October 11, 2026 Struggle Lesson 6 Romans 7:4-6,14-25

Picture Life p. 55 I believe God gave life to every living thing. The drawing on page 55 is that of a paramecium. It is a one-celled protozoan. All life forms are in one of the six Kingdoms or domains of living things. Protozoans are microscopic. People are in the Animalia domain. When I was in high school biology class, there were only three kingdoms of living things. The reason I bring this to our attention is because of the complexity of this life form. This little unit of life is covered with cilia, hair-like structures that help propel the organism. All of a paramecium's many parts had to be present at the same time for it to live. It could not have evolved. Evolution is an attempt to eliminate God from the human equation but He is the Creator of all life and His highest creation is humanity! God created humanity without sin but with the will to choose. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, sin and death came into the world. Ever since, people have been born with a sinful nature and struggled with sin. God provided a salvation plan through His Son, Jesus, and the directions through the prophets, apostles, and the Bible. God speaks to us through the writings of the apostle Paul. Paul's faith in God's salvation plan through Jesus does not require perfection, but it does cause much struggle. I struggle. Our commitment to Jesus will not produce perfection in this life but does produce a persistent effort to mature and grow in Christ. I can't be perfect in this life, but I can become more like Christ each day.

Binding (Romans 7:1-3) read in the bible
Paul uses illustrations or every-day examples to help explain a spiritual truth. The law has authority over a person only as long as he lives. **Romans 6:7** *"For he who has died has been freed from sin."* Just as dead people are not tempted to sin, so they are free from the demands of the law. The was writing to those who would easily connect to the law's authority. The Gentile believers especially in the Roman church were used to the imperial law of Rome being like an iron fist in their faces.
Vs. 2 Paul used marriage to illustrate the principle of law applying only to the living. He is assuming that the Roman congregation agreed with the biblical meaning of marriage as one man and one woman joined together for life. Not all people lived that way in Paul's time, as is true today. In the case of Paul's marriage illustration, the point is that laws governing marriage are null and void when the marriage union is broken by the death of a spouse. If a woman takes another man while her husband is still alive, she is an adulteress, but if her husband dies, she is free to marry another man.

Freed (Romans 7:4-6) p. 57

When we have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, we become married to another–-to Jesus who was raised from the dead. The church, we, are the bride of Christ! Believers are united with Christ in both His death and resurrection. Christians not only died to sin and died to their old way of life, they also died to the law. **Galatians 2:19-20** *"For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* The law no longer serves as a tool to condemn and mark the sinner for wrath since in Christ the believer's sin has been forgiven. The law as a guide for godliness has been replaced by Jesus as a guide to godliness. We now live to bear fruit for God. Christian living is not the result of obedience to an external system of law. It grows in the believer from the inside out; just like the life inside a seed that has been put in good soil and watered, it will want to grow and live in close relationship with God. When we have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, we become married to another–-to Jesus who was raised from the dead. The church, we, are the bride of Christ!

Vs. 5 The fruit that believers bear for God differs dramatically from the fruit they produced when "we were in the flesh" (a sinfulness incapable of conforming to God's holy expectations). Flesh is also the unaided human effort–-mere human strength without the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the flesh that offers sin a foothold in a person's life, contrasted with life in the Spirit. The believer lives in union with Christ, and at the same time lives in the flesh. These two realities war against one another. Paradoxically, sinful passions were often aroused through the law. Paul's comments bring to mind a child told not to do something who then becomes fascinated by the very thing he or she was warned to avoid. Fascination with the forbidden resulted in sinful passions working in us to bear fruit for death. That apple was really fascinating.

Vs. 6 While the law is holy, just, and good, it cannot save or produce the new life available through the Spirit of Christ. Only by God's grace and through faith in Christ can a person find new life shaped by the transforming power of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Conflicted (Romans 7:14-23) p. 58-59

If the law leads to sin, then is the law itself sinful or the cause of sin? Paul responded to these implied questions with an emphatic "absolutely not!" The law clearly identifies sinful actions and creates an awareness of sin that fallen humanity often finds alluring, but the law does not force anyone to sin. Who then is responsible for sin? The post-conversion Paul most clearly saw his own sin and described his Christian life as an ongoing struggle to grow in Christ. Paul is giving his own testimony regarding the conflict with sin that continued to trouble him. Struggling to follow Christ does not mark a person as a bad Christian. In

