way.

Did he still have the temptation? Yes, I think so, but the keeping power of the Spirit keep him from moving over into the besetting sins of his past, as he stood by faith knowing that he was **not** an lustful, coveting person, and as he depended on his real identity as Christ. Opposites are very important in life, they are our teacher. Paul had to learn "who he wasn't," before he could discover "who he really was."

Recently, my husband Scott was musing over his life, prior he knowing that Christ **was his life**. He said that "I was drawing from a well that was empty most of the time, so all I could do is survive my problems, and do my best." The well that Scott was drawing from was; his own way, his own ability, his own ideas, his own understand about his life, and his own reasonable conclusions for trying to make life work. Now, Scott is not unusual, but on the contrary, Scott's way of living is common to all of us. Yet, Paul describes that way of trying to strive to make ends meet, being more responsible for our families welfare, and doing the best we can as "Wretchedness." Why? It seems good, yet it is man taking God's place as God. The soulish well that Scott was taking about was empty, but the well that Jesus was talking about in John 4 was an Spiritual well that springs up

inside of us as eternal life. Scott now knows who his life is, and experiences fullness, and all sufficiently for all things for his eternal well never runs dry.

Now to the question that we started with at the beginning of this chart; Is this Romans 7 scenario, Paul warring with two natures, that is, one being his new nature, and other one being his old human nature really true? It seems so at first glance, but is it? That brings us to the next chart.