

Ladies Bible Study

Week 16

(Week 15 in your lessons)



February 3, 2026

Romans 7:14 - for we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, having been sold under sin.”

This verse is Paul’s concluding response to the question of verse 7, “is the law sin?” but it is also an introduction to the latter part of the chapter – verses 15-25.

This portion of the Romans epistle has been the subject of no small degree of _____, and deserves the most thoughtful consideration.

On the basis of divine revelation, not experience, Paul affirms that “we know” the law is spiritual. On the basis of what God had said about the law, and its origin, Paul had a clear mental picture of its nature. He knew that the law was spiritual.

It may seem strange that Paul describes the law as spiritual in view of what he says in 2 Corinthians 3:3-8 –

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?”

In this immediate context, he is endeavoring to put the law in as good as light as possible: it is holy, right, good and spiritual. He does not want his readers to _____ what he has been saying about sin and death, and blame it on the law, for all it has done is reveal the presence of sin and death. He is using the word spiritual here in contrast to the word carnal. The law is spiritual in that it was given by God and is directed to the minds of men but its precepts and ordinances relate to an earthly people in contrast to Grace which relates to heavenly people.

Philippians 3:20 – for our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4 - If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

As Paul affirms that the problem of sin and death is not produced by the law, he points to the guilty culprit, saying, “I am carnal, having been sold under sin.” Paul is saying he is of flesh; fleshly. In Galatians 5:18-21 we have a sordid picture of the works of the flesh, that which the lusts of the flesh produce.

Galatians 5:18-21 - But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 -And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Ephesians 2:3 - Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

It is important to note that Paul uses the present tense of the verb – he says, “I am carnal, at the present time I am carnal.” He is not talking about when he was under the law, but what he currently is under grace.

As one who is carnal, Paul describes himself as “sold under sin.” The language Paul uses here depicts him as still having the _____ nature, a propensity to sin, as still having to struggle against the old man, and as still being a sinner by nature.



Some able men of God have held that in Romans 7 we have Paul's experience under the law and in Romans 8 his experience under grace; the former fraught with discouragement and the latter with victory and blessing. Hence the advice: "Get out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8."

Something for you to think about though:

1. Paul penned these two chapters at the same writing, not even a chapter division appearing in the original. The same man who wrote Romans 8:1,2 prefaced this declaration with the words of Romans 7:22-25. Evidently he rejoiced in the truth of Romans 8:1,2 WHILE experiencing Romans 7:22-25.
2. Sincere and godly believers acknowledge that their experience has conformed closely to that described by Paul in Romans 7:14-25. Here we must ask those who hold that Romans 7 concerns Paul's experiences while still under the law:
 - Does not the old nature in you constantly strive to gain control?
 - Do you have no problem at all with the "old man?"
 - Have you consistently overcome the flesh in your experience as a Christian?
 - Do you honestly have to confess with Paul that "to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not?"
 - Have you found out how to consistently perform the good and overcome the evil?

Romans 7 should deeply concern us for this chapter describes the spiritual experience of no less a saint than the Apostle Paul, and that of every sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What student of the Word can read Romans 7:15-25 without being reminded of Galatians 2:20? "I am crucified with Christ – nevertheless I live – yet not I but Christ liveth in me.

Indeed, in Romans 7:15-25, more than Galatians 2:20 or any part of Paul's epistles, the question keeps arising: Of whom does Paul speak here, of the "old man," the "new man," or the whole man? Here we must ask God for special _____ to grasp the sense of His Word. In some cases, however, the meaning is quite clear.

In verse 18, the words "in me" obviously refer to the "old man," for he immediately explains, "that is, in my flesh."

But in verse 15, the words, "I allow not" and "I hate" clearly refer to the "new man."



In verse 17, the “sin that dwelleth in me” must, of course, be associated with the “old man,” but the “me” in which the sin dwells is the WHOLE man, or the man as a whole, while the word “I” in “it is no more I that do it” clearly refers to the “new man.”

In verse 21, the phrase “evil is present with me” might at first seem to mean that evil is at hand to tempt, but the preceding verse (20), followed by the words “I find then a law,” indicates that in verse 21 he speaks of sin in him. Why then does he use the term “present with?” The explanation is found in the identity of the person referred to. Here the “I” that “would do good” is obviously the “new man” and the “old man,” who does the evil, is “present with” him, both the old and the new residing in the whole man.