fact, our struggle to live in love and righteousness is one of the main things that identifies us as true believers. We are still living in the flesh, but we are alive to God and desire to live according to His will. As a result, we may find ourselves pulled between the influences of the flesh and our new nature in Christ.
Ephesians 4:23-24 *"and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."* The law is from God and teaches spiritual truths. Sin arises from the nature of the people interacting with the law. The phrase, "I am of the flesh" points out Paul's ongoing struggle with spiritual things. He is a fallible human being, of physical existence. Paul added to this that he is sold as a slave under sin. Using the language of the slave market, describing himself as having been sold identifies him as a person enslaved to another. Paul identifies sin as his master to whom he is under its control. Paul's statement does not deny the freedom he had found in Christ but rather laments the basic condition of a person still living in the flesh. A person who is of the flesh must continue, even after conversion (accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord), to struggle with the influence of a fallen world and its temptations.
For I do not understand what I am doing because I do not practice what I want to do, but do what I hate. How human, and I feel the same way at times. I cry out to God to help me, and He does. I ask God's forgiveness and keep trying. I want to make better use of my time and not put things off. Temptation and sin are like a bad case of acne. It can be kept in check but it always turns up somewhere. Paul's deep desire to please God gives evidence of his commitment to Jesus and his new life in Christ, but he still did things he hated. His hatred of sin reflects his new nature. Trapped in the confinement of the flesh, we work at becoming more Christ-like until God calls us to our heavenly home. Death is a release, rebirth, and sanctification completed. In heaven there will be no more struggles. Our glorified bodies will not hurt, and there will be no more sorrow.
Vs. 16 The conflict between Paul's desires and his actions reveals a truth. The things the law condemned were wrong, and he did not want to do them. The things Paul wanted to do were consistent with the law. Paul acknowledged that the law was good but it could not save. The law's prohibitions could even result in temptation to do the forbidden things. Why did Paul still struggle to do good and reject sin? He reasoned that his new, true self in Christ would renounce sin. But sin, personified as a resident in his physical body, is not so easily evicted. Knowing the nature of his true self, Paul asserted that he was "no longer the one doing it [sin]." It was the sin living in Paul/us that persists in violating God's will. As long as believers live in the flesh, they should acknowledge that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh [sinful nature]. Even believers with the desire to do what is good find that they may lack the ability to do it. Paul's description of the struggle Christians face against the evil that affects everyone who desires to serve God highlights the evil inherent in fallen humanity. **Galatians 5:17** *"For the*

flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
Paul noted that the law cast a bright light on sin. For that reason, he saw the law as good. He battled between his new nature in Christ and the old nature of the flesh. We still battle the power of sin even though Jesus has set us free from it. This ongoing battle will not be settled until Jesus returns.
Vs. 19 For I do not do the good that I want to do. Paul is saying, "I want to be perfect like Christ." The term "good" is a broad and general word encompassing any accurate expression of the will of God. Paul wanted to obey God, but in his own power all too often failed. Stating the other side of the same coin, Paul confessed, "I practice the evil that I do not want to do." All Christians face struggles to do what is right. Since Paul found that he did things that he did not want to do, then there must be a force within him that promoted such behavior. He identified the culprit as the "sin that lives in me." Paul was personifying sin as a force for evil within him.
Vs. 19 Even as a new person in Christ, Paul continued to live in the flesh with all its weaknesses and failings. Even when he wanted to do good, the impulse to sin and commit evil remained within him. The desire to do good comes from the Holy Spirit. Paul acknowledged that sin is still a formidable enemy, even after salvation. Death to sin as a power did not remove sin's allurement and is a conflict in the believer's life.
When we have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, we become married to another–-to Jesus who was raised from the dead. The church, we, are the bride of Christ!
Vs. 21 Paul distinguished between his inner self over and against the parts of the physical body [the flesh] and the sin that lives within. As for the inner self, Paul asserted, "I delight in God's law." **Psalms 1:2** *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But <u>his delight is in the law of the Lord</u>, and in His law he meditates day and night.* Paul described the conflict between the impulse which would lead a person in godliness and that which would lead a person to sin as two powers waging war. Paul's desire was to live according to the law of his mind, that is according to what his spiritual self wanted. Yet because of the fleshy nature of fallen humanity, he experienced the law of sin persistently trying to dominate and take him prisoner. Why do Christians sometimes do bad things? Unfortunately, for as long as we live in the flesh, our fallen self will continue to do battle with our spiritual self. The Christian life is not one of ease or perfection. It is one of struggle. Praise God, we do not struggle alone.

Hope (Romans 7:24-25) p. 61
It is good to acknowledge how needy we are. We need to be rescued! My sin does bother me. I can't win the war with sin under my own power. Like Paul we

cry out for help. We ask for forgiveness and the strength to persist in the pursuit of godliness. Paul's question, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?", leads to a proclamation of the only solution to the problem of sin.
Vs. 25 The answer is Jesus Christ! Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Paul's innermost commitment was to serve God. Yet he knew that the nature of his physical existence and the world he occupied would continually compel him to combat its influence and temptations to sin. As believers who share Paul's condition and commitment, we too can express gratitude to God for the deliverance and victory only He can provide. We too struggle to serve Him, not in our own power, but as followers of Jesus, and in the power of the Spirit.

Things to ponder
We bear fruit for God when we live in the Spirit of God, following Jesus's example.

We need to recognize that the struggle with sin is real, and we need help. Temptation will always be there, but so will God.

We need to continue to thank God for all He has done for us. Thank Him for saving us and empowering us with His indwelling Holy Spirit.