

THE BATTLE WITHIN US

AUGUST 21, 2022

WORSHIP

Joy, Awesome God, God is Able, His Mercy is More, Broken Vessels

WELCOME

Name a show or story where the main character has a secret identity. In what ways can you relate with the character?

WORD

ROMANS 7:14-25

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! 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.

Have you ever asked yourself, “**If I am really set free in Jesus, why do I still struggle with sin?**” Struggling with sin often makes us question our salvation and ask if we really are a Christian. Or other questions come up like the following that you may have asked as well: Is something wrong with my faith? Will I go to heaven? What is wrong with me? What will it take for me to change?

These are familiar questions that reveal our battle within. The truth is that God has won the war, and if you are genuinely in Christ, you are on the right track but it's not without struggle. Let's look at the reality of this battle within us.

1. THE BATTLE WITHIN US IS REAL (ROMANS. 7:14-20)

In **Romans 7:14**, we learn that the law is spiritual, but we are of flesh. “**Of flesh**” or simply being carnal, is translated from “**sarkinos**”. This is from the root noun “**sarx**” that means “**human nature apart from divine influence.**” Here we learn that the law of Lord is like a map to direct us where to go, but it lacks the power to bring us to where we should be.

We clearly see the reality of the battle within as Paul is writing it in the present tense (switched over from the past tense in **Romans 7:1-13**). The verses in the passage also testify of this struggle as we can see in **Romans 7:22**, as well as other verses in the Bible such as **Galatians 5:17**. We can also read of other stories in the Bible that show how even apostles struggled with sin. Paul himself, the most known of the apostles, have expressed the reality of his own struggle with sin (**Romans 7:15**). Lastly, we know the reality the reality of sin based on our own experience. This may seem like a roadblock in our pursuit of godliness and sanctification, but there is hope.

Firstly, we need to be reminded that we should not be discouraged because of the wrong expectation of perfection that others may have put upon us, or we have put on ourselves. Secondly, we should not live in expectation of defeat without hope of victory. This means that we may be tempted to live in either of two extremes: one extreme is that we won't make mistakes anymore or the other end of the spectrum that says we will always make mistakes thus we should just give up. As Christians, we are to fight day in and day out for Jesus, through Jesus, and when we fall, we get back up. We can keep going and find the courage to never give up because there is victory in Jesus Christ (**Philippians 2:12**).

2. THE BATTLE WITHIN REVEALS WHO WE ARE (ROMANS 7:21-23)

There is a dual nature living in us. We can see the tension of this dual nature in the chart below:

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WORD

The Flesh AKA "Old Me"	The "New Me" in Jesus
Romans 7:14; Romans 7:18b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carnal In bondage to sin 	Romans 7:14; Romans 7:18b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiritual Set free from sin
Romans 7:15b; Romans 7:19b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot do good Does sin 	Romans 7:15b; Romans 7:19b <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants to do good Hates sin
Romans 7:16; Romans 7:20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Against God's Law 	Romans 7:16; Romans 7:20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loves God's Law
Romans 7:17; Romans 7:20b-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evil is present 	Romans 7:17; Romans 7:20b-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inner man (Real Me)

Like Paul, we also struggle with sin. We most likely don't plan to sin, but still fall to it from time to time as though we have a Jekyll and Hyde within us. We are on a journey to eternity where we will be completely free from sin (**Romans 7:21-22**). But as we live on this side of eternity the struggle with our sinful nature will still be evident. To be clear, we are not saying that the body itself is evil--as some result to mutilation when they commit sin to "cut the evil" from them. We are made in Christ's image, and we are created to do good works with this body.

How then can we know that we are in Christ? Like the apostle Paul, a real follower of Jesus will hate sin. Being tempted to sin is different from wanting and even loving sin. A real follower of Christ loves God's law and desires to follow it (**Romans 7:23**). Before coming to Christ, our natural state was to give in to sin and God's wrath was at war with us. Now that we are in Christ, we are now on God's side and are now at war with sin.

Other than Jesus, there is no sinless perfection on this side of eternity, but we are called to sin less and less.

3. THE BATTLE WITHIN RUNS US TO CHRIST (ROMANS 7:24-25)

Honest acknowledgement or brokenness is part of running to Christ. We must be humble to realize that no matter how long we've been following Christ, we still need Him (**Romans 7:24-25a**).

How can Jesus lead us to victory? In **Philippians 2:12-13**, we are instructed to work out our salvation. In the same verse we see an encouragement that it is Christ who works in us. Sin can be a pursuit of pleasure by doing things excessively, thinking it can make us happy. It can also be harboring a disappointment with God. Our struggle with sin can make us wonder "Does God bring pleasure that will make us turn away from sin?" The answer is, we must experience Him for ourselves. Jesus is our hope that sets us free from sin (**John 3:16**). May the Lord keep us close to Him, that we can find victory in Him (**Galatians 5:16**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What actions can I take to help me do what God wants me to do (God's law)?

2. Setting It Right.

What activities should I repent of and avoid? What are the things that lead me to do what I don't want to do (SIN)?

3. Living It Out.

How can I stay close to Jesus as an active day by day decision?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people to encounter Jesus Christ and find hope and healing in Him. Pray that they will have open hearts to accept Him as their Savior and Lord. Through Christ, be a good testimony of God's transformative power over the "old nature" as you serve other people with joy and humility. Share the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to your loved ones.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For the Russian invasion of Ukraine to end; peace and order be restored, lives spared. Russian and Ukrainian soldiers, families, leaders to turn to Christ; refugees be given safe passage into surrounding nations.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 7:24-25

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! 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.