These are but examples of the problem and its basic _____.
The child of God, who sincerely desires to please Him and recognizes the fact that the old nature and the new dwell side-by-side within, will not find it too difficult to understand “who’s who” in this passage.

The phrase, “it is no more I that do it,” found twice in this passage (17,20), might seem to the careless reader to indicate that Paul is shedding the blame for the sins he commits. This is by no means the case. It is rather a note of rejoicing that the new man in him has no connection with sin. It does not and cannot sin, for it is Christ in him. The new man is the resurrected man, living resurrection life of Christ.

Also, Paul does what he urges us to do in Romans 6:11; he reckons himself to be “dead indeed” unto sin, for while the old nature is still active in us experientially, and will be until “the redemption of the body,” it has died so far as God is concerned, for He sees us now in the person of His crucified, buried, risen Son. Thus the same man who cried, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me...?” Could also exclaim, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” and “there is therefore now no condemnation!”

Further Lessons to Learn From 7:14-25:

1. This passage teaches unequivocally that the believer has two natures; that the Adamic nature is not eradicated at his conversion to Christ or at anytime before his going to be with Christ. It teaches further that the old nature cannot be improved, for it is totally bad.



We have seen that the way to victory over the flesh is not by _____, but by faith, by "reckoning" ourselves to be "dead indeed" unto sin, accepting God's Word that the old man was crucified with Christ. But it does not follow from this that the old nature is dead experientially, otherwise why the exhortations to consider him dead? Judicially he has indeed been put to death in Christ, and it is now for us to appropriate this truth in our daily experience.

2. The Apostle's words in Ver. 18: "How to perform that which is good I find not" are a humbling confession from the heart of no less a saint of God than Paul, yet it expresses a simple fact of any believer's experience, for who has yet learned how to consistently "perform that which is good"? We have a similar truth set forth in Gal. 5:17:

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. "

It goes without saying that the Apostle does not mean to condone sin here on the ground that we cannot do otherwise. His meaning is rather that whereas we yearn to be forever rid of temptation and sin, the flesh within us keeps badgering us so that we cannot settle down to living a sinless life. Thus the Christian life must be a step-by-step experience, daily appropriating by faith the help that God, in grace, provides.

3. This passage further shows us that the believer cannot boast that he, by nature, is any better than others. The truth of the matter is described in the words of a young Christian sailor who was accused of thinking that he was better than others. "Oh no," said the sailor, "you've got that all wrong. We don't think we're any better - but we're better off!"
4. The fact that this passage was penned as an honest confession by Paul himself should prove encouraging to believers who long, as he did, to live godly lives. Does the old nature continually try to dominate your experience? Then, in that respect at least, you are like Paul! But you must be like him in the rest too. Acknowledging recurrent failures, the Apostle nevertheless protests that this is not because he approves of sin or condones it in any way. Hear him: "I long to do good, I delight in the law of God, I hate sin, I do not 'allow' it, but how to perform that which is good find not. O wretched man that I am!"

Thus Paul did not take sin _____, for if anything is clear from this passage, it is the fact that he delighted in that which was right and hated that which was wrong, seeking earnestly to overcome it.



5. This passage also teaches us that Paul did not exalt himself, for here he confesses humiliating facts about his personal life which might well cause some to despise him. Elsewhere he calls himself the chief of sinners (I Tim. 1:15) and "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). He did, however, defend his God-given position and message. A consideration of the whole of Eph. 3:8 will explain why:

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST."

He was both the herald and the living example of what had been accomplished at Calvary. If his position as God's appointed ambassador of grace could be undermined, so could the message he was sent to proclaim. But the above verse is proof enough that he did not exalt himself in thus defending his position.

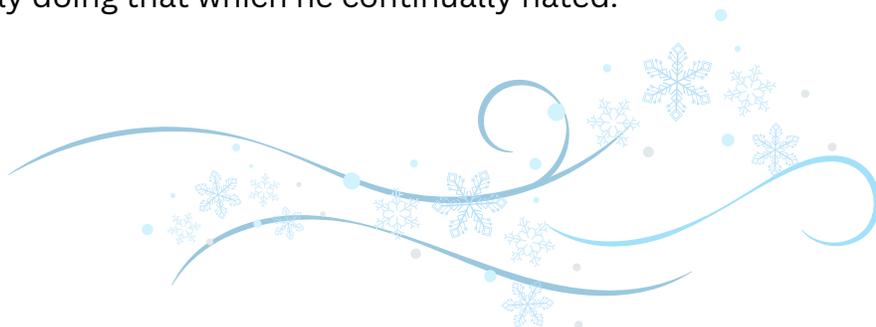
Final Breakdown of 15-25:

Verse 15 – For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

I allow not means "I know not" or "I understand not." He was saying he was not able to perceive, ascertain, or understand why he was doing what he was doing. At this point in his dialogue, he is a conundrum to himself, he hasn't fully grasped the reason for the inconsistency between his thinking and living, but later on in this context, he does unravel it.

Paul goes on to explain that there are two _____ forces at work in his being. The implication is that he has the ability to will and choose that which is good, but there is a breakdown between this and transferring it into practice, doing and actual performance.

Frustrated with his inability to convert what he willed and chose into practice, Paul emphatically says, "but what I hate, that do I." In actual life he finds himself doing that which is diametrically opposed to the good he determined to do. In fact, he says that which "I hate" detest and abhor, I do. The verbs translated hate and do are both in the present tense, which means that Paul was continuously and persistently doing that which he continually hated.



Verse 16 – If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that is it good.

Recognizing that some might misinterpret what he is saying about the Mosaic Law, back in verse 12, Paul began to defend it as being holy, just, and good. In verse 13 he added that it is spiritual. As a result of analyzing his own person, prodding the reason for his ability to will that which is good and his inability to transfer it into practice, he interprets this as further evidence that the law is good.

The common denominator that describes the condition of all men in all dispensations, since the fall of Adam and prior to the Millennium, is that they are all in the _____. Under the stipulations of Grace, Paul experienced the same conflict and diametric opposition as he did when he was under the law. Experiencing the same inconsistency between his grace-governed will and his living as under the law, Paul logically deducts that the law is good.

Verse 17 – Now then it is not more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

In verses 15 and 16, Paul pointed out the inconsistency between what he wills and what he actually does. He has the ability to will and choose to do that which is good, but when he ends up doing that which he hates instead, he disclaims personal involvement. If you are prone to interpret this as a cop-out, I urge you to refrain from such a hasty judgment, for this is only a part of the findings resulting from Paul's self-analysis, it is not the resolution of his inner conflict.

In strong contrast to what Paul has just said, that he himself is not the source of the sin in his life, he affirms that “the sin that dwelleth in me” is producing it. In other words, Paul is looking at “sin” as the subject producing the action in this verse. Mr. Sin is distinct from the real Paul; however, their place of dwelling is contiguous. The real Paul dwells in his body and Mr. Sin dwells in his flesh (vs.18). Keep in mind, what Paul says here describes his then present status as a Christian, and as such applies to all believers in this church age.

Verse 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.

Paul's statement, “for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” implies that on the basis of _____ revelation he knew, had been given insight, and perceived that he was destitute of good. The Greek word for “dwelleth” in this verse indicates that no good inhabits, lives, or makes its home in him. Paul uses the Greek phrase translated “in me” three times in this context, and he defines it as meaning “in my flesh” –verses 17,18,20. This definition is very important for it enables us to positively identify where the sin resides and where the good does not reside (v18).

Having declared that nothing “good” beneficial, profitable, and virtuous inhabits his flesh, Paul adds, “for to will is present with me.” “To will” means he had the ability of volition, to determine, and to choose. “Is present” means volition lies beside, is at hand, or is available to be used for good. As one of God’s elect, one chosen before the creation of the world, and as one made alive in Christ; Paul had the ability and responsibility to volitionally, or intentionally, live according to the Gospel of Grace.

Even though Paul had been justified from sin and declared righteous in Christ, his sin in the flesh status never changed. Sin occupied his flesh prior to his awareness of the Law, while he was under the Law, and now under Grace. He again reiterates that he is in a position to choose that which is good, “but how to perform that which is good I find not” possible due to sin in the flesh. In this context Paul looks at himself as a saved man, and as such he desires to do that which is good in God’s sight, but within himself, apart from the Holy Spirit, he is unable to put his good desires into _____.

Verse 19 – For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Again, in this verse, we see Paul willing and determining to do good, but he fails to accomplish it. On the other hand, the evil which he wills and determines not to do, this he ends up practicing. Here we have a picture of Paul doing the opposite of what he wants to do. The implication is that he had an absolute knowledge of good and evil in the Word, but instead of practicing the good and shunning the evil, the sin in his flesh produced the opposite. Paul describes himself as being frustrated in a dilemma.

As we move through this context we need to remember that Paul is not talking about how he actually lived under Grace. He is merely drawing aside the curtain and allowing us to listen to the rational process through which the Lord led him to an understanding of himself. He is dealing with fundamental human principles, which must be thoroughly understood before we can lay sound basis for true spirituality. Paul is giving us believers insight into the Divine nature -

2 Corinthians 5:17 -Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And through Adam we are sinners in our nature, i.e., sin dwells in our flesh –

Ephesians 2:3 - Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.



This 7th chapter points out the Great Problem which stands in the way of believers doing the will of God. The 8th chapter gives us the _____ to the problem.

Verse 20 – Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

In verses 15-19 Paul has, from different angles, dealt with the conflict between what he wills and what he does. In this verse, on the basis of the foregoing evidence, he draws a conclusion regarding the presence of indwelling sin. He says that "if what I do not will, this I do" then it follows that I am not doing what I will. The premise Paul postulates, or argues, is that volition is the initial ingredient in doing. It therefore follows that where there is no volition, no willing, there is no doing. According to this premise, if Paul did something which he did not will to do, it could not be attributed to him. He would not be responsible for doing it.

With respect to that which Paul did, which was contrary to his will, he says, "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Paul recognized two superhuman forces in the world: (1) the Triune God (2 Cor. 13:13), and (2) Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). On the one hand, God made him alive in Christ hereby enabling him to will to do that which is good. On the other hand, that which the real Paul did not will to do, but yet was done through his members, was produced by Satan via Sin in his flesh (the old nature).

Verse 21 – I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

The Greek verb translated "find" means to light upon, to come upon, and to discover. The use of the present tense suggests that Paul was in the process of discovering, via human experience confirmed by Divine revelation, that what was happening in his life was so consistent that it could be stated as a law. He observed that every time he willingly determined to do good, the evil lurking in his flesh stymied its fulfillment.

Prior to this verse, with only one exception (3:27), Paul has consistently used the Greek noun translated "law" with reference to the Mosaic Law. In this verse and following he uses this noun with its general meaning, i.e., as a principle or rule (vv. 22, 23, 25; 8:2, 4, 7). The law or principle Paul discovered was that while or during the time he determined to do good, he was plagued with the presence of that which was evil and bad. According to the foregoing context this evil was resident, he says, "in me", i.e., "in my flesh". We interpret this as meaning that when he wanted to do good he was _____ by his sin nature (Eph. 2:3).



Verse 22 – For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

Paul is saying that I rejoice together with and am pleased with the law of God. In contrast to the Law of Moses (Acts 28:23), he is speaking here of "the law of God", the principles and rules of God pertinent to the present dispensation of Grace (8:7). This law is not a takeoff from the Law of Moses, but is distinct from it, involving a special revelation of Truth given to the Church (1 Cor. 2:6-10; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:2-9).

Paul says that he delights together with this law, this Truth for the Body of Christ, "according to the inner man." This means that from the vantage point of the "inner man," inside man, and internal man, his mind and spirit concurred with the Gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24). This inner man is the same as Paul's real self, the one able to will that which is good (vv. 18-19), and his new nature (2 Peter 1:4). Paul also identifies the inner man with his "mind" with which he serves the law of God (vv. 23, 25).

Verse 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.

According to verse 21 Paul _____ the law – that when he wills to do good, evil is present to counteract it. According to verse 22 his inner man is delighted with the law of God, the Gospel of Grace. In this 23rd verse he refers to the same law as in verse 21, adding that the sin in his members utterly defeats him.

In contrast to the Law of God in verse 22, Paul sees "another law" in his members.

The Greek noun translated "members" refers to the various parts of the body through which it expresses itself such as the limbs, etc. In the latter part of the verse he describes this other law as "the law of sin," i.e., as the Law which belongs to sin. Paul uses the designations of sin in his members and of sin in his flesh synonymously to depict his sin nature (Eph. 2:3) and his old man (Eph. 4:22). With respect to this law of sin, Paul says that it is "in my members." The thought is that the law of sin continued to exist in his members.

Now let us look at what Paul calls "the law of my mind." According to the context we see the law of the mind in action in verse 22. The inner man and the mind designate Paul's real person as one who has been saved by Grace. The fact that he rejoices together with the law of God, with the Gospel of Grace, is an expression of how the law of the mind works. As the name of this law implies, the redeemed mind delights to function in accordance with the law of God, the special revelation of Truth given to the Church. All of Paul's statements in the above context regarding his ability to will that which is good are evidence of the law of the mind in operation (vv. 18-19, 21).

Finally, let us examine Paul's statement, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." This literally means that the law of sin is continuously waging war against the law of Paul's mind. This indicates that the sin which indwells his flesh is continually attacking the relation between his mind and the Word of God. Satan, working through the sin nature of the flesh, focuses his attack on the juncture where the minds of believers submit to what God has said. To the extent that this juncture is weakened, disobedience will result as it did with Eve (Gen. 3:4).

Verse 24 – O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

We could translate this to "I am a wretched man!" The Greek word rendered "wretched" basically speaks of one who is suffering hardship or enduring trouble, hence, one who is wretched, miserable, and pitiable. As we reflect on Paul's dialogue in the foregoing context it is not surprising that he uses this word to describe his miserable defeat by sin in the flesh (v. 23).

Paul cries out, in the midst of his wretchedness, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For the benefit of the Roman believers and us Paul has drawn aside the curtain in this chapter and shared with us some choice tidbits from his spiritual pilgrimage. Thus far we have been listening to a man who became exceedingly conscious of his sin. He sees it deeply rooted in his flesh, in the very nature of his physical being, engaging and defeating him on the moral battlefield. In the midst of continually being defeated he dramatically cries forth the question for the sake of his readers, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" For him personally this question had been answered many years before he wrote this epistle, but for all his readers they must still wait for the answer, not in the next verse, but in the following chapter (8:1-17).

Verse 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.

Using the Greek grammar, we could translate this: "But thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Then therefore I myself, on the one hand with the mind serve the law of God, but on the other hand, with the flesh the law of sin."



The latter translation makes the contrast more distinct with the mind serving the Law of God and with the flesh serving the law of sin.

Now let us examine the meaning of the statement, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Greek word translated "thanks" is used some 24 times in this epistle. In 22 contexts it clearly means grace, i.e., it is used with reference to the Grace of God. The same phrase as used here is also used in 6:17, and may be translated but grace to God, but gratitude to God, or but thanks to God. It basically means to have good grace, hence, to be grateful and thankful to God. This statement appears to be a short prayer to God the Father "through" the agency of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, in this context, it could be interpreted to mean that Paul is grateful to God for the potential victory over sin which he is about to discuss in the next chapter. In the light of chapter 8, it would be inconsistent for Paul to thank God for what he says in the last sentence in this chapter. This sentence merely states again the dilemma between his will and the sin in his flesh. It does not resolve nor offer a solution to his dilemma, but leaves him as a wretched and miserable man.

Finally, let us briefly look at this last sentence. Paul says, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." The Greek particles rendered "so" and "then" imply that what Paul is about to say is the consequence of what he has said in the previous context (vv. 15-24). The Greek phrase translated "I myself," together with the present tense verb, suggests that his dialogue refers to a time when he himself was still frustrated and losing the war against sin in his members (v. 23).

Summarizing, why does Paul spend so much time on the issue of sin in this 7th chapter? The most _____ answer is because we believers must know the strangle hold sin has on us, that the sin-nature is in our flesh, and that we in ourselves cannot conquer or subdue it. When we know that the strength of our enemy is such that we cannot personally cope with it; then we will be ready to flee to God the Holy Spirit for help (Eph. 6:12).

This entire 7th chapter deals with three key issues.

- First, how was one who was under the Mosaic Law freed from it (vv. 1-6)?
- Second, the Law, which was good in itself, revealed how exceedingly sinful sin is (vv. 7-14a).
- Third, a saved person is able to will to do that which is good, but if void of the power of the Spirit, the sin in his flesh thwarts him from doing good, leaving him as one who is wretched, miserable, and pitiable (vv. 14b-24).

